

Preventing Young Adult Impoverishment

I believe Idaho has the highest rate of poverty in the nation because of low minimum wage, a high young marriage/teen pregnancy rate, and so many students putting themselves through college. The minimum wage is so low that a person couldn't work part time, while in college, and support his/herself. In addition to the low wages, young adults are encouraged to get married early and start families right away. Churches, families, and friends influence these young people. In Idaho, it is socially acceptable to get married before careers and financial security are established. Careers and financial security cannot be established without college. In Idaho, there are 65,594 students enrolled in college. Furthering one's education is not cheap; it costs an average of \$7,585 (based on 2002-03 statistics) per year to attend a public college in Idaho. As a result, it causes many young people to go into severe debt leading to poverty.

The above-mentioned factors can be reduced in several ways. The minimum wage could be raised. If it were to be raised, students could work the part time hours and still be able to support themselves. I believe the young marriage/teen pregnancy issue could be remedied through advertising. I think the number of teen pregnancy awareness commercials could be increased as well as supplemented with commercials promoting marriage at a later age (i.e. mid to late twenties). The influence from families and churches for early marriage and starting families early can never be stopped, but it can be countered. The damaging effects of college costs can be countered as well. If more scholarships and other forms of financial aid were made available, a higher percentage of students would receive assistance. The only way to reduce the number of young people in poverty because of college costs is to let them know that scholarship and financial aid opportunities are out there. There are many misconceptions about FAFSA and

other forms of financial aid, and if those false ideas were cleared up, more young people would take advantage of them.

I personally had many questions about FAFSA and financial aid, but I went looking for answers. I am planning to stay out of poverty through applying for financial aid, living at home, and I am not planning on getting married or having kids any time soon. I am hoping I receive some financial assistance for college through the scholarships I applied for. I am also planning on living at home so that I won't have living expenses while I'm putting myself through school. As a result, any money I earn I can use for my schooling. I also see that getting married early and having kids at an early age is a bad idea. It is an irresponsible action to bring a life into this world and not have the resources to take care of it. I know my plan isn't fool proof, but nothing in life is and I know I will do my best to stay out of poverty.

I also believe that my community has a sufficient number of aid programs for the impoverished. We have programs such as Habitat for Humanity, a teen parent high school, SEICCA, TRIO student services, and Job Service that provides retooling services. My community provides many opportunities to help those in need, and I believe it's doing all it can do without putting itself at risk.

Poverty among 18-24 year olds is a huge problem in Idaho, but not one without any solutions. Things can be done, and if everyone would simply give what they can, we would be one step closer to solving it.

Works Cited

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