

In modern society, a common issue is the difference in pay among citizens, which is more commonly referred to as income inequality. Many politicians debate that income inequality is part of a functioning capitalist society, rather than a problem that needs to be addressed. I believe that income inequality is an issue that needs to be addressed. Due to the recession that occurred five years ago, the gap between the wealthy and poor has been the widest since 1967. High income inequality is usually associated with financial crashes, such as the 1929 stock market crash and the recession. Income inequality can either influence someone to do better or participate in crime, poverty and "social exclusion". In the United States, social mobility has been stalled due to the gap between the families with higher incomes and those with lower incomes. Families with lower incomes don't have enough money to send their children to college which leads to lack of higher education. To acquire a well-paying job, higher education is necessary; therefore, the poor have lesser opportunity to excel. The poor are unable to rise up which leads to high dropout rates. Also, since "low-skill" jobs are disappearing, those without higher education will soon be unemployed. Due to lack of social mobility, the wealthy stay rich, and the poor stay deprived. Recent data shows that the poor are more likely to participate in criminal activities, due to lack of resources and need for money.

Education was known to be an "equalizer" among many people in the United States. From when we grew up, it was taught that if you worked and studied hard, you would succeed. Though, in recent times, education may have opportunity gaps as well. Massachusetts is one of the states that have the best public school education in the country. Though, two students from different financial backgrounds had different experiences when considering their education. Curtis, the student from a low income family, could not attend college due to his family's financial standing. He received the John-Abigail Adam Scholarship and had many great assets on his college application, yet could not afford college. Anna attended a high school, in a wealthier part of Massachusetts, that provided better teachers and opportunities to succeed, and is currently attending Harvard University. In Richmond, many students that attend Richmond Public Schools are at a disadvantage since proposed budget cuts will decrease the little amount they have. More than 75% of RPS students are below the poverty line and are at a weakness since their parents cannot pay school budgets, students' fees, or provide needed transportation. This leads to very little resources available to the children attending RPS. The City of Richmond is known to have the third highest level of student poverty among all Virginia areas, yet Richmond Public Schools is getting less state money to educate its children than surrounding counties. Therefore, the students in surrounding counties receive a better education and opportunity, with a more likely chance to succeed further, creating an "opportunity gap".

As times are getting harder in modern day society, more people are relying on federal government pay for aid. The applications for disability correlate with unemployment rates; as unemployment rates get higher, more applications come in for disability pay. The regulation for disability is very broad: if you have a medical condition that makes it impossible to work, you are disable. In "Unfit for Work: The Startling Rise of Disability in America," it was stated that many people from low income families who have lost labor jobs, try claiming disability. When a patient goes to determine whether or not they are disable, Dr. Perry Timberlake asks the

question, "What grade did you finish?" He understands that people with higher education have sit down jobs, so when people from low income families complain about back pain, they most probably cannot do the labor their jobs require. In my opinion, those who are disabled are at a disadvantage and cannot provide for themselves, although disabilities do not necessarily prohibit work. Even though many disability applications are accepted, many are denied as well. If people with disabilities are unable to work for long hours, they should get partial disability pay and then work minimum hours. Instead of the federal government paying \$13,000 every year, including medical insurance, then the government should assist in finding an alternative job that fits the person's education and disability. Also, kids who receive money from federal government do not have to prove whether or not they are actually incapable functioning in a work environment. Two-thirds of all children are diagnosed with mental or intellectual disabilities, but if given training and taught properly, they can overcome their deficiencies.

In every society, there are "haves" and "have-nots". In early ancient Rome, the plebians were at a disadvantage because they would do the labor jobs but wouldn't get a say in government. Likewise, in modern day society, people from low income backgrounds have to perform laborious jobs for minimum wage. Those whom are considered the "haves" are the wealthy in both ancient Rome and America. The patricians were the "haves" in ancient Rome because they lived luxuriously due to their wealth. Also, in Rome, the plebians took up 95% of the population which is similar to modern day America. Today, in America, the increasing number of the poor can be witnessed in many urban cities (Brooks, 2014). Also, the plebians in Rome did not have as many opportunities as the patricians, which also applies for Americans. The "haves" in early Rome got to participate in government and made the laws, while the plebians weren't allowed to because of their social standing. Currently, the opportunities that Americans receive are greatly based on their income, which ultimately determines social standing (Rohde, 2012). Aforementioned, those with more wealth have better chances of getting a higher education and therefore receiving more opportunities (Fitrer, 2011). This opportunity gap was also evident in Roman society.

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