# Affirmative Case

#### Ladies and Gentlement,

#### We affirm, Resolved: A just government ought to provide a universal basic income to its citizens.

### Our Case Study is Automation

#### Dr. ‘Blumenthal explains in 2018 that unemployment has been increasing over the past couple of decades. Data from the ILO estimates that in 2016 there were about 71 million workers who faced long-term unemployment. Compounding the problem, Paul Davidson reports in 2017 that due to automation, millions of workers could lose their jobs. In the US alone, automation could destroy 73 million jobs by 2030. Globally, he furthers, up to 800 million workers will lose their jobs and as many as 375 million may need to learn new skills for new occupational categories. Fortunately, a Universal Basic Income could help solve this problem in three ways.

#### First, ensuring income. Davidson goes on to conclude with the rise of automation and the displacement of millions of jobs,] it becomes the burden of governments to provide income support to help workers whose jobs have been outsourced due to technology. For that reason, Timothy Carter writes in 2014 that there is a basic human rights case for a basic income. Poverty is not a natural tragedy like cancer or earthquakes. Poverty is a human caused tragedy like slavery or government oppression. These types of tragedies can be ended by recognizing that humans have the right not to be subjected to tortuous conditions imposed by other humans. In that way, a universal basic income is not a strategy for dealing with poverty; it is the elimination of poverty.

#### Second, encouraging job flexibility. The Economics Network at the University of Bristol writes that a UBI could be seen as encouraging more employment as people no longer have to work jobs that they feel forced to accept/ to pay the bills. Knowing they have an income to fall back on, more time will be spent searching for meaningful jobs that align with people’s values and ideals. Thus, entrepreneurship is encouraged as those wanting to start their own business previously/ unable to finance this option/ will, through UBI, have the financial means to start their own business. Em’pirically, Whitney Mallet finds in his 2015 found that the primary breadwinner in the families who received stipends were in fact not less motivated to work than before, leading him to conclude that a Universal Basic Income does not decrease incentive to work. This has macroeconomic implications as well. Scott Santens writes in 2017 that a basic income improves the market for labor by making it optional. This transformation from a co’ercive to free market means a more productive work force thanks to more individual li’quidity and the elimination of counter-productive bu’reaucracy and conditions.

#### Third, increasing bargaining power.

#### Peter Bo(h)mer writes in 2017 that wages are largely determined by the bargaining power of workers to improve their wages. Let’s say you’re facing a minimum wage job where you’re really treated badly. With a Universal Basic Income you wouldn’t have to take the first job you are offered. You could say you’ll only work if working conditions improve or if I get offered a better wage. Thus, in many ways a Universal Basic Income has a spillover effect in which it could increase not only people’s wages, but working conditions as well. For these reasons and many more, my partner and I strongly encourage an affirmative ballot.

#### Whitney Mallett in 2015

Mallett 2/4/15 (WHITNEY MALLETT – Whitney is a writer and video producer, especially interested in how technology intersects with art, privacy, and criminal justice. – Whitney is a writer and video producer, especially interested in how technology intersects with art, privacy, and criminal justice. – “The Town Where Everyone Got Free Money” – Motherboard – February 2, 2015 – http://motherboard.vice.com/read/the-mincome-experiment-dauphin)

Critics of basic income guarantees have insisted that giving the poor money would disincentivize them to work, and point to studies that show [​a drop in peoples' willingness to work under pilot programs](http://www.bostonfed.org/economic/conf/conf30/conf30b.pdf). But in Dauphin—thought to be the largest such experiment conducted in North America—the experimenters found that the primary breadwinner in the families who received stipends were in fact not less motivated to work than before. Though there was some reduction in work effort from mothers of young children and teenagers still in high school—mothers wanted to stay at home longer with their newborns and teenagers weren’t under as much pressure to support their families—the reduction was not anywhere close to disastrous, as skeptics had predicted.

# Evidence

#### Dr. Blumenthal 2018

Dr Ivor Blumenthal | CEO | ArkKonsult, June 2018, **:** Is South Africa headed down a road of jobless growth where a capital-intensive economy is incompatible with a labour-intensive need?

