
The Creation of the Myth of the American Dream

Does America Still Provide Access to the American Dream?

“That dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement.” -(James Truslow Adams). There are many different perceptions of the American Dream. To many, the American Dream is of materialistic wealth or “a pursuit of material prosperity,” (Adams), to own larger cars, intricate homes along with designer shoes and clothes. But for others, the American Dream goes beyond materialistic value. To others the American Dream is to attain a fulfilling, momentous life in which they are afforded opportunities that are pleasing to them. In the United States’ Declaration of Independence, it states, “all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.” This is considered to be the foundation of the American Dream. Seeming that we live in a land of democracy and not dictatorship, everyone in America is provided with equal access to the American Dream, but, the real question isn’t whether or not America provides access to the American Dream because they do. The more debatable question is, does America make the American Dream attainable for all? In one’s opinion, America does not make the American Dream attainable for all.

There are many ways in which people are blocked from achieving the American Dream. An example of such can be seen with the attempts to eliminate the DACA program. The DACA program is a program in which illegal immigrants can apply for a two year renewable visa as long as they graduated from or attend high school, are a military veteran, and have a mostly clean criminal record. President Donald Trump is choosing to get rid of the program. The program was also publicly scrutinized by Mr. Sessions who stated, “the policy was implemented unilaterally, to great controversy and legal concern”. The elimination of this program impacts the lives of at least 800,000 people. Although they won’t be immediately affected by the depletion of the program, they have limited time to prepare for deportation since they aren’t actual American citizens. Not only would they be separated from everything they’ve ever known, they’ll be forced to return back to a country that is no longer familiar to them. The infamous wall is another barrier to attaining the American Dream. In addition to eliminating the DACA program, the government, specifically President Trump, plans to build a wall between America and Mexico in an attempt to keep illegal immigration to a minimum. The barrier between America and Mexico has already begun to be built, but there are many people who oppose the plan. In “THE WALL The real costs of a barrier between the United States and Mexico”, an article by Vanda Felbab-Brown, states “Undocumented workers and drugs will still find their way across

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any barrier the administration ends up building.” Brown also stated that people are more likely to become an illegal immigrant by overstaying their visas than they are by crossing the border. She gives many additional reasons why building the wall is futile.

Race is another factor that would impede one’s ability to attain the American Dream. Many examples can be seen within the American economy. There are unequal job opportunities, graduation rates and success rates between races. In today’s society, the unemployment rate for the African American community is twice as high than that of Caucasian citizens. Even though 150,000 jobs were added in January, the 2:1 ratio between black and white unemployment still remains. The lack of jobs dispersed among the African American group can affect the numbers of graduates as well. This would ultimately result in a larger group of people who are not interested in going to college just to avoid being in debt for the rest of their lives. Which means an African American citizen will have a hard time trying to pay for college. As to be expected the graduation rates are just as unfair. In an article called “Graduation Rates and Race” by Emily Tate, it was said, “College completion rates vary widely along racial and ethnic lines, with black and Hispanic students earning credentials at a much lower rate than white and Asian students do..”. In a recent study, it shows that African Americans had a graduation rate of only 38% and Latinos had 45.8% as opposed to white students whose overall graduation rate as an astounding 62% at the college level. Another article called “College Degree Gap Grows Wider Between Whites, Blacks and Latinos”, by Meredith Kolodner, tells us that by 2020 about 65% of jobs are predicted to require an education beyond the high school level. This puts the Latino and black community at an even further risk because not only are the unemployment rates high, but the graduation rates are low, which makes it even harder for them to get employed and work towards attaining the American Dream. More examples can be seen within the White Supremacy and Police Brutality Movements. The Latino and African American communities are suppressed and wrongfully punished by the white ‘superior’. “Police officers are indicted in fewer than 1% of killings, but the indictment rate for civilians involved in a killing is 90%.” (FiveThirtyEight) Young black men ages 15-34 are the most likely to be part of that 90% seeing they are nine times more likely, than other Americans, to be killed by law enforcement. With society against them, there is only a slim chance that an African American or any citizen of color will attain the American Dream. Even though the American Dream isn’t completely taken away from them like it is the immigrants, the Dream is still less attainable and seemingly impossible to acquire. Though there are many who believe the American Dream is not attainable, a keen few may believe otherwise.

There are many people who believe the American Dream has equal attainability for everyone. Arguments from the opposing team include that the American Dream is meant for Americans which means that getting rid of immigrants is no big deal. President Trump, in an article called “Trump Moves to End DACA and Calls on Congress to Act”, by Michael D. Shear and Juli H. Davis, stated that “before we ask what is fair to illegal immigrants, we must also ask what is fair

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to American families, students, taxpayers and, job seekers.” What makes American citizens any better and more deserving than other people? It has already been proven that job opportunities were unfair without even calculating the population of immigrants. Although the immigrants may be here illegally, they still aren’t able to interfere with the chances of Americans getting a job. “Most natives do not face significant job competition from immigrants; however, those who do tend to be less-educated and poorer than those who face relatively little competition from immigrants,”(Camarota and Zeigler). If a native born American is in competition with an illegal immigrant chances are the immigrant is just as, if not more qualified than the American. Although removing the immigrants will make space for Americans to have jobs, the economy will still be at risk because with all the missing workers, the economy will lose at least \$½ trillion. So with \$½ trillion gone and a smaller population, everyone is still pushed further away from attaining the American Dream. People may also argue that people should not struggle seeing the government provides help with alternative income. People are provided with SSI, food stamps/ebt, unemployment, section 8 and etc. Yes this extra income may help, but it is still only enough to get them by and is only applicable to certain areas of people's lives, so unless they have more stable sources of income, the person will still struggle to attain the American Dream. Even though they have reasons to oppose, there is still logical reasoning as to annul their justifications.

America may provide access to the American Dream, but the leaders of our country, make attaining the dream seemingly impossible. Between the new immigration regulations, unfair job opportunities and other circumstances, a lot of people, specifically minorities, would have to work twice as hard to attain the American Dream. Realistically and equitably speaking, the same results should be given to people who apply the same amount of effort. Everyone should have a fair chance at attaining the American Dream, whether they be black, white, legal or illegal, nobody should have to work twice as hard for being born the way they are. These are all the reasons why America makes attaining the American Dream unfeasible.

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