**Social Policies Affecting the African American Race and Policies for Addressing them**

Student name

Institution

Course name

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Due date

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**Social Policies Affecting the African American Race**

The experiences of the African American race have greatly been shaped by the social policies in the United States. Discrimination, isolation and a history of slavery are among the factors that have influenced these experiences. In the recent years, it has been seen that there has been growth towards addressing these differences through social policies. Here are some of the policies that have had impact on the African Americans:

Slavery (Taylor et al., 2019). The African Americans were deeply affected by this policy since they were forcefully and unwillingly shipped to the United States and were put through exploitation and oppression for hundreds of years. They were subjected to extreme physical and emotional torture and also denied the rights to practice their cultural heritage (Taylor et al., 2019). Once they arrived, they were denied basic human rights as they were viewed as property rather than human beings.

Jim Crow laws (Forman Jr, 2012). These laws followed the abolition of slavery. They administered racial segregation and discrimination, restricted access to education, employment, housing and public amenities. African Americans attended different schools which were often inferior to white schools. Public spaces such as hospitals had separate spaces for them. The transport sector which included buses and trains had selected areas for African Americans and most of the times it was required of them to leave their seats for whites. The African Americans, especially the poor found it difficult to exercise their right to vote. Any African American who dared to challenge the system had racial violence inflicted upon them.

War on drugs. This policy was initiated in the 1980s leading to disproportionately high detention rates for African Americans (Provine, 2011). The African American communities were intentionally targeted by the implementation of these laws on them amounting to perpetuation of inequalities in the system. They also experienced stricter drug laws and severe sentencing practices. Among the key aspects of these policies are mandatory minimum sentencing in disregard to the crime committed, crack cocaine sentencing disparities and drug law enforcement disparities (Provine, 2011). Calls for criminal justice reform and reconsideration of drug policies were called for due to the negative consequences of these policies.

Education policies. These policies have led to African American students facing unequal education treatment (Skiba et al., 2011). Segregated schools were established for these students, with the schools often underfunded and lacked the necessary resources and infrastructure. The students also faced discipline disparities in that for them, there were zero-tolerance policies incase they committed a mistake (Skiba et al., 2011). In the sector of advanced placement courses, they have been underrepresented yet some have the maximum qualifications needed for that.

Healthcare policies (Iglesias & Malchuk, 2023). Lack of insurance has seen many African Americans denied access to healthcare services. Medicaid aimed at increasing healthcare access for uninsured individuals yet many African Americans are yet to benefit from this program (Iglesias & Malchuk, 2023). Most African Americans also find it difficult to receive insurance, they are either uninsured or underinsured because the insurance policies or providers prioritize whites over them.

 Redlining. This was a practice where access to affordable housing loans and mortgages were systemically restricted to African American communities (Flournoy, 2021). This made it difficult for these communities to invest in property or even purchase homes. A wealth gap that was very wide came up due to these policies because all wealth was dominantly in the hands of the whites. The wealth gap also created a racial boundary in that there are some neighborhoods where African Americans were restricted to access.

**Policies for Addressing them**

Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Forman Jr, 2012). This landmark legislation prohibited discrimination and racial segregation based on mainly race but also included color, religion, sex or national origin. Legal protection and equal opportunities were provided by this law for African Americans in various sectors. These sectors included employment, access to education and voting rights. In regard to employment, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), was established to overlook the enactment of these provisions. The law also ensured that anyone in need of financial assistance received it. It also aimed at doing away with discriminatory barriers that barred African Americans from exercising their rights to vote.

Fair Housing Act of 1968 (Massey, 2015). Prevention of discrimination in he housing market was its main aim. Refusing to rent, sell, or finance housing based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin was made illegal in this act. Housing providers were given an affirmative duty to promote fair housing practices and avoid actions that led to discrimination (Massey, 2015). Under this law, The Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) was established to provide assistance to discriminated individuals. This act has also seen more improvements on it over to strengthen its provisions on the fight over discrimination.

Affirmative action. For the historically marginalized groups such as the African Americans, this policy aimed to promote equal opportunities. To ensure diversity and address past discrimination, practices such as preferential hiring and admission practices were put into place. College admission practices aimed at those who have been discriminated and faced barriers while accessing higher education (Skiba et al., 2011). In the government contracting sector, affirmative action aimed at also including businesses of individuals from underrepresented individuals in the bidding process and awarding of government contracts.

Criminal justice reform. To mitigate systemic biases, certain policies such as reducing mandatory minimum sentences, promoting alternatives to incarceration and reforming policies practices have been established (Provine, 2011). A police reform policy was also introduced to promote accountability, de-escalation training and community policing which would curb excessive use of force and racial profiling.

Education equity. Elementary and Secondary Education Act as a policy was established to provide equal access to quality education to all students, including African American students. Early childhood education would narrow the achievement gap and will also deliver quality foundation essential for success in the future (Neitzel & Mead, 2023). Funding for schools can also be increased in the marginalized areas of the African Americans to come up with resources that aim to improve the education levels. More teachers should also be employed to work in these schools to cater for low staff.

Healthcare reform. Affordable Care Act (ACA) was set up and aimed at expanding access to quality healthcare for the African Americans, especially those who are underinsured or uninsured (Iglesias & Malchuk, 2023). Health equity programs can also be established to address health disparities and promote culturally competent individuals who will address the unique healthcare need for African Americans.

It is important to note that while these policies have been implemented, challenges and inequities still persist. Continued attention and efforts are required to ensure the well-being and equal treatment of the African American community.

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