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Settling The Differences: Acknowledgement of Discrimination and Segregation In Society

Often communities publicize the improvements taking place in this great nation, marketing the average American's abilities to make change and uphold the notions associated with the "land of the free." Though as uplifting as this may seem, more damage and destruction of social, cultural, and racial norms takes place on a daily basis, effectively deceiving all onlookers. These issues may even be initiated by one's sense of comfort and familiarity, separating themselves from those who have distinct differences. Among self-segregation, government discrimination still thrives throughout the country in which forms a barrier around the people's capabilities. Amidst the controversy lies a solution that may hold the key to society's differences. With a positive mindset and a passionate attitude to support, an individual may break through this rhetorical wall by taking action and pushing for change. Moreover, the differences that embody this divide affect society on a social, political, and financial level which can be resolved through lawful action and universal acknowledgement.

Diversity, as it seems to be implemented throughout schools, still has yet to fully disperse in society. Administrators encourage clubs and organizations that solely focus on one ethnic group, preaching about the need for students to find confidence and pride in their identity. As this may seem beneficial, it introduces self-segregation at an early age. Self-segregation is an issue that spreads like wildfire, shaping views and opinions for future generations. Results of this

timely issue includes an individual's unwillingness to expand their horizons and associate with those of different social groups. Danah Boyd's essay, "Why America Is Self-Segregating," gives an insightful view on this concern, relaying how people are more likely to identify with "'safe spaces' and 'cultural fit'" when approaching unfamiliar settings (79). Behavior as such renders society useless when faced with diverse issues or topics. In the exposition, "Minority Clubs: Segregation or Integration," Gabriela Moro further addresses the broad solution stated above, discussing how a balance is needed to "support minorities and avoid segregation" between these groups and the rest of the student body (130). This statement exemplifies a compromise between the two opinions by allowing cultural groups to proceed with their practices, but stops them from discouraging others who may not share the same ethnicity from joining. Finding this sweet spot is the first step towards a unified society.

Another form of discrimination has intervened with society as the middle and lower socioeconomic classes are suffering at the hands of the biased American government. Due to the lack of financial standing or past incarceration, the government is more likely criminalize those who live in poverty, effectively separating society of the haves and the have-nots. Joseph E. Stiglitz's paper, "A Tax System Stacked against the 99 Percent," directly discusses the biases that have led to the "highest income inequality and the least equality of opportunity" seen in this country (143). He manages to elaborate on this subsequential issue when describing the special treatment that those of higher standings receive compared to citizens who struggle to make a living each day. These ideals coincide with Michelle Alexander's in her essay, "The New Jim Crow," as she identifies the striking resemblance between modern criminal regulations and the Jim Crow laws of the past. She also expresses her opinion on the unjust discrimination between

the upper and working classes, trying to convey her beliefs and solutions to this universal issue. She implores how an individual's "class reflects on one's character," restating how one's financial or racial identification may be the underlying cause for the mistreatment and discrimination displayed by the government (99). The two authors share a common solution, both believing that the demolition of these issues begins with an eye-opening conversation to kick start a system built on equality.

In order to fix these problematic situations, society needs to be willing to take charge and act on their opinions. As the writers above have shared their views on the issues that divide common communities, they have informed their readers about issues they believe are most important, but failed to give them a feasible plan. Barack Obama's, "Howard University Commencement Speech," encourages everyone to take a stand for their beliefs, carefully acknowledging the importance of action in change. He continues with this point when sharing how "awareness is not enough, it requires changes in law" to fix the injustice discussed (159). As well, he goes on about the importance of accountability in these circumstances, describing how those who are strong enough to face the harsh obstacles in life will succeed in making society better. This connects with J.D. Vance's experiences in his essay, "Hillbilly Elegy," as he discloses how optimism has motivated him to take control over his life and any factors that may get in his way. Vance continues by describing how alienated he felt since he does not fall in line with the expectations of the average working class white American, and how he refuses to comply with their diminishing "will to work for a better life" (121). He gives the readers an a realistic glimpse at the entirety of this issue, hinting at the pessimistic outlooks commonly seen

in this socioeconomic group. Vance's goal is to make his audience aware of the power of optimism and how it leads to change in every setting possible.

Therefore, to seal the gap that separates society into groups and subcategories, communities must come together and participate in action-filled events to positively reinforce the issues addressed. Society must come to a consensus about these differences and find a common ground to stand on together, as a unified front. Americans must put aside segregatory and discriminatory views to become a nation of equality and justice. Everyone has to recognize the importance of taking a stand for what one believes in, coming together to create a fair society. One where race should not determine one's living conditions or government treatment, nor should an individual's financial status demonstrate their need to abide by the laws. This will be the beginning of the bridging of all societal differences.

Work Cited

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