

## **Changing the World**

After decades of societal destruction across the world, the ideas that are embedded in society continue to break away at the good it has left. Gun control which could be a personal belief or opinion is now viewed as a political divide in our country, our society continues to divide itself when it is struggling the most and in need of unity. We are living in a world post slavery and still, the racial oppression burdens the victims due to the lack of understanding of their history. Americas mass incarceration is another destruction that is going on in this time, the idea that incarceration will help not only the victim but the criminal as well, is greatly flawed. Violence roots from poverty, unequal education, financial inequalities, and violence itself, incarcerations elevate all those aspects and many more. Our society is in need of reform, through understanding, reconciliation, and restructuring of the self-destructive nature it has developed.

In “Until We Reckon: Violence, Mass Incarceration, and a Road to Repair,” Danielle Sered explains that despite after being released, people are facing disadvantages in society. Not only financially, but also in education and housing, people are not being given the resources to succeed and change after imprisonment. It is actually allowing violence to grow more due to the unfair treatment of these criminals. I strongly believe that there must be resources such as guidance and connections made with businesses that will allow people to make a step up and give them the road to changing their lives for the better. Mass incarceration has also become a part of our culture, by normalizing imprisonment of low-level crimes, we are becoming unphased by unfair sentences for crimes that are results of the inequalities people in our society are going through. I also believe that in our current political environment, we need to address the problems that have been ignored for far too long. Many of the arrests and convictions, many of times occur based of a profiling that is clearly flawed. A drug possession for example, could be a

cause of a forced financial issue that someone might not have been the proper resources to solve in any other way. A small crime that can either result in a fine or years of imprisonment based on your appearance, or life history show how mass incarceration is a flaw in our country. If it is deemed a high-level crime where incarceration is necessary, I believe our society needs to create resources for post imprisonment victims who need more than their freedom to succeed.

Additionally, imprisonment should not be the response to criminals who made a small mistake and have the promise to change and become a better member in society. I would hope that addressing these issues and creating alternatives such as therapy and rehabilitation, would provide someone the opportunity to grow and change. These possible alternatives could allow our society as a whole to begin understanding what led to that crime and what we need to do, to help others not experience the pain someone else did. This is one of the most prominent and active flaws in our society that must be addressed, in order to help victims of societal inequalities. Due to those flaws mentioned, I would choose to work with Common Justice in hopes of lessening one of the major flaws in our country. I think this would be the opportunity where I could grow the most internally and make the biggest impact. In our current political environment, the country needs to address some of the hidden issues that are contributing to more problems that arising, problems that are causing more divide in our country.

Although I believe that that mass incarceration is one of the biggest flaws in American society, I know that the lack of empathy and understanding causes issues in our society to create divides between the people not only in our country. I know that this effort would help alleviate some of the divide in society. To work with Narrative Four would be an eye-opening opportunity, where I would be able to not only gain knowledge on controversial subjects but learn how to break those barriers in real life situations where sometimes people need to

understand each other's perspectives. Seeing how Narrative Four was able to create connections between people who have a differing opinion in one of the most controversial topics in America was truly astonishing. Seeing how the creator of a gun selling network was able to empathize with a victim of gun violence shows how stereotypes and barriers due to differing opinions sometimes need understanding and an explanation to their beliefs. Due to the current gun violence in our society, I would like to expand this work that Narrative Four has done and create more situations where both counterparts understand that there could be a middle ground in the future that still help the safety of our society.

The ability to grow the efforts of addressing and repairing issues derived from racial oppression could help give equality and opportunities to minorities who have been victims of oppression. In the article "Slavery reparations hearing ignites fiery debate in Congress," it states that Mitch McConnell claims that putting a price on the pain that African American ancestors went through would be insulting, but they are still going through pain and not getting any sort of compensation to this day. The fact that there haven't been any reparations is more "insulting" than any little bit the government and our society could do to help end the racial oppression they are going through. I believe that reparations such as addressing the subpar education that is delivered to low income communities which correlate almost directly with race, are necessary for our society to grow past the embedded racial oppression that has been going on for decades in the country. The government is not giving aid to those people who have been affected by racial oppression and slavery, it shows that equality is not being achieved in through our government. This is one of the reasons why I believe that helping in the effort in these reparations can find alternatives to demanding aid from the government. Efforts such as social awareness of the everyday oppression racial minorities are experiencing to help in aiding financial need that

causes racial oppression in specific areas. Working with creating more communication with political figures and society is a step in the right direction to ending racial oppression.

South African TRC, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, or any transitional justice efforts are making huge changes post-apartheid. In the situation where Amy Biehl's parents were able to forgive her perpetrator it shows how the efforts in transitional justice can help not only gain closure for the victim, but the perpetrator could be relived knowing they were forgiven. I feel that these efforts are helping drastically emotionally for both counterparts, but politically they are not creating the best solution to end the problem. I do believe that understanding why something happened and getting closure can help both counterparts grow past the event, but I think that this creates an effort to fix the problem after it has occurred. I would like to create solutions prior to events occurring and creating resources for people who have rough pasts, who could possibly make a mistake and have to face severe consequences. Transitional justice provides victims to be treated as citizens and humans and gives them the opportunity to explain themselves and gives the public a chance to realize and understand what it is, they are really going through. I think it is a great project and effort that is happening in the world because it involves human empathy and not simply laws that need to follow certain steps. Although I believe that addressing these issues can be a factor in rebuilding a society, I think in order for a society to grow to its fullest potential it needs to figure out a way to address these issues prior to them occurring.

In our flawed world, the problems that occur could be addressed through our communication and awareness of our issues. Mass incarceration is a leading issue in American society and still, it is not acknowledged by every American. An issue as such must be addressed not only to the government but in our current time period where social media and the internet can

be such an asset to organizations and efforts, it can help create awareness and possibly alternatives and resources to the cause. I would love to make a change in an issue that such a large amount of innocent people go through, an issue that could be solved through understanding and the ability to see the promise that criminals have to grow. The violence that incarceration develops, impacts and adds to other issues in the country. I believe that this is one of the main factors that allow problems like poverty and gun control to continue growing in our country.

Works Cited

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