

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Over the last two years I have had some 100 letters to the editor published with and without Libertarian affiliation – but all had a Libertarian perspective. They have appeared in the San Francisco Examiner, San Francisco Chronicle and two weekly alternative newspapers – the SF Bay Guardian and SF Weekly. The LTE's have covered a broad range of topical news events or happenings or in response to editorials.

How was this achieved?

First some simple guidelines must be followed. As a general rule LTE's must be under 150 words. They must be as the SF Chronicle states: current - correct - concise and pithy.

It goes without saying the LTE must have correct spelling, grammar and punctuation as no editor will waste more than a second on any LTE submitted with bad English. Use spell-check and grammar correction software to review what you wrote. Eyeball what you wrote word for word for words that sound the same but mean different things. Examples would be: mane vs. main or fore vs. four or two vs. to.

One extremely important factor in getting an LTE accepted is timeliness. If you read a newspaper in the morning and see an issue of import – get the LTE out that morning. Sending out an LTE a couple days after the fact is a waste of time and effort as it is a day late and dollar short.

Another method of getting an LTE printed is to be anniversary/date conscious. Most newspapers will publish appropriate news stories or articles on important dates or anniversaries. A recent example was the 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Iraq invasion with editorials and LTE's about the Iraq fiasco.

To increase the chances of getting an LTE published stick to local issues or if it is a statewide or national issue - what's the local impact. The LTE page will usually be split between local, state and national issues depending on space and how hot the topic. Local issues always carry weight if topical and present an issue from a local angle.

LTE's presenting a radical viewpoint may be published if properly presented in response to an issue of import. Newspapers cater to a wide audience. If you present something the newspaper believes this audience should be aware of or at least consider they will publish the LTE. See some of those below where the editors as an example headlined the LTE with: **Taxes are thievery** and **Repeal all taxes** and **No free housing**.

For Libertarians who are the heads of a committee or members of a commission or have some position of authority add this to the signature line. The editor will decide whether or not to include the affiliation but titles or positions of authority give verisimilitude to the LTE and a higher likelihood of being published as being representative of a viewpoint.

For Libertarians who do not have a position you may still include the title Libertarian after your name as the editor very well may include it if they believe it presents a viewpoint of import. I have had several published without title or affiliation but the LTE presented a Libertarian viewpoint on a topic.

Another method of getting an LTE published is in response to editorials by the newspaper. A well written rebuttal or letter of support has an excellent opportunity of being published.

When local or state ballot propositions appear on the ballot this is another time which is ripe for a well written LTE. This is especially true if they involve bonds or government funding or just plain political chicanery for catering to a special interest group. The same also applies to legislation if it is coming up for a vote or if it has

been voted on but not signed. Arousing public commentary is always a good thing when it comes to legislation which goes against basic Libertarian principles and saying why it is wrong for the general public.

Another factor when appropriate is to add facts and figures which have been documented as this adds to the LTE and its veracity.

Another important note is to not send the exact same letter to several different newspapers. Newspapers when they publish have copyrights to what is published in their newspaper. Sending differently worded LTE's about the same topic is perfectly kosher – just not the exact same word for word LTE.

When sending LTE's do not inundate the newspaper by sending LTE's on a daily basis. This dramatically lessens the chances of ever getting an LTE published. Once or twice week is probably the most as the newspaper does have to publish viewpoints from other writers.

The samples of published LTE's to give a flavor of what can be said and get published both with and without affiliation. The headlines of the LTE's are written by the newspaper.

The topics cover police – healthcare – education – taxes – small businesses - recycling – drug wars – minimum wages and government employees pay. The published LTE's show how complex issues can be addressed in 150 words or less even when you wanted to write 1,500 words or 15,000 words.

## **Homicide arrests**

Police are crime historians and it is rare for them to stop a crime in progress. The report on the homicide arrest rates [“Police mount stern defense of homicide record,” Jan. 19] neglects this point. The Police Department can't place an officer per block 24/7 to protect citizens.

