

Sutter County Taxpayers Association

Honesty, Integrity and Cost Effectiveness in Government

P. O. Box 1232, Yuba City, Ca 95992, 530-673-6562

www.suttertaxpayers.com

July 28, 2015

Sutter County Board of Supervisors
1160 Civic Center Boulevard
Yuba City, CA 95993

Dear Supervisors:

The Sutter County Taxpayers Association has the following questions/comments concerning the wellness clinic.

1. SCTA recognizes that the wellness clinic was agreed to in the MOUs passed by the Board on February 14, 2015 and, therefore, must go forward unless the employee groups agree to renegotiate. Have you asked the employee groups to renegotiate this issue in the interest of better serving the citizens of Sutter County by funding necessary positions to protect the citizens you represent, i.e. two Sheriff's deputies, internal auditor, I.T. security officer?
2. Did the County ask for competitive bids from more than the two health insurance groups involved – the previous provider, Tri-County School Insurance Group, and the new provider, San Joaquin Valley Insurance Authority? CalPERS just released its health insurance costs for the 2016 year and they appear much lower than the San Joaquin Valley Insurance Authority. If competitive bids were not sought, we would encourage the county to request them in the future for all such contracts.
3. We encourage the county to track the usefulness/success of the Wellness Clinic to determine if it is necessary and for possible consideration for the next employee contract.
4. SCTA strongly encourages the county to adopt COIN which stands for Civic Openness in Negotiations. Had COIN been in effect during employee negotiations last fall, the proposals from both the employee organizations and county officials would have been presented during at least two meetings prior to the meeting when a vote was taken. This would give the citizens -- who are the bill payers -- a chance to study and comment on the proposals. As it is now, negotiations are done in secret and then an MOU is put on the agenda for adoption with little or no advance notice.

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Remember back in 2004 when the Board passed a 35% increase in pension benefits on the consent calendar and made the increase retroactive. Well, that action, which was done without letting the public analyze the proposal and speak to it, has cost we citizens millions of dollars. Sutter County, or rather we citizens now owe CalPERS over \$120 million. It is the public's right to have a say in how our tax dollars are being spent and we encourage you to open up the employee negotiation process to transparency and public input.

Sincerely,

Original signed by:

Patricia A. Miller

President