



Promoting accountable, cost-effective  
and efficient government and opposing  
unnecessary taxes and spending

November 12, 2020

## CoCoTax President's Report – November 12, 2020

### CoCoTax Officers

**Susan Pricco**  
President

**James Pezzaglia**  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

**Ryder Brose**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

**Paul Bleeg**  
Treasurer/Secretary

**Honorable Mike McGill**  
Past President

**Denise Sheehan**  
Business Manager

It's a sad and nerve-wracking time for taxpayers. As we catch our breath from an incredibly challenging election season, votes are still being counted, reports of fraudulent votes being discussed, and Californians are biting their nails. We hope the Contra Costa Elections Department has been diligent and watchful over the integrity of our ballots. There have been many previously unforeseen changes in the process of voting in the November election.

The **Contra Costa Elections Department** shows that just over 82% of 703,021 registered voters cast their ballots. (Note the website says that, as of 11/10/2020, there are 704,896 registered voters). That's an incredibly high margin, but we ask, "why not 100%?" There's a question to ponder with many possible answers, not all of them positive.

As all the measures and propositions line up, the cost of living here will get more difficult for so many hard-working good people. There may be reasons for increased taxes, like paying down pension debt in the cities, but if that is the case, it should be stated as such. All we ask is transparency and honesty in ballot measures, so people can make a good decision and...no one should need a PhD to decipher a ballot question and all the ramifications that go with it.

In an eleventh-hour push, **SB 1349** introduced by Senator Glazer has opened the door to raising sales taxes much higher in this county. We note that authority to place **Measure X** on the ballot did not exist until weeks after the measure was filed to be put to the voters. **SB 1349** expands the cap on sales tax allowing for more in the future. We will discuss this in greater detail at a later time.

At this writing, it appears that California and Contra Costa appear to be posturing to return us to more stringent restrictions in the quest against coronavirus. We can only speculate how many of the restrictions are politically motivated and what is really effective for our health and well-being. Clearly, many of us are feeling the effects of our inability to move freely after so many months. CoCoTax has adapted to the best of our ability and we hope you are keeping in touch with us through Facebook, our newsletters, **Lunchtime Zoom! Speaker Series** and our videos on YouTube. If you have difficulty with using Zoom! for joining our speaker sessions, it's easy to catch the replay and search "Contra Costa Taxpayers Association" on YouTube and watch there or click on "Videos" on our website.



**Susan L Pricco**  
President, Contra Costa  
Taxpayers Association  
*"Good government at  
affordable cost"*

There is still work to do on transportation/regional issues, rent control/tenant protections, pensions, and other committees. Call us if you would like to be involved on a committee or work on our social media campaigns. We are lining up new speakers and though our plans for an in-person event have again been tabled, we are still pursuing good government at affordable cost.

**Be safe, be happy and be well-informed!**

**Contact  
CoCoTax**

#### Address

1661 Botelho Drive, Suite 105  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

**Phone:** 925-289-6900

**Email:** [info@cocotax.org](mailto:info@cocotax.org)

**Website:** [cocotax.org](http://cocotax.org)



On Facebook:

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## JUST ANNOUNCED!

### State Proposition 15 Fails!

**PROPOSITION 15**, the “**SPLIT ROLL**” misleadingly labeled as “**SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES FIRST**”, has **FAILED!** The effort to remove businesses from the protections of 1978’s Prop 13 has lost.

California already has become increasingly unfriendly to do business, and many companies have left the state due to crushing taxation. This major proposal would have given plenty of our businesses a major reason to leave. The Opposition was spearheaded by the **Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association** and **CalTAX**, joined by taxpayer advocates across the state, including **CoCoTax**. We can celebrate this major victory.

### Meet Joe Rubay, CoCoTax’s Newest Executive Team Member

Joe Rubay was born and raised in the Bay Area. He lives with his wife and daughters and works as a professional appraiser and auditor. Joe wants to fight for issues that matter most to our community, such as improving our commutes, holding our government accountable, and making sure extremists don’t drive our policies. In his words:

*“We want transparency to ensure the taxes paid by us are being used for their intended purpose. This is essential in order to control the budget and stop excessive spending, and to help taxpayers keep more money in their pockets. Our infrastructure is suffering as a result of the mismanagement of earmarked funds.”*

A faithful CoCoTax member for years, Joe now extends his time and talent to the Executive Team as we look toward a new year and new challenges.



**Joe Rubay**  
Executive Team Member,  
Contra Costa Taxpayers  
Association

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## LUNCHTIME SPEAKER SERIES

### Michael Shellenberger

The following is a synopsis of Lunchtime Speaker Michael Shellenberger's presentation on October 9, 2020 by CoCoTax Board member Mark Fernwood.

Michael Shellenberger is the author of the book "***Apocalypse Never***" that deals with the realities of the environmental movement. He admits that he came from being a left-wing activist to now being a moderate Democrat and describes himself as the "heretical environmentalist". He says, "over the years we have moved to ever cleaner energy production" and believes the ultimate future for clean energy is nuclear. In an interesting narrative, he explained that the development and use of fossil fuels for lighting is actually what has saved the whales. Far cheaper kerosene meant we no longer needed whale oil. He also believes that plastics should not be recycled as this is not cost effective.

His new book focuses on the homeless crisis which is causing a tremendous public health & environmental problem. Human waste lingers on the ground and goes into waterways. "This crisis has been created by very bad progressive policies. 75% to 100% of homeless are addicted to hard drugs. Many addicts describe their addiction to an enslavement." Many also have mental problems like schizophrenia, but about half deny their problem and will not accept help. "Liberal laws on open addiction, camping on public property and social aid has created a homeless magnet." Some cities have seen the development of an "open air drug market" created in their streets. A number of European cities such as Zurich, Lisbon & Amsterdam no longer tolerate these markets and the behaviors creating these pockets of lawlessness, effectively improving their homeless problem.

Shellenberger notes "in SF it is still illegal to lie down on sidewalks. Elements of vagrancy laws still exist and need to be used. Rampant homelessness is a breakdown of society." Currently, a person must have committed 7 violent crimes in order to be committed to an institution. Finally, his position is that we must take a hard stand before we offer help, and the homeless must also participate in their recovery.

Watch Michael's presentation to CoCoTax on our YouTube channel:  
[Why Saving Civilization Requires Saving California](#)

Watch PragerU video interview with Michael Shellenberger on climate issues:  
[The "Religion of Green" presented by PragerU](#)



Michael Shellenberger

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