

# Why We Should Be Seething with Anger over Inequality

[Paul Buchheit](#) | [Commondreams](#)



“If we were given proper media coverage of the endless takeaway of our country’s wealth by the super-rich, we would be infuriated,” the author writes. (Photo: Len Tsou/UNARMED CIVILIAN/flickr/cc)

It was recently reported that Americans greatly [underestimate](#) the degree of inequality in our country. If we were given proper media coverage of the endless takeaway of our country’s wealth by the super-rich, we would be infuriated. And we would be taking it personally.

Each of [nine individuals](#) (Gates, Buffett, 2 Kochs, 4 Waltons, Zuckerberg) made, on average, so much from his/her investments since January, 2013 that a median American worker would [need](#) a quarter of a million years to catch up. For the most part it was passive income, new wealth derived from the continuing productivity of America’s workers.

Why We Should Take It Personally

First, because our productivity is rewarding a relatively few people. In addition, many of the top money-makers are damaging other American lives. The top nine include [four people](#) (Waltons) who pay their employees so little that we taxpayers have to pay almost \$6,000 a year to support each one of the employees. And it includes [two people](#) (Kochs) who have polluted our air and water to enrich themselves while quietly [funding](#) organizations that threaten to dismantle what's left of our democracy.

Another personal issue: While the [Forbes 400](#) made almost enough in one year to fund the entire [safety net](#), they don't even have to pay taxes on their half-trillion dollars of investment gain until they cash in, which may be never.

On Average, Most of Us Got ONE DOLLAR for Every BILLION DOLLARS of New Wealth

A look at the numbers compiled by [Us Against Greed](#) shows how personal it really is. Out of that \$5,350,000,000,000 (\$5.35 trillion) made since the start of 2013, the bottom 80 percent of America took an average of less than \$5,000 each. The richest 6 to 20 percent fared better, taking an average of about \$65,000.

Now it begins to heat up. From that \$5.35 trillion, the richest 2 to 5 percent took an average of about \$343,000. The one-percenters need to be split up into the rich, the super-rich, and the filthy-rich:

--The more common members of the one-percent (1,068,000 families) made over \$1,000,000 each (\$1,068 billion total)

--The .1 percent (108,000 families) made about \$4 million each (\$480 billion total)

--The .01 percent made about \$40 million each (\$480 billion total)

The unimaginably rich Forbes 400 each took, on average, almost \$1,500,000,000 (\$1.5 billion) since January, 2013.

That brings us to the Final 9 (Gates, Buffett, 2 Kochs, 4 Waltons, Zuckerberg). Each of them [has accumulated](#), on average, over \$13,000,000,000 (\$13 billion) since January 2013.

### Getting Billions for Working Less

A big reason to get angry: Our country's wealth grew from [\\$64 trillion](#) to [\\$80 trillion](#) (a 25 percent increase!) in two years, reflecting the unprecedented surge in America's productivity and wealth over the past few years. But there was little if any new innovation or job creation by these big takers over the past two years. The simple fact that they were already incomprehensibly rich allowed them to sit back and collect more and more and more.

### Mainstream Media: Incompetent or In Bed with Business

And thus a final reason to be incensed about inequality: The fact that the regular media doesn't properly inform the public about all this. That should be their job, to report on issues that have a great impact on our lives, instead of hushing up the perversity of redistributed national wealth. But apparently it's good business for the super-rich media owners to keep their viewers harmlessly underestimating the truth.

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