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Reflection Paper

I enjoyed interviewing Erin Parker for our interview project. She gave a glimpse of what the real world can be like. She showed that there is a lot to take into consideration, which is making me more afraid of graduating from college and handling things on my own. This interview showed me how things could be, how some people live their lives every day. I think about how the way she is living could be the way I could be living 10 years from now. The interview made me realize that I need to prepare myself for what could come and start thinking now about how I many want to live my life. In addition, different experience will give you different appreciations for things in life. Even though I'm not yet in a financial state of taking care of family, there are things like paying for school and a cell phone bill that I see as something that I can afford to appreciate because some people aren't able to get where I am. I see that this economy situation is not just going to affect me later in life but it is affecting me now.

Looking back at Erin's situation, are too many what ifs and "if-then" when it comes to living in the economy today. For Erin, she had a baby on the way, working as a cook, making minimum wage, uses government aid to care for the new baby, and aspirations to one day live in a better area owning her own business with her husband. Decent wishes for a person who wants to live the "American Dream". Some paths to those dreams change for the better or worse, depending on the opportunity handed to you. Recently found out that Erin let go of her job to pick up a new one as a janitor. Being a janitor has better benefits and better pay then being a cook, one step closer to her goal. Erin might have been content with being a cook at the time, but factors and

motivation such as a baby and wanting better living arrangement will make you take any opportunity there is to get ahead. The question: Is will it be enough?

The system today is not looking to well right now but many see positive change over the next couple years. For life now, it takes two working parents to sustain a decent lifestyle with at least one child. For two adults with one child to live comfortably in Montgomery County they must make \$18.29 an hour. Qualifying for jobs that earn this much are very competitive, especially with education background. Looking at the system it is hard to really know if it is there to help or to hinder you or just separate the weak from the strong. Either way I don't believe that people should struggle to survive in life. Life was meant to enjoy and be prosperous but most don't see much of that in today's world.

Hard working Americans should receive the most benefits. Those that go to work on time, go above and beyond the call of duty, and dedicate most of their lives to work hard to provide for family at home. Everyone should have the opportunity to be able to work and provide a decent life for themselves and others that they care for. The option of a living wage sounds like a decent enough trade of for people who deserve it. For individuals who think that a living wage will cause problems with the economy don't look at the whole pictures. They don't put themselves in the shoes of those who don't have what they have. Who have to work twice as hard to make sure they have a place to sleep at night and way of getting food when they are hungry. If they have people like elderly parents who can't work and siblings with disabilities who can't work, or young children who can't care for themselves yet that have to put in even more effort. I feel people who are doing what they are suppose to, to provide for themselves and a family should be

the ones receiving the living wage. Government aid only does so much and it only works up to a certain point. In an economy where the more you give the less you receive is discouraging for that only dream of a better lifestyle and can't quite get there. Seeing people like Barbara on the video we watched in class makes me worry and want to devise a plan now so I can prepare myself for if I was to get into a situation similar to hers. This is one of those examples where you cannot say it will not happen to me because it can, and in a blink of an eye.

Implementing the living wage has been a big social movement by grassroots organizations. Their goal is to achieve a decent living wage where individuals would be able to live in a comfortable setting. Reading articles about the positive and negative effects of a living wage and ways in which a living wage could potentially help the economy get back on a good foot has had a compelling influence on my own opinion about it. I find myself in support of creating a living wage where people are receiving enough income to live a decent living. Also, reading articles have made me more aware about the increasing gap between the rich and the poor and how the living wage could possibly help bridge that gap. There have been more supporting claims given than negative, even though there are a few counter arguments that still support the idea of creating a living wage. People deserve the right to live in a home without the worries of losing it and be able to take care of their family without any financial trouble if they are doing the hard work asked of them when they go to work every day on time and efficiently. I believe those that do more, such as take care of family with disability and have more than one child, whether be their own or through adoption, to be compensated a little more because they are taking care of more people. . The money allocated to them should be proportionate to that of which it would take to sustain a livable lifestyle. I also feel rich people making over a certain amount of money,

for example over a billion dollars a year, should be regulated for money they get and how much they should give back to the community. They should be required have a scholarship to give back to school or donate to a cause.

On another note, from discussion in class, I was born in DC when I was young, and had to leave at the age of 2 because of poor living condition. I look back now and wonder what would have happened if I was never taken out of the bad situation like I was. How I could be struggling right now with real life situations like working at McDonalds instead of going to class five days a week. I'm not saying that I still couldn't happen because I'll be in the that world in about a year and I have yet to know where I want to go with my degree. Getting to college was another blessing because my parents would not have been able to afford to send me. I would have ended up in the Air Force, but because my school offered so many scholarships and I applied for everyone I could qualified for I was able to find a scholarship that would pay for over half of my tuition fees. Being at tech, I am learning everything there is to know about my major and doing this all this work to get a degree. Another concern is will my degree be enough to be where I can live comfortably, making bill payments on time and have a house and car in my name and still be able to live comfortably. It is unsure because the economy is ever changing and you have to be able to keep up with those changes because only the strongest and smartest survive. I believe everyone is where he or she is, because of opportunity. I was given the opportunity to go to college and I took advantage of it. I am not saying people deserve to be where they are but I believe if the right opportunity was to come to the right people at the right time, most people would be in better situation then they are now. Opportunity don't come often, and for some they

never come at all, but when they do come people have to know what to do with them to their advantage. It may be little or it may be a lot, but it is something that everyone could benefit from.

What I've taken out of the whole experience is that life is what you make it, but the governing system of the united states should be make it so that everyone should be able to live the life they need. No one person should be threatened to be thrown out of their homes and out on the streets and everyone should have the opportunity to provide for their family and live a stable lifestyle from the 40+ hours they put in a week. Everyone should have a chance at their American Dream, if they still believe in it.

Resources:

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