The SFPD must set high-crime priorities for personnel assignments. With so many unsolved homicides, how has the SFPD assigned officers to those investigations? With homicides happening because of drug and gang battles, how has the SFPD assigned officers to concentrate on those activities? Pull officers from all nonessential duties and have them concentrate on major crimes.

Crime problems brought about by inadequate housing and limited employment opportunities are the direct result of city leaders' incoherent and negative policies to alleviate these problems. Focusing on high-priced condo developments and a tax-the-businesses climate blocks building affordable housing and stops employers with job opportunities.

## **Recycling is a waste**

The Board of Supervisors resolution to demand manufacturers to pay the cost of recycling [“S.F. demands payment for disposal of e-waste,” Feb. 20] should be extended to cover the additional \$150 million in refuse rates San Franciscans pay.

What the Board of Supervisors found is that the cost of do-gooding and kowtowing to environmentalists can be expensive when legislators want to look good regardless of the costs to consumers.

Recycling needs to address its true costs as an inefficient use of time, money and resources. If recycling were resourceful, the costs would be paid by the recycled material and no refuse rates would be charged. If you are concerned, then start reducing and reusing materials. Let the market price determine the costs of the materials bought, but don't assess each garbage customer.

Use garbage dumps for everything. If the market demands show it is efficient to do so, then businesses will go and sift the dumps for useful materials.

## **Wal-Mart and healthcare**

(This was in response to an op-ed State Sen. Carole Migden wrote on her proposed Anti-Big Business healthcare legislation)

Carole Migden says Wal-Mart costs the state \$32 million in health care and \$52 million in welfare subsidies [“Protecting health care from Wal-Mart effect,” Feb. 23]. Migden wants to mandate that 69 major employers of 10,000 or more people set aside 8 percent of total wages to pay their “fair share” of health care.

Why stop the mandate for just large employers? Why not mandate all employers pay 8 percent of their total payroll toward their “fair share” of health care? Why not mandate all employers pay toward housing and food costs so there will be no need for subsidized welfare benefits for employees?

Migden exemplifies the looting-by-law mentality of Sacramento’s “Robbing Hoods.” To help employees, repeal state income and sales taxes, and then cut corporate taxes for businesses. This will help all Californians.

Why enact legislation whose mandate will only drive businesses and their employment opportunities out of state hurting all Californians?

## **Why tax only litter?**

(This was a tongue in cheek reply to an op-ed the SF Examiner published which our Fred Foldvary wrote for the California Perspective)

Fred Foldvary [“Oakland litter law really a tax on business,” Feb. 28] showed a new direction for cities in creating tax laws.

Oakland passed an anti-litter tax law on fast-food outlets, making responsible customers pay the costs of customers who are litterbugs and use the sidewalks as garbage cans. Oakland is shortsighted in its anti-litter tax law.

Oakland needs to expand its anti-litter tax law to cover all litter. The anti-litter tax law should include car dealers to pay for the litter cleanup costs of abandoned cars, furniture stores for abandoned sofas and Realtors for abandoned property. The list is almost endless.

Then include an anti-litter tax on Oakland residents to pay for the costs of people who abandon Oakland because of the nonsense emanating from City Hall. At this rate, Oakland is on pace to become the place where, as Gertrude Stein said, “There is no there-there.”

## **Teacher tax exemption**

A parcel tax to increase teachers pay doesn’t help teachers. Teachers complain that the cost of living has increased beyond their pay. The school administration claims a shortage of available funds. There is a very simple fix.

Specifically exempt full-time K-12 school teachers from paying state income taxes and sales taxes. This way you reward school teachers for their work without having all tax payers dig deeper into their wallets.

To make up for lost taxes, divide up the amount needed among the 60,000 K-12 students families. Then bill each parent for each K-12 child's share. Why tax everyone to pay for someone else’s child attending public school?

## **For shame**

Assemblyman Ray Haynes, R-Murrieta proposes shame plates for DUI drivers ["Legislator hopes 'shame' plates will cut driving fatalities, DUI's March 24"]. He shouldn't stop there.

