

Dear Editor:

I have read Pat Ledbetter's letter of early June. I would like to publicly congratulate her on her award. Pat was one of my favorite teachers although she leans heavily to the liberal view of history and finances. To her credit, she would entertain conservative views in her classroom.

I waited hoping some other conservatives would respond but it appears most will remain in the silent majority or may not be aware of the big increases in Tuition, Taxes and Salaries at NCTC.

I share Pat's concern about the affordability of an NCTC education in Cooke County. That is why when I ran as a fiscal conservative in 2004 for the NCTC Board; I campaigned against the high tax burden and the unfairness of that tax per credit hour, (current property tax is \$103/hr. per NCTC). With the bond tax, we now pay more than \$152/credit hour in taxes, plus tuition and fees for a total of \$222+ per credit hour in Cooke County. Out of County students get a bargain at \$118/hr. Pat's husband, Bill Ledbetter, and Dave Flusche agreed the tax burden was unfair to Cooke County in 2004. Together we ran ads pointing out the disparity and said we would fix it.

To our disappointment, some forgot their campaign promises. When I left the board after six years, by speaking out against tax and tuition increases for Cooke County, the Cooke County tuition & fee rate went from \$42 per credit hour in 2004 to \$46 per credit hour in 2010. The administration requested a 4.2% increase in property taxes in 2004. I asked some questions and caught our former college president asking for a tax increase on something he said the previous month wasn't coming from the taxpayers. He quickly lowered the tax increase request to 1.2%. That was the last NCTC property tax effective increase until the bond passed in 2013. I also voted against large salary increases that were more than inflation and sometimes exceeded 15%.

What have we gotten with the liberal policies and leadership at NCTC who say college should be more affordable? Under Board Chairman Bill Ledbetter, Cooke County tuition and fees were recently raised \$10 to \$70/hr. That is a \$24 increase from \$46 in 2010. Tuition and Fees have gone up more than 50% in five years!

In addition to the bond tax increase, NCTC is back to increasing the M&O property tax almost 8% each year.

NCTC recently approved a 6% salary increase for NCTC faculty and staff. (Inflation was flat in the 12 months ending May 2015.) NCTC had salary increases almost every year in the past ten, averaging 3+% per year, totaling more than 20% since 2010. The latest salary increase will cost just short of **One Million Dollars** per year. Apparently, the board thinks NCTC and their employees need more of the students and taxpayer's money. NCTC only has \$36 Million in the bank.

Cooke County consistently votes conservative in state and federal elections by a margin of about four to one. How is it that we are letting our local governments pursue these big tax and spend policies?

Pat Ledbetter concludes her letter with "I am ashamed that my generation, so generously supported by those who came before us, cares more about a few dollars in our bank accounts than about the future

of our country.” NCTC taxes went up 64% last year. Those few dollars added up to a \$113 increase in our NCTC taxes just last year. It will add up to \$2825 over 25 years.

Perhaps when Pat wrote her letter, she didn’t realize that both NCTC Tuition and Taxes have gone up more than 50% in the last five years while the employees have gotten cumulative raises averaging more than 20% in that same time.

Since it appears we are agreement about keeping college affordable, I am hopeful Pat will join me in petitioning the board to reverse those increases and limit them to no more than inflation, at least for the student tuition and salaries, and for taxes going forward.

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