

Hello, this is Tom Cookman with a Community Comment.

I enjoy the letters to the editor in the Times Standard newspaper. There was a recent letter that stated how happy the writer was with the additions to our Sheriff's Department with the Measure Z money. These funds are a result of a tax increase approved by the voters of Humboldt County. I was very vocal in my opposition to this tax increase as I am with every tax increase. I strongly believe that our government has more than enough of our tax dollars to fully fund every department with money to spare. The reason we are always facing budget deficits is because of the very expensive employee benefit packages and the extremely top heavy salaries those in charge are collecting. It is absurd to be paying \$4,000 per month or more for these benefits. It is more absurd that we have department heads making well over \$200,000 per year. These highly compensated employees are the same people who are in charge of the budgets. They fully fund every aspect of their position and when there is a deficit they reach out to the ignorant voters with the sad story that our police, fire, schools and roads are all going to suffer if we don't vote them more tax revenue. A lot of time these tax increases are disguised in the form of issuing bonds. Unfortunately, the tax payer doesn't fully understand that taxes pay back bonds. If you own a piece of property in Humboldt County look at you tax bill and you will see that we are the ones who pay back the bonds. The bonds are nothing more than a credit card the government gets to use and payback over a long period of time with a low interest rate. This is a very bad concept for the tax payer. Giving a government entity more money with the hope that they will get their spending under control is like giving a meth addict more drugs with the hope of them quitting. Yes, our government is addicted to our tax dollar and they will do

everything an addict will do to get more. Measure Z was advertised with lies. We were told that the County budget was cut to the bones and without this money our safety would be compromised. Well, they never think of cutting back the wages of the employees collecting over \$100,000 per year. I would like a ballot measures that would cap public workers compensation and the savings would go to hiring more police officers. I wish just one time our elected officials would take a stand for the taxpayer instead of getting in bed with the government unions.

Getting back to the letter to the editor, I too am happy that these funds have been used to hire more police officers. Unlike the writer, I am not the least bit concerned with what will happen when Measure Z expires. Our Board of Supervisors have never planned on this tax expiring. They will have a five year extension on the ballot a year before it expires. They will toot their own horn and tell you all the wonderful things they've accomplished with this money. They will scare you into voting for the extension with stories of how they will need to cut back on public safety without this money. They will leave out the fact that they've voted themselves large pay raises. They will never mention that the highly compensated county employees will retire with nearly 100% of their salary at least ten years earlier than those of us working in the private sector. The sad part is the extension will pass.

This has been Tom Cookman with a Community Comment.