According to an International Labour Organisation (ILO) report reviewed in Forbes Magazine, 11 August 2017, **there are about 71 million unemployed 15 to 24-year-olds around the globe, many of them facing long-term unemployment. This is close to a historic peak of 13%.** It is a problem which primarily hits low-income countries especially hard. Even where there is work, much of it is low-paying. **The ILO estimates that about 156 million (or 38%) employed youth in emerging and developing countries were living in extreme or moderate poverty in 2016 - equivalent to less than $3.10 per day.**

#### Paul Davidson

Paul Davidson,, 11-28-2017, "Automation could kill 73 million U.S. jobs by 2030," USA TODAY, https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2017/11/29/automation-could-kill-73-million-u-s-jobs-2030/899878001/

Automation could destroy as many as 73 million U.S. jobs by 2030, but economic growth, rising productivity and other forces could more than offset the losses, according to a new report by McKinsey Global Institute. “The dire predictions that robots are going to take our jobs are overstated,” says Susan Lund, the group’s director of research and co-author of the study. “There will be enough jobs for everyone in most sectors.” Yet maintaining full employment will require a huge overhaul of the economy and labor market that rivals or exceeds the nation’s massive shifts from agriculture- and manufacturing-dominated societies over the past 165 years, the report says. “I think it’s going to be a difficult transition,” Lund says. More: Special report: Automation puts jobs in peril More: Robots stealing human jobs isn't the problem. This is. More: Could robots replace pastors? This one just gives blessings Machines and artificial intelligence are already spreading rapidly with the advent of with self-driving cars, software that can respond to customer service inquiries and robots that can man assembly lines, flip hamburgers and check store inventory. In a study early this year, McKinsey found that about half of all work activities globally have the technological potential to be automated, but the new report provides a more realistic assessment based on economic, social and technical factors. It concludes that from zero to a third of work activities could be displaced by 2030. In the U.S., 39 million to 73 million jobs could be destroyed, but about 20 million of those displaced workers can be shifted fairly easily into similar occupations, though they may take on slightly different tasks, the report says. That means 16 million to 54 million workers — or as much as a third of the U.S. workforce — will need to be retrained for entirely new occupations. Globally, up to 800 million workers could be displaced and as many as 375 million may need to learn new skills for new occupational categories. Advanced economies such as the U.S. that have higher wages are more vulnerable to the adoption of labor-saving technology. The employment growth needed to replace the jobs eradicated will come in part from automation itself — the new workers needed to operate the machines, as well as the increased productivity and economic growth that automation will generate through bigger company profits and higher wages. Also, however, jobs will be created from rising incomes and consumption, an aging population that will demand more health care professionals and investment in infrastructure and renewable energy, the study says. Jobs most susceptible to automation are physical ones in predictable environments. Those include workers who operate machinery, prepare fast food, collect and process data, originate mortgages and do paralegal and accounting work. Jobs safest from the effects of automation involve managing people, high-level expertise and unpredictable environments. They include engineers, scientists, health care providers, educators and IT professionals, as well as gardeners, plumbers and elder care providers. As a result, high-wage workers are expected to be less affected by the sweeping changes because they have skills that machines can’t replace. Low-wage jobs also could grow rapidly, partly because they cost employers less and so are often not worth supplanting with technology, while many are in health care, such as home health aides. That means middle-wage jobs will continue to decline, widening the divide between wealthy and low-income households, the report says. The biggest challenge, Lund says, will be retraining millions of workers midcareer. Governments and businesses already have fallen short in the retraining of workers who lost jobs in the recession of 2007 to 2009. “The big question isn’t, 'Will there be jobs?' ” Lund says. “The big question is, 'Will people who lost jobs be able to get new ones?' ” According to the report, “there are few precedents in which societies have successfully retrained such large numbers of people.” Governments will also need to provide income support and other assistance to help workers transition to new occupations and increase investments in infrastructure and energy to boost economic growth, the study says.

