

# [In work ethic doesn’t mean anything in today’s](https://assignbuster.com/in-work-ethic-doesnt-mean-anything-in-todays/)

In “ Fuck Work” economic historian, andprofessor of history James Livingston argues that Americans must transitionaway from the idea, that having a job is the only way an individual can buildcharacter and a sense of self-worth. Livingston claims most Americans definethemselves through their work ethic, however, this work ethic doesn’t mean anythingin today’s workforce.

Many jobs simply don’t pay enough to provide workers witha living wage. Most full-time workers qualify for food stamps because they donot earn enough to survive. American’s belief in hard work is based on the assumptionthat a fair reward will be earned for hard work. While most full-time workersare barely able to afford to live, others earn ridiculous amounts of money. Simplyput, there just aren’t enough jobs for everyone, and those that are available justdon’t pay enough. Livingstonsays, “ These beliefs are no longerplausible.

In fact, they’ve become ridiculous, because there’s not enough workto go around, and what there is of it won’t pay the bills.” There have been 0 net jobshave been created in recent years. Also, per one estimate, up to half of Americanscurrent jobs might disappear due to robots within 20 years. The idea that governmentpolicies can restore the country to full employment is unnecessary. This can bea chance to reflect on the current predicament. Why have a job that doesn’tprovide for your basic needs? Livingston believes American’s must look beyond jobs for other ways to build character, income, and self-worth.

Livingstonwrote this essay, targeting readers who are unemployed and looking for work, and those who work a full-time job that just does not pay enough. One couldalso argue that his target audience is all Americans. The essay was publishedby Aeon Digital Magazine, a publisher of articles involving ideas, philosophy, and culture.

It makes sense that this article would be published here becauseof the target audience. The purpose of Livingston’s essay is to address a feweconomic issues, the outlook of America’s workforce, and a possible solution. He examines a workforce that is tired of unemployment, underemployment, stagnantand shrinking wages; a workforce who resents the rich whom they work for; and apolarized political climate. Livingston wants Americans to know that the futureworkforce does not look good. If the current situation does not change thateventually the system will fail. He also wants to persuade Americans to believein a possible solution. That solution being a universal basic income paid forby taxing corporations.

Livingston argues that, “ Taxing the profits of corporationsto finance a welfare state that permits us to love our neighbors and to be ourbrothers’ keeper isn’t an economic problem. It’s something else – it’s anintellectual issue, a moral conundrum.” Livingston wants Americans to imagine alife without work because he believes it is inevitable. Livingstondoes a good job persuading the reader that Americans need to change the waythey view jobs. He presents compelling market and economic statistics, andhyperlinks to outside sources that support his arguments to persuade thereader. He also does a good job presenting the reader with, what he believes tobe, the solution to the problem.

Livingston attempts to persuade the readerthat we need to move to a universal basic income system. He tried to persuadethe reader by asking, “ What would society andcivilization be like if we didn’t have to ‘ earn’ a living—if leisure was notour choice but our lot? Would we hang out at the local Starbucks, laptops open? Or volunteer to teach children in less-developed places, such as Mississippi? Or smoke weed and watch reality TV all day?” Many aspects of Livingston’sessay are agreeable and very persuasive, such as Americans workforce problems, workforce resentment, and political polarization; however, the idea of auniversal basic income is not. Universal basic income will never work because Americanswill never support it.

As long as Americans believe their hard-earned taxdollars would be going to support someone sitting around on their couch all daywatching television, they will never get behind it. After all, why should someoneelse have to work hard at a low paying job only to have their paycheck taxed tohelp pay for someone who does not work. Now, if universal basic income was supportedwith funds from the governments sale of goods and resources, then and only thenwould there possibly be enough support for the idea of a universal basicincome. Livingston assumes that the government has the ability and means tosupport a universal basic income. The government has shut down numerous timesbecause congress cannot agree on a budget.

If the government can’t agree on a budgethow will they ever agree on passing a budget that would include something likeuniversal basic income?