The proposal needs 'shame' plates for all felonious crimes. As Haynes said, "Here is a guy who may be dangerous. It alerts cops." The article said after several decades of tough legislation and progress DUI crimes still continue and have risen. So have all other felonies. Unfair scrutiny and labeling aside, Haynes wants you to believe these people have not paid their debt to society and need to keep paying for their crime.

Haynes leaves out a needed urgent priority 'shame' plate titled "tax thief". This plate is for all tax enacting elected officials. Taxpayers need to watch for and keep an eye on these proliferating thieves. Unfortunately, the tax thieves' crimes still continue unabated, despite numerous cries for surcease by taxpayers from these hardened criminals.

## **Drop the War on Drugs**

The Angel Raich medical marijuana pot case [Medical pot case back in court," March 27] exemplifies the waste of taxpayers' money in the War on Drugs in just court case battles. FBI national crime statistics reports 725,000 personal- possession pot arrests while 650,000 arrests were made for murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault. These figures show the impact drug laws and Drug Enforcement Administration largesse has on local police departments.

Congress should repeal the War on Drugs, which is wasting billions of taxpayer dollars while creating a profitable market for drugs through un-intended consequences.

If Congress is un-willing to totally repeal it, at least de-criminalize all personal possession medical marijuana use with a doctor's prescription.

The federal government claims there is no therapeutic medical value to pot. Yet hundreds of medical pot users have found relief from their pain. It's time Congress stopped being such a pain on personal-possession medical marijuana use.

## **Costly minimum wage**

Editor -- Your editorial support of an increased minimum wage without automatic increases is misguided ("A minimum raise," March 29).

San Francisco has an \$8.82 minimum wage. To hire a full-time worker, businesses must net \$20,000 after mandatory matching taxes. An un-hired worker suffers when the job this worker could perform doesn't generate \$20,000 of net business income. The law bans them from being employed with less pay. To get around this, businesses hire capable workers "off the books" and pay them "under the table."

Economic studies have shown for every 10 percent increase in minimum wage, there is a corresponding 2 percent drop in employment, and for women this can jump to 4 percent.

The best way to help low-income laborers is to repeal restrictive minimum wage-laws and personal-income taxes. Then, lower the regressive state sales tax or put a floor of \$100 on purchases where no sales tax is charged.

## **Public employee salaries**

If the figures by Nathan Nayman in his guest column are correct [“City budget problems are tip of iceberg,” April 26], the unfunded health plan liability of retired city employees is the iceberg and The City is the Titanic.

With 43 labor contracts being renewed, it’s time to clamp down on city pay and benefits. Currently, 40 percent of the \$5 billion city budget goes to pay and benefits averaging \$75,000 for city employees, while private industry averages \$50,000.

The City needs a salary cap on pay and benefits, with public employees picking up a larger share of the co-pay instead of the taxpayers. Set the mayor’s pay and benefits at \$120,000, and scale down all other city employees from there. Stop the massive abuse of overtime, like the SFPD blowing through \$10 million in half a year while patrolling hot spots.

Stop digging into city taxpayer wallets to give public employees benefits the taxpayers don’t have for themselves.

## **Bayview redevelopment**

The Board of Supervisors’ preliminary approval for a 30-year, \$188 million Redevelopment Agency program to revitalize the Bayview-Hunters Point is another example of the agency again taking property taxes from residents and re-directing the money “for their own good.”

The Redevelopment Agency has a checkered history. The Fillmore District project still has swaths of bare land awaiting revitalization. The former residents driven from a vibrant neighborhood have still not recovered.

Redevelopment Agency officials are telling Bayview-Hunters Point community groups about the good that will happen. The biggest talking point will be the “carrot-on-a-stick” temptation of jobs.

The real jobs will be for people employed at the Redevelopment Agency and its approved contract vendors. Token local construction jobs will be created only after a ruckus is raised about the hiring problems with vendors.

This is another taxpayer-funded Redevelopment Agency boondoggle.

## **City homicide rate**

Proposition A, the blue-ribbon anti-homicide panel and \$10 million annual fund, will not prevent homicides (“Prop. A - The wrong solution,” Opinion, May 24).

