Four Facts about US Inequality

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Four Facts

- The rich have gotten richer
- Inequality increased greatly among workers
- College graduates increased their earnings advantage over HS educated workers
- Poverty has not increased with rising inequality
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Income Inequality, 1917–2010

Income Share Top 10%
Union Density and Income Inequality, 1917–2010
Wage and Income Inequality, 1973 to 2006

Variance of Log Income or Wage

- Men's wages
Wage and Income Inequality, 1973 to 2006

Variance of Log Income or Wage

Incomes of families

Men's wages
Wage and Income Inequality, 1973 to 2006

Variance of Log Income or Wage

- Incomes of families w. children
- Incomes of families
- Men's wages

100 120 140 160

- BA v. HS
- Higher degree v. HS

Higher Education Premium (%)

- 1960
- 1970
- 1980
- 1990
- 2000
- 2010

0 20 40 60 80 100 120

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Higher Education Premium (%)
Four Facts (Amended)

- The rich have gotten richer (and this is associated with a shift in power in American society)
- Inequality increased greatly among workers (and has increased even more across families)
- College graduates increased their earnings advantage over HS educated workers (but professionals with higher degrees are in a class of their own)
- Poverty has not increased with rising inequality (but extreme poverty increased among children even as the economy has doubled in size)
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Increased economic inequality is closely connected to inequalities of family life, political power, and over the life course.

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The increase in severe poverty among children in an era of abundance presents a moral challenge: should we be more action-oriented?
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