

## All things being equal...they're not.

"How do you feel about all the income inequality in America," a friend asked me the other day. Don't you mean, *income disparity*, I said. "No, he sputtered. I mean income inequality, the main reason our country is headed for a revolution of the middle class!" I must have looked like I didn't hear him because he repeated it. Truth is, I couldn't believe my ears. This normally rock-solid individual had gotten his dander way up and was obviously upset.

OK, I told myself, I'll bite. My first question was, where in the Constitution does it say that all income in the USA must be divided equally, to which my friend replied "Well nowhere, but it SHOULD be there." Not wanting to sound preachy or condescending I offered the following, the Declaration of Independence said that, "...all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness..." Then my friend said, "That's all well and good but what about the preamble to the Constitution where it says...*promote the general Welfare*? Surely that means that everybody should have *generally* the same as everybody else?"

Not on your tintype, I replied. I'll concede that there has been a lot of social engineering that has helped take the inequality out of American life like the abolition of slavery, the breakup of monopolies from the *Robber Barons'* time, the institution of the Social Security system and the passage of the Civil Rights Act, but you're not going to seriously tell me that we are all now going to be forced to pool our money, send it to Washington and then get an allowance from Uncle Sam are you?

"Of course not, said my pal. What do you think I am, a Communist? No, we just need to tax the rich more so that we can give the poor a decent living, that's all." Not wanting to go into detail on *rich America's* contribution to the entire U.S. tax burden, I opted for a different question: "Do you think the rich will object if the government takes most of their money and gives it to somebody else?"

"Why should they, he said. How many more vacation homes and fancy cars and trips around the world do they need, anyway? And if they do object and start moving out of the country or dealing only in cash and stuffing it into their mattresses, what then, I said? "Well, we'll find 'em, no matter how long it takes. We have the IRS and the NSA and the FBI and the SEC and now Obamacare health records to make it easier. The first time they visit a doctor for a flu shot, we'll nab 'em and then confiscate their mattress! You can run, but you can't hide. We got Whitey Bulger didn't we?"

I could feel the knot in my stomach tighten, so I rolled out the following, slowly, carefully... my dear friend, I would suggest that what you're talking about is really the *difference* in incomes that happens naturally in a free society when some people work harder, invest more wisely, inherit money or profit from honest industriousness. There will always be income disparity in a capitalist system no matter which political party is in power. In case you don't know the difference in the 'isms' think about this...

With Socialism, you have two cows. The government takes one and gives it to your neighbor. With Communism, you have two cows. You give them to the Government, and the Government then gives you some milk. With Fascism, you have two cows. You give them to the Government, and the Government then sells you some milk. With Capitalism, you have two cows. You sell one and buy a bull.

Author: Site Admin