Economically destitute neighborhoods, drug turf gang warfare and a backlog of unsolved homicides will not be corrected. These situations were created by the Diaspora from the black neighborhoods caused by Redevelopment Agency policies in the Western Addition, the Fillmore and now Bayview-Hunters Point.

Forced busing and dragging children from neighborhood schools further disrupted neighborhood families. Blocking big-box retailers lessened the availability of entry-level and unskilled jobs. Unsolved homicides are exacerbated by a dysfunctional relationship between the district attorney and the SFPD.

Prop. A is of the politicians, by the politicians and for the politicians, and the people of the local neighborhood communities be damned.

## **City's overtime costs out of control**

The actions of the "Big Six" departments running up massive amounts of overtime are unforgivable ("City overtime costs soar to \$122 million," May 27).

The City must stop kowtowing to employee unions' work rules and classify city employees as salaried. This way there would be no need for \$37 million in pay overruns.

City employees average \$85,000 in pay and benefits. In comparison, the average San Francisco civilian receives \$50,000 in pay and benefits. This is why city employee wages and benefits take up 40 percent of the \$5 billion city budget.

The City has a ratio of one public employee for every 28 residents. City Hall must do a department-by-department audit of exactly what each department does. Then it should contract out competitive bids to private companies for everything that could be done at less cost to the taxpayers.

City public servants shouldn't live high on the hog at taxpayers' expense.

## **Capping gas prices isn't the answer**

A new bill in Sacramento is being promoted to provide temporary price caps in times of "abnormal market disruption" on "artificially inflated" gas prices ("State officials urging price caps on gasoline," June 10). Price increases greater than 10 percent are barred after a state of emergency is declared. The new law would extend this from retailers to include refineries and suppliers.

But the bill doesn't cap the overseas cost of oil. It doesn't make it easier for new refineries to be built, as no new refineries have been built in the last 25 years. It ignores free market competition under the politicians' guise of doing something to help consumers.

Free market competition decides prices. If prices are too high, consumers buy less. Legislating market prices helps no one. Repeal gas taxes to reduce pump prices.

## **Small businesses' burden**

Your editorial ("City Hall right to kill business fee," June 23) erred when stating the \$235,000 funding for extra labor investigators "rightly should come from The City's budget." Those city funds include revenue from taxes paid by businesses.

City officials treat small businesses in San Francisco as ATMs for every progressive idea from wages to health plans. Business edicts are imposed even when detrimental to businesses and employment opportunities coming to San Francisco.

Consider this: Sixteen thousand small businesses, made up of five to 50 employees, comprise one-third of all city businesses but pay two-thirds of the annual payroll taxes, with 30,000 businesses exempted by various laws. The \$120 million taken from these small businesses could hire 6,000 workers under city minimum wage laws.

The board of supervisors — with its "progressive," anti-business legislation — shows its obvious contempt for profitable small businesses in San Francisco.

## **Generosity of city worker benefits**

City employees and their benefits are bleeding San Francisco taxpayers. Employee salaries, benefits and pensions take up \$2.98 billion, or 52 percent of the new \$5.7 billion budget. Not included are the hundreds of millions of dollars in unfunded liabilities for retired city employees' health plans.

The new budget places an \$8,000 tax burden on each city resident. This is paid through higher prices for all basic necessities and amenities. Foolish people say we should tax businesses more to come up with the money. What's ignored is that businesses get the tax money they pay from people who pay for goods and services sold. Higher taxes mean higher prices.

City officials must significantly cut back on the number of city employees, their wages and benefits, and they must bid out services to competitive enterprise to cut the cancerous budget that is eating San Francisco taxpayers.

## **NO TAXES, NO BUREAUCRATS**

Tim Redmond [Editor's Notes, 7/12/06] expressed amazement over the Dolores Park soccer party created overnight by an individual. He scratched his head over why Rec-Park couldn't do the same. Redmond wrote, "Rec-Park is a nest of bureaucrats without a vision." Well — duh!

