**SOCIAL ISSUES AFFECTING THE AFRICAN AMERICAN RACE AND THE POLICIES THAT WILL HELP**

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**SOCIAL ISSUES**

Racial discrimination has deeply affected African Americans for a long period of time, touching almost every part of their lives. Economic inequality is one of the issues which means that African Americans have a high chance of having trouble finding good jobs or they often end up in low-paying ones. African Americans have a higher unemployment rate as compared to other groups and even when they find jobs, they face barriers to promotion and fair wages. This results to a large gap in wealth between African Americans and white families. In history, banks refused to give loans to Black people in certain neighborhoods and this made it difficult for African Americans to own homes and build wealth. African Americans also experience chronic illnesses and mental health challenges at higher rates and this results to premature deaths when they face too much racism.

Education is another important issue that is connected to economic inequality. A large number of African American children attend schools in poor neighborhoods because they cannot afford to be enrolled in better schools with better facilities. This schools often have fewer resources, less experienced teachers and also fewer advanced classes. Therefore, this puts African American students at a disadvantage from a young age. To make the matters worse, many Black students are punished more harshly in learning institutions. For instance, there is a higher suspension rate for the African American students and they are more involved with the criminal justice system. Without good education and support, it becomes difficult for African American children to succeed later in life and hence this adds to the poverty cycle.

The criminal justice system is one of the biggest problems facing African Americans. Black people, in particular, are imprisoned at much higher rates compared to white people who've committed similar offences. This is partly because of biased policing and unfair court systems. Another major concern is police brutality whereby African Americans are more likely to be victims of excessive force or even killed by policemen. The deaths of unarmed African Americans have resulted to nationwide protests and movements like Black Lives Matter Whereby African Americans are demanding justice and change in how police treat them. African Americans are additionally unfairly targeted by law enforcement agencies and this leads to racial profiling and higher rates of arrest and conviction.

Housing discrimination is another issue that has been affecting generations of African Americans. Redlining kept African Americans out of certain neighborhoods and this made it difficult for them to buy homes and build wealth in the past. Even today many African American families live in segregated neighborhoods with fewer resources, for example good schools and healthcare facilities. As a result of gentrification, wealthier people move into historically Black neighborhoods and this leads to a rise in housing prices and hence forcing longtime residents out. This creates more instability for African American families and makes it difficult for them to remain in their communities.

Cultural and identity issues are also a concern for African Americans. African Americans are often shown in negative ways in the media and this reinforces stereotypes that are harmful and limiting. The media often portrays them in narrow roles, such as criminals, athletes, or entertainers instead of representing the full diversity and richness of African American life. This leads to the marginalization of African Americans in the society. Without giving proper credit or respect to the origins of cultural expressions, African American culture is often taken and used by other groups, especially in music, fashion and slang. This therefore results to exploitation and erasure of African American history and identity.

**POLICIES**

Several targeted policies are essential in the tackling of the economic inequalities faced by African Americans. For instance, raising the federal minimum wage can provide a livable income for many African American workers. This will help in reducing the poverty levels within the community. Furthermore, African American entrepreneurship needs to be supported through grants and loans for small businesses hence stimulating local economies and creating job opportunities. Job training programs should be expanded to allow access hence equipping individuals with the necessary skills for better-paying positions in high-demand industries, ensuring that they can compete effectively in the job market. By implementing these economic policies, we can help bridge the wealth gap that has existed for generations.

In the part of education, addressing the inequalities faced by African American students requires significant reform. Equitable school funding is important; schools in predominantly Black neighborhoods often lack resources necessary to provide quality education. By doing this, it improves facilities, teacher quality, and available programs. Additionally, increasing access to quality early childhood education can set a strong foundation for academic success in the future. Culturally relevant curriculum should be implemented in order to foster engagement among students and promote a sense of belonging. These educational policies are important for breaking the poverty cycle and providing American children with the tools they need to succeed.

The criminal justice system is another field where urgent reforms are needed to address racism affecting African Americans. Policies that end racial profiling and ensure equitable treatment by law enforcement are crucial for building trust between communities and police. Addressing inequalities in sentencing laws, particularly for non-violent offenses, can reduce the disproportionate incarceration rates of African Americans. Community policing initiatives should be implemented to enhance safety and improve relationships between law enforcement and community members. These reforms are essential in creating a fairer justice system that protects the rights of all individuals.

Housing discrimination continues to impact African American families, hindering their ability to achieve financial stability. Strengthening fair housing enforcement to combat discrimination is essential to ensure equal access to housing opportunities. Investing in affordable housing projects in underserved communities will help increase access to safe and quality homes. Providing homeownership assistance through down payment programs can also enable more African Americans to buy homes and build wealth. These housing policies are critical for fostering stable communities and promoting economic mobility.

Lastly, cultural and identity issues also play an important role in the African American experience. Promoting anti-racism education in schools and workplaces can lead to understanding and reduce discrimination. Supporting African American cultural institutions, artists, and events can help preserve and celebrate the community’s rich heritage. Additionally, addressing cultural appropriation and ensuring that the contributions of African Americans are recognized and respected is vital for validating their experiences and history. We can create a more inclusive society by prioritizing cultural awareness and sensitivity.

In conclusion, addressing the problematic social issues affecting the African American community requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach. By implementing policies that focus on economic opportunity, educational equity, criminal justice reform, housing stability and cultural awareness, we can work towards a more equitable and just society for all. These changes will benefit the African American community and they will also contribute to the overall well-being and progress of society as a whole.

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