

“For each of the four hundred and four bodily ailments celebrated physicians have produced infallible remedies, but the malady which brings the greatest distress to mankind- to even the wisest and cleverest of us- is the plague of poverty.” – Ihara Saikaku

Many situations can lead to poverty. Sometimes just one instance causes poverty, but oftentimes it is a result of many different instances. Idaho is an agriculturally based state. Most farmers’ and ranchers’ sole job is their farm or ranch, where their children typically assist them for little to no pay. With the current state of the economy, the price for potatoes is down, which means that farmers work hard, but their pay doesn’t often break even with their labor. With what little money they bring in, they struggle to stay out of poverty.

Many people between the ages of 18 and 24 are in college learning to be on their own for the first time and making important decisions. College students are faced with huge money issues, including a hefty tuition fee and the cost of pricey books. Credit cards can cause debt and many problems. The credit card companies aim their products directly at college students wishing to take care of their own money issues rather than ask a parent. Once a student is tricked into carrying a card, it is a tough job to stay above the plentiful bills and have money to eat at the same time. On top of many other factors, college students are beginning entry-level jobs that pay only minimum wage.

Poverty can be found anywhere and is difficult to eliminate completely. There are things that would benefit all indigent persons, one being a greater minimum wage for all. The federal poverty guidelines state that a person that receives \$9,310 per year or less is impoverished, and at \$5.50 per hour for minimum wage, it is hard to reach above this number. To raise the minimum wage to \$7.00 would help reduce the number of impoverished 18-24 year olds. Another way to cut poverty is to increase the amount of financial aid that a college gives out. If a college could set up a system for less expensive books by agreeing to buy them back for full price, or offer a greater financial aid package, many more students would be better off.

A key idea to reduce the deficiency of money for 18-24 year olds is to make a statewide law discouraging credit card companies from targeting this age group for their products. This would decrease the number of bills, overspending and debt. In a more local sense, Pocatello should provide aid for people of this age group. We already have the Salvation Army's Soup Kitchen, yet it seems as though it's geared more for older persons. If Pocatello could build a facility that is more modern for young adults, the number of poor persons could possibly go down.

Being 18 years of age, I need to make sensible choices to try to stay out of poverty. I know that I will be poor for a while, but I view college as a "good debt" that will eventually pay off in the end. I won't use credit cards and will make wise choices when choosing what to buy. I know that I won't be reaching above poverty income due to working only part time at minimum wage, but am willing to work my hardest to suffice.