Government does not attract creative freethinking red tape-less individuals who ache to streamline the process. Bureaucrats do not rock the boat or make waves, and live for "decision by committee" and CYA — cover your ass.

Redmond wrote that there are ways to spend the public's money, helping the public have fun and reminding people of why they pay taxes.

Help the public by not taking taxes from the public. Let the public decide how it would like to spend its earnings. Don't let bureaucrats decide on the public's behalf what's "good for the public" after taking taxes from the public.

## **Housing economics**

City supervisors are now contemplating new legislation mandating developers to set aside more affordable housing than before ("Supervisors look at mandates for more affordable housing," July 13). Supervisors need to understand free market forces.

Home and apartment rental prices reflect market demand. Prices rise when demand exceeds the supply. Prices fall when the supply exceeds the demand. Supervisors should enact legislation streamlining development and keep it free from red-tape bureaucracy, cumbersome permit approval processes and "not-in-my-backyard" NIMBY's. The supervisors must understand below-market homes are paid for by market-rate home purchasers, as there are no free rides.

San Francisco desperately needs some 50,000 new rental units and 10,000 homes. Based on scarcity of land, this means high-rise apartments and condos/town-home developments. If San Francisco wants a cultural diversity of families, the supervisors should get their heads screwed on straight about free market economic forces.

## **Requiring paid sick days**

Abandon ye all hope, small business owners, who do business in San Francisco. Advocates petition the supervisors to approve a ballot initiative forcing businesses to provide paid sick days ("Paid sick days for employees may be ballot bound," July 26). They claim a savings in costs over turnover of \$8.5 million.

Small businesses owe payroll taxes, taxes for permits, licenses and registration and soon health insurance taxes. Simplify the tax process. All small businesses will be owned by The City with an on-site commissar taking the daily receipts. This is a small price for a business owner to pay to enjoy the ambience of San Francisco living.

The appropriated money would be redistributed for workers to have high pay, medical benefits, paid sick leave, food, rent and proper clothing for their children. Thus, a happy workers' paradise created by the supervisors through small business taxes.

## **Enterprise zone**

The editorial to make San Francisco an enterprise zone ["Let's make S.F. an enterprise zone," 9-8] neglects a problem. The Board of Supervisors levies "progressive" taxes on small businesses, forcing them out of existence by using them as ATM's for "fair share" programs. The Board of Supervisors will never give up those "fair share" taxes on small businesses.

With increased minimum wages, an imposed city health plan and passage of the sick leave initiative, with payroll taxes, permits and license fees, a new business should never open in San Francisco. With just payroll taxes, small businesses of five to 49 employees pay \$120 million to The City. At the current city-mandated minimum wage, that's 6,000 minimum wage jobs lost to taxes. Now that's progressive fair share taxes in action.

The Board of Supervisors should cut all mandated "fair share," "progressive," small business taxes to attract new businesses and keep existing businesses here.

## **No he shouldn't**

Your editorial ("The mayor should plan to not plan," Sept. 29) highlights the fallacies of government as the "do all be all." Government is the antithesis of bringing jobs as the jobs come at the cost of taxes taken and spent unwisely.

If Mayor Newsom and the Board of Supervisors truly believe in expanding San Francisco's economic base they need to create the climate to attract businesses.

Repeal all anti-business regulations and small business payroll taxes. Streamline the business license and permit process. To house and attract workers, repeal rent control laws and get the building permit process less red-tape ridden so more apartments will be built. Cut The City budget in half so less tax money will be needed to be drained from the economy which will lower the costs of goods and services.

These starter steps are needed first to attract new businesses to San Francisco.

## **More money for closing schools?**

The declining San Francisco Unified School District enrollment ["Board members say more closures likely," Oct. 20] begs the question of why the school board needs a \$450 million school fixer-upper bond issue. A review of the bond notes the types of repairs needed but not the dollar amounts. A selectively appointed bond oversight committee engenders a boondoggle for politically wired contractors.

The decline in public students has happened over years. The SFUSD didn't have the grit to close schools and use the funds saved to fix the remaining schools. Sell the closed school sites for mixed use residential/light commercial development and stop hitting taxpayers' wallets.

