

- 1) If I was running for President of the United States of America I would treat income inequality as a significant problem that needs to be addressed. In the United States in 2012, 46 million people of the 313 million were under the poverty line (Samuelson, 2014). That is approximately 15% of the nation. In my opinion, that is a significant problem that needs to be assessed. The gap between the rich and poor has been steadily growing in the last few years. If nothing is done to stop this growth the economic gap could become too large and there would be not much left we could do about it. Essentially, the middle class is disappearing.

Income inequality is affecting people in many different ways. First, the life span for the rich is five years longer than the life span for the poor. Also, Americans education is affected by their family's income. In a recent study 55% of the rich attended a four year college, whereas only 8% of the poor received a four year college education (Hargreaves, 2013). There are many ways to go about solving this problem, one solution I think might work would be raising minimum wage and letting the money get back into the economy. Through CNN, Steve Hargreaves expressed that some solutions to this problem could be, "strengthening unions, taxing the rich, and more training for specialized jobs." Income inequality is affecting many parts of the American society, and it needs to be addressed and fixed now.

- 2) I believe that there is an opportunity gap in education in not only America, but in Henrico County as well. People living just miles apart from each other are given different opportunities throughout their schooling experience. A lot of this inequality is caused by the income of a family, and where the family lives. If a family cannot send their children to college they are at a severe disadvantage later in life. In fact, in a recent study done by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, workers with a bachelor's degree earn double that of a worker with a just a high school diploma (Porter, 2013).

Even in Henrico County there is an opportunity gap for people living in different parts of the county. The teacher's salary at a school can help to determine the amount of money and funding a particular school has. The money and funding affects the facilities, supplies, and even partially the quality of the teachers a school may have. In Henrico County a teacher's salary can be \$8,000 different, per year, than another teacher teaching just miles away. This is almost a 5% difference in salary. Most of the schools with lower teacher salaries are in the east end, and most of the schools that are on the higher end are in the west end, says a study done by James Bacon (Bacon, 2013). This shows that although we are living just miles apart our education is dramatically different.

- 3) I believe those considered have-nots have a responsibility for addressing their own employment, financial, and educational status. Although they may need some help getting started, those considered have-nots are humans too and still have a responsibility to take care of themselves. Someone considered a have-not or having a disability can range from people with serious heart diseases to people with minor back pains. In fact, the Social Security Administration did a little research on this topic in 2011 showing that

more people are under the title of disabled for back pain or other spinal issues (34%) than any other problem (Joffe-Walt, 2011). Though back pain can prevent people from doing some jobs, there are many jobs out there that require no back stress at all. Also, getting an education can be done with minor back pain. On the other hand, I can see someone with a major heart problem or mental illness having a problem getting a good education and finding a job.

There are also some social and financial problems a person with a disability might have. For example, someone with a physical problem might look a little different. Socially, in a public school system he or she might have trouble meeting new people and making friends. Also, having a disability can cost a lot of money and cause a family to lose a substantial amount of money trying to pay for it. This can prevent some people with disabilities to attend school and get a good education. Although there are many people with disabilities who are not in the workforce, a study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics released a statement saying that 17.8% of disabled people above the age of 16 are in the workforce. Therefore, have-nots do have responsibility to address their employment, financial, and educational status.

- 4) Many of the haves vs. have-nots problems in ancient Rome are also reflected in modern American society. These problems include income inequality, opportunity gap in education, and responsibility of the disabled to take care of themselves. On top of that, there is also unemployment and inflation. All these problems are related and are actually caused from one another.

Unemployment has been a problem throughout history and will probably always be a problem. In ancient Rome around the year 300 A.D. the unemployment rate was approximately 5%, whereas in the United States today the unemployment rate is 7%. This have vs. have-nots issue is related to education as well. In fact in an article by Susan Adams she states, "It turns out cities with greater shortcomings in education also have greater unemployment." This just goes to show how these problems create a domino effect (Adams, 2012).

Also, there is inflation which can be caused by a number of things. During the fall of ancient Rome the inflation was so bad that they stopped even using a coinage system. This began to happen when Rome stopped taking over other places and the gold in circulation went down. In response to that the merchants raised the prices on goods making it almost impossible for people to buy anything. For a little while at the end of the empire they had to go back to the barter system. In America inflation is going down, but in the past couple years it has been at an all-time high. Inflation can be caused by too much money being in circulation, or by prices on items going up too high. Inflation and unemployment are actually inversely related. As Dr. Madsen Pirie stated, "Put simply, the higher the rate of inflation, the lower the rate of unemployment." Though these problems are inversely related, they are very big problems that need to be solved (Pirie, 2010).

Although there were many problems in ancient Rome and today there will always be the "haves" of the situation who will have jobs or who will have enough money. In my opinion they have a responsibility to try their best to help the others or "have-nots" in their society succeed as well.

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