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As the wealthier accumulate more wealth, the middle class's total share of the economic pie shrinks even more. The widening income and wealth gap is associated to the increase of larger corporations and Wall Streets' political power. They manipulate the market's rules to make themselves more profitable hence reducing the economic gains that go to most Americans (Reich, page 4). The United States government does not do much to actively combat the economic inequality that Americans face. The United States has traditionally had low taxes and low spending on the poor (Faricy, Slide 13). The government can raise taxes on the wealthy and allocate more money towards the poor and middle class to reduce the wealth and income inequality that stems from political power. The income and wealth gap for individuals in poverty and middle class can be ameliorated with more access to quality education and welfare programs funded by the taxation of the wealthy.

Wealth and income disparities will reduce if the government raises taxes and allocates the revenue towards increasing public access to education and the quality of public education. Tax money could go towards providing students with more school resources, more experienced teachers, transportation, and smaller teacher to student ratios. These improvements to education could raise students' likelihood of pursuing higher education and increase literacy rates in the United States. In 2013, Americans with four-year college degrees earn 98 percent more per hour on average than people with college degrees (Reich, page 3). By creating more educational opportunities for lower and middle-class families, the income gap can be reduced but often the

wealth gap persists due to the college debt accumulated. The quality of K-12 public education and of community colleges can be improved to help reduce student debt and increase income and wealth inequality. This would help lower and middle-class individuals have a higher income, while also not accumulating the extreme college debt that puts many Americans in “desperate straits” (Gabler, page 8). Improving public education will help citizens better understand policies that deal with wealth and income inequality and can vote and advocate accordingly. Access to a quality education will reduce wealth and income inequality by highering access to higher skilled and higher paying job and reducing unemployment.

Taxing the affluent and directing the revenue created towards welfare programs could mitigate the wealth and income gap. Federal programs for the poor, such as Medicaid, SNAPs, SSI, and more, are restrictive and often temporary (Faricy, slide 13). Many lower- and middle-class American families are financially fragile and cannot afford medical care, childcare, housing, and more. For example, one individual could not afford a mammogram and died consequently (Gabler, page 7). A major problem with social welfare programs in the United States, is that individuals often must apply and be approved. When applying for disability in poor communities, it is widely known you must apply multiple times as if it is standard (Desmond, page 31). Individuals with political power normally have influence over where the money that goes to social welfare programs is spent and the policies implemented that contribute to the persistence of poverty. By allocating more tax revenue towards social welfare programs, more wealth in the US would be redistributed to the middle and lower class. These programs will help lower and middle-class individuals avoid debt from medical, food, and educational expenses. By reducing the potential debt, the wealth gap would be reduced.

Increasing taxation of the rich would help individuals in poverty and the middle class. The government could spend more on social welfare programs that help improve the living

conditions for those living below the poverty line. More spending designated towards improving access to and the quality of public education would help to expand the middle class and decrease the wealth and income gap. Raising taxation would alleviate both poverty and middle class precarities. However, allocating the tax revenue towards welfare would be more effective for reducing poverty, while directing it towards improved education would help the middle class more. Through the implementation of this policy, the United States would be taking critical steps towards reducing economic inequality and would provide citizens with a fairer opportunity at achieving their full potential.