With 60,000 students and a \$450 million bond, bill the parents of each public school child \$7,500 as their "progressive fair share" of maintaining public schools. If parents whose children attend private schools have to pay for facility upkeep so should public school parents.

## **Yes on 90**

Editor -- Debra J. Saunders is totally erroneous ("Prop. 90 ends one abuse, adds others," Oct. 19) when she says vote no on Proposition 90.

Proposition 90 is about property-right abuses by local and state governments through restrictive legislation or outright eminent-domain thievery for political payoffs to wired insiders. Proposition 90 demands compensation when the government abuses property rights. If people have problems with this, then blame Sacramento for not immediately passing anti-Kelo (case) legislation when it could have.

San Francisco has passed numerous laws and regulations governing private property. A law forbids hotel property owners from converting rooms to condos as a sop to the hotel- workers union. Forced property construction set asides are mandated for "affordable" housing. There's the outright political bribery of mandated community investments for multiunit condo projects' permit approval. It's time the pipers paid for the tunes they stole -- as there are no free lunches.

## **Taxes are thievery**

Your editorial ["House speaker largesse coming," Nov. 16] bespeaks sugar-plums-dancing-in-their-heads thinking. Drooling over the potential cornucopia of dollar bills pouring down on the Bay Area and California is contemptuous of where the money comes from.

The money comes from dollars forcibly taken from wage earners. Imagine what it would be like if those dollars were never taken in the first place. Between federal and state income and payroll taxes, a person has a third of their income taken before they get their paycheck.

Stop the thievery and let us decide how we spend the money we earn.

## **Repeal all taxes**

Walter Williams' erroneous support for the Fair Tax ["Is fair taxation possible?" Dec. 13] is sad. The proposed 23 percent sales tax on the cost of goods and services sold to replace all other national taxes is a pipe dream.

A 23 percent sales tax is regressive; hurting the lowest paid the most. The Fair Tax, if it was designed to not hurt the poor, would have a \$250 floor on it. Further, there's no doubt a thriving underground black market would evolve in a flash.

A major problem complicating a Fair Tax is that states and cities have sales taxes and those will not be repealed — those taxes are on top of the federal sales tax. Hotel and gas taxes will continue — put those on top of all the other sales taxes.

Taxes in any form are thievery of income earned by workers. Just repeal all taxes.

## **The health care mess**

Viewpoints writer John Graham doesn't address who caused health care to become expensive ["Mandatory health care won't work," Dec. 12-22]. In 1965, Medicare and Medicaid were created by politicians and mongrelized by bureaucrats imposed massive administrative regulations on hospitals and doctors — including a no-turn-away policy for emergency rooms. Medical expenses were further exacerbated by the federal HMO legislation of 1973, which mandated employers to offer HMO to their employees.

Government meddling in health care is the cause of the health care crisis and its spiraling costs to businesses and consumers. Get the state and federal government and their regulations out of health care. Repeal Medicare and Medicaid and all of its regulations. Open up competition for health care providers by repealing AMA protective anti-competitive legislation mandating AMA approved courses and medical schools.

Health insurance mandated by the state only makes politicians look like they are doing something about health care but they aren't solving the crisis of health care.

## **No free housing**

Ken Garcia highlights an incontrovertible fact — government is the enemy of private property and private property ownership ["Meddling in massive housing deal," Jan. 25].

The Trinity Plaza housing imbroglio is a degenerated theatrical version of The Merchant of Venice — with Shylock (Board of Supervisors) demanding the pound of flesh from Antonio (Angelo Sangiacomo). The Board of Supervisors' lack of economic acumen and sense of urgency for a vitally needed housing development are contemptible.

Sangiacomo should dump the project based on the 40 percent increase in construction costs. Were these costs passed through to renters or purchasers, the supervisors' uproar would be heard worldwide.

The affordable-housing battle is a further measure of the supervisors' economic cupidity. The price differential in below-market units is paid for by others in the full-market units — there are no free lunches.