#### Timothy Carter

Timothy Roscoe Carter 2014 (Basic Income Earth Network, “The One Minute Case for a Basic Income”, http://basicincome.org/bien/pdf/montreal2014/BIEN2014\_Carter.pdf)

The one minute human rights case for a basic income: Poverty is not a natural tragedy like cancer or earthquakes. Poverty is a human caused tragedy like slavery or government oppression. Slavery is caused by societal recognition of humans as property. Government oppression is caused by governments punishing people for their beliefs or characteristics, and without due process of law. Poverty is caused by property laws that deny some people access to necessities. These types of tragedies can be ended by recognizing that humans have the right not to be subjected to tortuous conditions imposed by other humans. Humans have a right not to live in slavery. Humans have a right to be free of government oppression. And humans have a right not to live in poverty. A basic income is not a strategy for dealing with poverty; it it the elimination of poverty. The campaign for a basic income is a campaign for the abolition of poverty. It is the abolitionist movement of the 21st century.

#### Economics Network at the University of Bristol

Economics Network at the University of Bristol (“Universal Basic Income: debunking the scaremongering”, http://www.studyingeconomics.ac.uk/universal-basic-income-debunking-the-scaremongering/)

Furthermore, UBI could be seen as encouraging employment as people would no longer have to work jobs that they feel forced to accept in order to pay the bills. Knowing that they have an income to fall back on, more time will be spent searching for meaningful jobs that align with people’s values and ideals. Entrepreneurship is encouraged as those wanting to start their own business rely on personal savings to do so as unemployment benefits are not given to those seeking to start a business. Those previously unable to finance this option will, through UBI, have the financial means to start their own businesses which would otherwise not be possible. For example, there exists a minimum bar to entry relating to business start-ups. If an individual has only a small amount of capital, it makes entrepreneurship near impossible, yet UBI, in offering a constant form of income, negates this. UBI also encourages employment in so far as it adds to an individual’s sense of stability, and making things such as childcare and transport more accessible (Harris, 2016). UBI is thus more likely to incentivize employment than to dis-incentivize it.

#### Scott Santens in 2017

Scott Santens 3/21/2017 (“This is Why Experts Think All People Should Have a Universal Basic Income”, <https://futurism.com/why-experts-think-all-people-should-have-universal-basic-income/)>

Simply put, a basic income improves the market for labor by making it optional. The transformation from a coercive market to a free market means that employers must attract employees with better pay and more flexible hours. It also means a more productive work force that potentially obviates the need for market-distorting minimum wage laws. Friction might even be reduced, so that people can move more easily from job to job, or from job to education/retraining to job, or even from job to entrepreneur, all thanks to more individual liquidity and the elimination of counter-productive bureaucracy and conditions. Perhaps best of all, the automation of low-demand jobs becomes further incentivized through the rising of wages. The work that people refuse to do for less than a machine would cost to do it becomes a job for machines. And thanks to those replaced workers having a basic income, they aren’t just left standing in the cold in the job market’s ongoing game of musical chairs. They are instead better enabled to find new work, paid or unpaid, full-time or part-time, that works best for them. [[1]](#footnote-1)

#### Peter Bohmer in 2017

Bohmer 17, Peter. [Peter Bohmer is a faculty member in Political Economy at the Ever-green State College in Olympia, WA. He has been an activist since 1967 in movements for fundamental social change.] 11-23-2017, ”The Human Right to Not Be Poor: A Proposal for a Radical, Not a Neoliberal Universal Basic Income,” counterpunch.org, https://www.counterpunch.org/2017/12/01/the-human-right-to-not-be-poor-a-proposal-for-a-radical-not-a-neoliberal-universal-basic-income/, accessed 2-11-2018

In the United States, wages are largely determined by the bargaining power of workers to improve their wages. Right now the bargaining power has been decreasing with the decline of unions, firms threatening to move offshore, and technical change, and this program while being insufficient would increase the bargaining power of workers because they would have the UBI as a minimum. Let’s say you’re facing a minimum wage job where you’re really treated badly, you would have this UBI as a fall back income. You wouldn’t have to take the first job you are offered. You could say you’ll only work if working conditions improve or if I get offered a better wage; so it would improve the bargaining power of workers. We need stronger labor union laws to make it easier to organize but this is one part of a strategy of improving the dignity of work and people’s wages and working conditions.

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)