CSCI-471 Professional Communications

Artificial Intelligence and the Unemployment Crisis

It is the year 2081. Unemployment is at 85% of the population, an all-time high. Due to recent advances in robotics, artificial intelligence, and machine learning, most routine jobs and also many non-routine, creative jobs have been eliminated from the economy. People, who several decades ago would have been employed in retail sales, warehouse stocking, computer programming, engineering, teaching, law, accounting, and most other white-collar or labor-intensive jobs are unable to find employment due to those jobs having been fully automated. In addition, military and police units now consist mostly of un-manned drone forces.

Of the 15% of the population who are employed, 2% work as moderate-wage politicians, physicians, and entertainers, and 0.5% work as high-wage financial experts and CEOs of multi-national corporations. The remaining 12.5% work as low-wage robot technicians, social workers, healthcare providers, and general-purpose care-givers who beautify the homes, provide companionship for, and tend the children of the high-wage earners. There is very little need for workers in any other sector of the economy due to automation.

Taxes (5% of total assets) are paid only by the high-wage earners for the purpose of running the government and for municipal services such as maintaining roads, hospitals, and public parks. Education, health care, social services, utilities, and all other public services are provided for free to the public via charitable foundations established and administered by the high-wage earners, who also determine the conditions and policies under which their foundations will distribute funds.

Pro Group: You are a member of the unemployed or the low-wage earner group, petitioning Congress to pass a law that would increase the taxes paid by the high-wage earners to 10% of total assets so that more goods and services can be provided for your community. You feel that what is currently provided is inadequate to maintain a reasonable standard of living.

Con Group: You are a lawyer representing a group of high-wage earners who are opposed to any higher taxes on the basis that your group already pays all the taxes and has shown a high commitment to charitable giving that benefits the less fortunate. You feel that the current situation of taxes and charity is more than adequate to maintain a reasonable standard of living for all.

Jury: You are member of Congress. You are voting to determine whether or not to raise taxes on the high-wage group to 10% of total assets.