

## **Writing Assignment**

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**GOVT 2305**

### **What are the social and economic factors that affect gun violence in the United States?**

“Gun violence is not a gun problem, it’s an economic problem”. In the video the speaker stated this quote to drive the following point home. Gun violence is directly correlated with joblessness. As the level of well-paying jobs diminishes from the economy, the violence goes up. Detroit was mentioned in the film as being a prime example of a once booming economic economy whose violence increased as the manufacturing jobs went away. People also become desperate as jobs disappear, which is a contributing social factor.

### **What are the effects of mass incarceration on political rights, social dynamics, and personal economic achievement?**

Mass incarceration encroaches in each of these three categories in specific ways. Political rights, such as voting, are taken away from criminals upon their first felony. For social dynamics, there are huge barriers for reentering society. The first one is the feeling of getting out. Some criminals have been behind bars so long they feel anxious about life outside. After a significant adjustment timeframe, criminals also face red tape designed to filter them out of the job market. Most applications for jobs, apartments and even government aid programs like food stamps will not accept citizens with criminal records. This leaves them with virtually no options. Then finally we come full swing to economic achievement. Without a job, place to live or government aid it is extremely difficult to make money. This in turn leads to a vicious cycle of more violent activity because criminals have basically no economic opportunities at all after getting out. These

limitations are due to the social barriers placed on them. This results in a permeant economic status for criminals as second-class citizens.

### **What are the causes and effects of the War on Drugs?**

The United States has a history of discriminating on the lower economic class. Just as the War on Poverty ended the government launched the War on Drugs. The main causes were political. White Americans were scared to lose jobs as African Americans gained civil rights. So, politicians who wanted to “secure the vote” adopted “get tough policies” on drug criminals. This had a snowball effect until the current situation today. The effects are clear. Now we have a “caste-based system” that is designed to lock criminals into a permanent second-class status.

### **What are the complexities of finding a solution to the problem of mass incarceration?**

Visibility is the biggest barrier that the speaker mentioned to finding a solution to mass incarceration. When the Jim Crow laws were in place, the signs were literally printed and posted in public and visibly displayed forms of discrimination. Today, most of the discrimination is red tape embedded in the system of government and commercial policies. The discrimination is harder to see today. Another barrier to change is we must reform public opinion to encourage listening to GUILTY and innocent criminals.

### **What are my thoughts?**

I agree with the speaker’s argument. Mainly because the astounding facts that back her argument up. First, crime rates and incarceration rates are independent. Second, the U.S. prison population quadrupled over the last 30 years. Finally, crime rates have fluctuated sometimes going up and sometimes going down over the last 30 years. This proves that the two factors, crime and incarceration, are not linked.