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*Disconnect from our Core Values*

Equality is rooted deep in America's history, a core value that many people believe should be normalized for citizens of America. It developed from the Declaration of Independence, which was written in 1776. Equality has continued to be important for Americans since then, though others don't seem to think the same. Justice is another core value that stems from the Declaration. It's very important to people when it comes to the law and justice system. Many people nowadays seem to think that equality and justice in America is a lie or a joke, as there are so many who are failed by the justice system and are met with inequality in modern America. Our justice system is filled with false incarceration, and several minority groups in America still have very limited rights today. According to a study done in 2016 by Pew Research Center, 84% of black people interviewed expressed that they were treated less fairly than white people when it came to dealing with the police.

It's very hard for African-American people to get access to psychological care due to an increased risk of living in poverty, meaning limited opportunities to get help regarding their mental health. Minorities do not have every single right that other groups may have in America. This is something that America needs to fix, as we praise "equality" for everyone but we can't even give African-American people proper health care without forcing them to spend hundreds

of dollars. “Nearly 25% of African Americans are uninsured and are also more likely to use emergency and/or primary care specialists. However, these professionals lack training in the diagnoses and treatment of mental and behavioral health problems. Psychologists are better trained to identify mental illness and provide psychotherapy to treat disorders.” (Limited Access)

This information details how difficult it is for minority groups in America to gain rights to affordable healthcare, especially when they are not insured. Out of the 22 million (and counting) people in America who identify as African-American, 22% are living in poverty.

African-Americans are twice as likely to be diagnosed with schizophrenia (a horrible mental illness) but without proper psychological care, it’s almost impossible for these patients to be tended to and receive treatment due to living in poverty. America’s health insurance system is almost as messed up as our justice system, a structure filled with false sentencing and corrupt judges. How is it so difficult for minorities to live peacefully in “the land of the free”?

It’s no surprise that false convictions are often a sad conclusion in crimes with little to no leads. It’s also sad how many false convicts happen to be young and/or African-American. The reasoning for this can range from point-blank racism to coincidences in the crime patterns. In 2016, 47% of the falsely convicted inmates that had since been released were African-American. “Overall African American are about five times as likely to go to prison for drug possession as whites, and judging from exonerations, innocent black people are about 12 times more likely to be convicted of drug crimes than innocent white people. If that were not true, it would mean that for some unknown reason innocent African Americans convicted of drug crimes are much more likely to be exonerated than innocent white drug convicts.” (Gross, Possley, Stephens, 21).

This direct quote from the report details a major problem seen in the justice system. The

statistics of innocent black people going to jail compared to white people. I chose to focus on my evidence on drug-related crimes rather than murder or sexual assault crimes, as drug crimes tend to not have victims. Even if these drug crimes have no victims, a shocking number of African-American people are sentenced to life for committing them. If America were truly living up to its core values, then we would not be faced with systematic racism and false incarceration crises. Our country needs to do better before we are faced with dire consequences.

America has failed to live up to the values first established by the founding fathers. Minority groups in our country are faced with limited rights and oppression, as their family members serve life sentences for a run-in with marijuana when they were eighteen. My thesis is important for people who believe that everyone in America is “equal” when it’s clear that the systems we have in place do not believe inequality. I believe it is important to open your eyes to the injustices of our country, something we desperately need to change. My disappointment is immeasurable, and my day is ruined.

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