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Thinking Ahead for What is to Come

Statistics have shown that Idaho has the highest rate of poverty for adults ages eighteen to twenty-four. However, many young adults around this area seem as normal as any other struggling college students. There may be many reasons as to why this occurs, but no matter what the cause, something must be done to reduce it.

So, why is it that Idaho's poverty rate is so high? Firstly, many couples get married at a much younger age in Idaho, and begin a family very early. However, these same people that are raising families are only qualified to get lower paying jobs because they lack the necessary education for many higher paying jobs. Consequently, as the number of people in the family is increasing, the amount of income flowing into the household is not. Therefore, the income that these families are making in Idaho put them below the poverty line, where as for a single person they would not be below the line. Another cause of poverty may be that the statisticians may not have looked at the cost of living in Idaho. Land in Idaho is much cheaper than elsewhere, thus a lower income can be earned, while still being able to buy necessary items. Hence, a lower salary in Idaho might qualify as being below the poverty line, while still providing enough money for a family in Idaho to suffice. Yet another factor may be that Idaho is agriculturally based, and many young people may be part of a farming family. With Idaho having a drought for many years, the amount of income these families are making is lower than usual, and

these people may now be under the poverty line. All of these factors combined have helped to put so many people in Idaho under the poverty line, and something must be done to reduce the number of destitute families in Idaho.

Idaho already has many services available to indigent people. However, the rate of poverty is still exceedingly high. Perhaps many young people feel that they do not qualify to benefit from these services, or are embarrassed to seek out the aide of these establishments. However, it does not seem necessary to spend money setting up new aide businesses because so many already exist, and the rate is still high. Creating new businesses to help struggling families would be a waste of money because so many already exist. Educating the families on these services would help people, however. Many families may not know how to get in contact with the help that is already available. Instead of creating more businesses, the solution may just be educating the people about the current businesses already functioning.

Yet, things could still be enacted to reduce the poverty rate. One thing that would greatly help young adults is to raise minimum wage. The current minimum wage, \$5.15 an hour, seems extremely low. It is hard for people ages eighteen to twenty-four to qualify for jobs that pay more than minimum wage because they lack necessary education because they are still earning college degrees. Furthermore, if the minimum wage was increased many people may be able to earn an income that is above the poverty line. Another option that could help reduce the poverty level is to bring more businesses to Idaho. This would allow more people to get jobs, perhaps higher paying. Also, more businesses, especially popular restaurants and amusing parks, would bring in more money to cities in Idaho which would boost Idaho's income and allow the minimum

wage to be increased. In addition, if there were more attracting businesses in Idaho, more tourists might visit Idaho and bring more money into the state.

When I first heard this statistic, I was a little worried because I recently turned eighteen. However, I had already decided that I was going to attend college and not work very much, if at all. I am willing to be under the poverty line with the hope that earning a college degree will help me to get a higher paying job in the future. Education seems to be the key to ending the poverty struggle in Idaho, and I for one am ready to be a statistic now and avoid poverty later in life.