

Mia Huo

mjh4928

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Town Hall Brief on the Ethical Dimensions of Wealth Inequality

The upcoming town hall is a great opportunity for our office to get out there and show voters why they chose you. We first need to address the recent events in Louisiana and address space travel in general, giving you the opportunity to shape the conversation around this issue. However, it also allows for us to tie it back to the bigger picture of wealth inequality. If we do a good job at this town hall, we can reach the everyday American who is tired of the dissipating middle class and billionaire takeover going on in this country. We will help constituents realize that the conversation should not be solely about the space travel industry, but wealth inequality in general. If we do this, and offer practical solutions, we can set the tone for your time in office, give constituents someone to rally behind, and offer hope for positive change in America.

Before we talk about any policy issues, we should start by addressing the recent events in Louisiana. It is extremely important that we sympathize with the people affected and the families and friends who lost loved ones that day. Then we can start to lay out our position on the issue at hand. The space travel industry has become a way for the rich to flaunt their wealth and exhibit their cultural and economic power over the rest of the country. While some legislators have suggested that we ban the industry altogether, we will explain to constituents that we do not believe in that. Banning the industry in the country would push the manufacturing of rockets, launch site locations, and all other parts of the industry overseas. We must make it clear that it's not the billionaires who would travel out of the country that we're worried about. We care about the everyday people that would be affected by moving the industry out of the country. First, if we

ship these problems to another country we will see these space travel companies take advantage of workers in countries without the same worker protections that we have here. We have countless examples of this, with one of the best examples being Nike taking their shoe manufacturing to countries like China and Vietnam where there is no federal minimum wage and less protections for minors in the workplace. Not only this, but if we ban the industry we would also be taking away hundreds of good manufacturing jobs, hospitality jobs, and countless other jobs from workers here in America. So while we are not concerned about the billionaires' space travels, we do care about the people who are not billionaires who make an honest living working in this industry.

Now that we have established our position on the space travel industry we can begin to build our argument on wealth inequality in this country. It is important to keep intact the free market principles that give so many people the chance to lift themselves out of poverty. We must also be honest with ourselves and address the flawed system which allows billionaires to fly back and forth from space while millions of people starve all over the country. Understanding that the space travel industry is just one small piece of the problem is a good first step in seeing the bigger picture. Income inequality has been an issue for decades as huge corporations have led to the rise of billionaires, and has led to the collapse of the American middle class. Looking at the situation as a whole we see corporations like Amazon taking over multiple markets killing small businesses, offshoring labor to lower costs, and mistreating employees. But when we try to solve the problem we run into many of the same problems. Corporations like Amazon and Walmart employ thousands of people, and to simply try to put an end to these businesses we risk putting so many out of work. On top of that, by eliminating big business the cost of living might go up for a short period of time which would have a negative impact on working class consumers.

Higher cost of living would happen because small businesses cannot invest millions of dollars on infrastructure and offshoring jobs to sell products at a lower price like big corporations can.

However, many predict that over time small businesses, with good policy from the government, would be able to make up for price discrepancies. This is the ethical dilemma we face when it comes to dealing with big corporations.

While billionaires and huge corporations play a giant role in wealth inequality, it is not the only factor. Historic institutional racism is also a major cause of the issues we see today. To get this point across it is important to focus on generational wealth. The wealth gap between white people and people of color has been built up over many centuries as a result of policies that disproportionately hurt minorities. While we have made great strides as a nation against racial injustice it is necessary to remember the fact that black people were first brought to this country against their will, enslaved. After the civil war slavery was technically abolished, but unpaid prison labor was still allowed. This unfortunate reality led to the mass incarceration of minorities in order to continue exploiting them for cheap labor. In addition to all this, we saw segregation into the late 1900's which often put minority students at a disadvantage when it came to the quality of education. Redlining also played a massive role in hindering people of colors' economic growth, specifically black people. The areas white people and black people were able to live in were segregated. The homes in the white neighborhoods were placed at a higher value than those in the black neighborhoods simply because they were owned by white people. In addition, while it might not have been at the same scale, women have also been disadvantaged throughout American history. While we cannot go into detail on every policy that has led to where we are now, it is important to acknowledge that all levels of government have been mainly controlled by white males since the founding of this country. On the other hand, it would be an

overgeneralization to say all white people have an advantage over minorities simply based on race. Knowing this, we are faced with yet another ethical dilemma. How do we find a way to redistribute wealth without making overgeneralizations about which populations need the help? We need to establish equity in a way that doesn't negatively affect people who are disadvantaged for reasons other than race or gender.

Finally, we are left with what your constituents came to hear, and that is how to address the problems we just presented to them. The first step is to realign our tax laws with reality. We must make sure that all people and corporations pay their fair share, while also making sure that our laws stay business friendly so jobs are not outsourced and small businesses can thrive. We do this in a few different ways. First, we need to increase worker protections by doing things such as establish a higher minimum wage, making sure all employees have the ability to unionize, and protecting paid time off. To avoid hurting businesses of all sizes it is important that we also implement pro business policies. We need to create a small business tax break to allow small businesses to compete with big corporations. Secondly, we need to create programs that reward businesses that practice the pro-worker policies we mentioned earlier. These policies incentivize businesses to treat employees well, while also making sure small businesses are protected, and at the same time doing enough to keep big corporations from offshoring their business.

Incentivizing business to treat workers well and making sure small businesses are protected are not the only possible solutions. As we said earlier, there are communities in our country that have been historically disadvantaged. Knowing this, it would be impossible to address wealth inequality without proposing changes regarding social inequality. One of the greatest tools we have against wealth inequality is education. It is known now that at this day and age that good education and college are disproportionately available to wealthy, white families. We need to

change that by re-allocating some military funding to fully pay for pre-school and university under the poverty line. In addition, we will provide much more significant financial aid to students outside of the elite. On top of all of this, for those that are not interested in a college education, we will offer paid trade school for individuals of lower socioeconomic status. Making education affordable and accessible to all puts everyone on a level playing field, and the more people getting an education the more we will see our middle class being revived.

Therefore, to solve wealth inequality we must boost small businesses to allow everyone to reap the benefits of what the American economy can be, not just the top one-percent. Creating a more friendly environment for small businesses helps re-allocate wealth, but also increases competition which will help lower the cost of living. All while wages are going up. On top of that we need to make sure that the wealth gap across races is addressed as well. Our solution is addressing equity in education, by making education accessible we provide the chance for everyone to get a good paying job in the field of their choice so nobody has to settle for a job that does not get the bills paid. Our solutions offer up the chance for an America where everyone has a fair shot, a society that incentivizes hard work, but also provides safety nets for those who need it. This is the way we take our country back, not by attacking the big corporations, but by addressing the social and economic issues that have plagued our nation since its founding.