

There's a point at which a Money Count becomes so extreme that it is no longer possible to be working for a living. It's the point where, no matter what a Count chooses to do, he can no longer *earn* more than what he *takes* automatically in clockwork Free Income. Let's call this point the Counting Class Line. It marks a deep gulf in America.

Currently, the Counting Class Line is at a Money Count of about \$100 million. The exact number is debatable. And it changes over time. But it is simple to identify: All we need to know is (1) the long-term *Free Income rate* available to those who can afford to wait, and (2) the *maximum wage* that the most highly qualified Americans can typically expect to earn from productive work.

In American today, we can say that (1) the *Free Income rate* is 10%, since that's the long-term average yearly gain of the stock market S&P 500. And we can say that (2) the *maximum wage* is around \$10 million, since that's about the take-home pay for the CEO of a typical mid-range, top-500 corporation.

This means that anyone with a Money Count over \$100 million collects more in yearly Free Income than the \$10 million he otherwise might hope to receive in earned income for work. And many Counts collect so much more: a middle-rank E10 Count collects \$5 billion a year in Free Income, just by waiting.

Beyond the Counting Class Line, a Count can choose to stay busy if he wants. He doesn't have to only wait to collect Free Income. But any income he might earn from work is easily eclipsed by that Free Income. In terms of money, past the Counting Class Line the *net contribution* to America turns negative.

The Counting Class Line is where we reach an end to any healthy competition of efforts and ideas. Counts can just collect inflating

amounts of Free Income. And things like work, quality, and merit matter less and less. That's a grave threat to capitalist America.

The Counting Class Line is a dangerous breaking point. As Counts become more and more disconnected from the reality of life in America, they also gain more and more power. With no need to work for a living or to work with neighbors, Counts can afford to play America like a game. They can treat productive corporations like hobbies, and they can treat any of our representative governments like personal pastimes.

The deepest gulf in America today isn't between richer and poorer members of the Contributing Classes. It's between all of us who keep contributing to American Life, and Counts who collect Free Income at escalating extremes. The elites who cross the Counting Class Line threaten the America we love. ■

