Income Inequality in the United States

“Income inequality in the United States is at an all-time high, surpassing even levels seen during the Great Depression.”
- University of California, Berkeley Professor Emmanuel Saez, 2006

Wealth & Income Inequality in the United States

- More than other countries, we have a very unequal income distribution where compensation goes to the top in a winner-takes-all economy.
- HuffingtonPost.com, 9/28/10

U.S. Earners

1% of the highest U.S. earners gained almost 75% of the earnings from 2002-2006

Total U.S. Earnings

99% of the remaining earners split 25% of the total earnings

Capital Income

Capital income is that income from capital, which is investment in a business, real estate, art, or other assets. While this income is often considered better than wage income, it is not as secure, as it is not paid out every month, but rather is paid out to investors on a regular basis. Capital income is often taxed at a lower rate than wage income, which can lead to higher overall income for capital income.

Gini Coefficient

The Gini coefficient is a measure of the inequality of a distribution in a society. It is calculated by dividing the area between the Lorenz curve and the diagonal by the area under the diagonal.

Income Inequality in the United States

- The United States has the highest income inequality in the world. The Gini coefficient for the United States is 0.48, which is higher than any other country.
- Inequality has increased significantly since the 1980s, with the top 1% of earners gaining a disproportionate amount of the nation's wealth.

Wealth & Income Inequality in the United States

- Wealth inequality is also very high in the United States. The top 1% of earners own 40% of the nation's wealth, and the top 5% own 75%.
- Wealth inequality is much higher than income inequality, with the top 1% of earners owning 38% of the nation's wealth.

What's this?

Gini Index (most recent) by Country

The Gini index is a measure of the inequality of a distribution. It is calculated by dividing the area between the Lorenz curve and the diagonal by the area under the diagonal. A Gini index of 0 represents perfect equality, while a Gini index of 1 represents perfect inequality. The Gini index is often used to measure income inequality, as it is relatively easy to calculate and is widely understood.

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Share of Capital Income Flowing to Households in Various Income

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