Every person should be required to contribute something to broader society
Stance: Disagree

In the Western, capitalist context that we are currently living in, and for this essay, what
counts as a “contribution” to broader society is defined as an action done by a person which can
be quantified in the form of monetary value. This is problematic for three main reasons: 1) there
are many people with various physical and disabilities who are unable to contribute, 2) it is
unreasonable to demand that someone contribute to a society which they did not ask to be born
into, 3) traditional human ways of contributing are being replaced by technology every day, so
our standards need to change. Based on that definition, and expanding on these three arguments,
I argue that not every person should be required to contribute something to broader society.

First, many people are incapable of contributing in a quantifiable way because of their
physical or mental disabilities. For example, a national survey of Canadian citizens in 2011
revealed that 11% of the population reported daily limitations because of their disability (mental,
physical, or both, as defined in the paper), with the unemployment rate being 74% for those with
a very severe disability (Turcotte, 2014). Making it a requirement for those incapable of
working, and forcing employers to hire those with less severe disabilities would simply be
unrealistic and possibly unethical.

Second, no person asked to be born in the first place, let alone in a society which would
require them to contribute in the specific way they deemed valuable. For example, it would be
analogous to gifting someone a toy and demanding they perform certain actions if they want to
keep it, but not letting them return the toy because they should be grateful to have it, even though
nobody asked them if they wanted a toy in the first place.

Third, it is becoming increasingly more prevalent for jobs to be replaced by computers
and emerging technology. An estimation suggests that 47% of current jobs in the US could be
replaced by the next decade (Benedikt Frey & Osbourne A, 2013). A contribution to society
today might be possible in the form of flipping burgers, but a company has already come out
with a multi-tasking 10-second-burger-making bot which can replace an entire fast food joint
(McNeal, 2015). We ought to be open to the idea that the way we currently think of contributions
to broader society will be replaced, just as the way we contribute to society is changing.

References
