

The enough
purchasing power to
grow the



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The microeconomic picture of the U. S. has changed immensely since 1973, and the trends are proving to be consistently downward for the nation's high school graduates and high school dropouts.

Of all the reasons given for the wage squeeze international competition, technology, deregulation, the decline of unions and defense cuts technology is probably the most critical. It has favored the educated and the skilled, says M. B. Zuckerman, editor-in-chief of U.

S. News & World Report (7/31/95). Since 1973, wages adjusted for inflation have declined by about a quarter for high school dropouts, by a sixth for high school graduates, and by about 7% for those with some college education. Only the wages of college graduates are up. Of the fastest growing technical jobs, software engineering tops the list. Carnegie Mellon University reports, recruitment of its software engineering students is up this year by over 20%. All engineering jobs are paying well, proving that highly skilled labor is what employers want! There is clear evidence that the supply of workers in the unskilled labor categories already exceeds the demand for their services, says L. Mishel, Research Director of Welfare Reform Network.

In view of these facts, I wonder if these trends are good or bad for society. The danger of the information age is that while in the short run it may be cheaper to replace workers with technology, in the long run it is potentially self-destructive because there will not be enough purchasing power to grow the economy, M. B. Zuckerman. My feeling is that the trend from unskilled labor to highly technical, skilled labor is a good one! Nevertheless, political action must be taken to ensure that this societal evolution is beneficial to all

of us. Back in 1970, a high school diploma could still be a ticket to the middle-income bracket, a nice car in the driveway and a house in the suburbs. Today all it gets is a clunker parked on the street, and a dingy apartment in a low rent building, says Time Magazine (Jan 30, 1995 issue).

However, in 1970, our government provided our children with a free education, allowing the vast majority of our population to earn a high school diploma. This means that anyone, regardless of family income, could be educated to a level that would allow him or her a comfortable place in the middle class. Even restrictions upon child labor hours kept children in school, since they are not allowed to work full time while under the age of 18. This government policy was conducive to our economic markets, and allowed our country to prosper from 1950 through 1970. Now, our own prosperity has moved us into a highly technical world, which requires highly skilled labor.

The natural answer to this problem is that the U. S. Government's education policy must keep pace with the demands of the highly technical job market. If a middle class income of 1970 required a high school diploma, and the middle class income of 1990 requires a college diploma, then it should be as easy for the children of the 90's to get a college diploma, as it was for the children of the 70's to get a high school diploma. This brings me to the issue of our country's political process, in a technologically advanced world. Voting & Poisoned Political Process in The U. S. The advance of mass communication is natural in a technologically advanced society.

In our country's short history, we have seen the development of the printing press, the radio, the television, and now the Internet; all of these, able to

reach millions of people. Equally natural, is the poisoning and corruption of these medias, to benefit a few. From the 1950's until today, television has been the preferred media. Because it captures the minds of most Americans, it is the preferred method of persuasion by political figures, multinational corporate advertising, and the upper 2% of the elite, who have an interest in controlling public opinion. Newspapers and radio experienced this same history, but are now somewhat obsolete in the science of changing public opinion. Though I do not suspect television to become completely obsolete within the next 20 years, I do