

Degradation of the american dream

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Degradation of the American Dream The United States of America is a country in which success and happiness are its primary ideals that it was built around. It offers its inhabitants an opportunity to pursue and achieve success through hard work, effort, and dedication, people call this the American dream. However, the American dream is being degraded. The reason is because of the American people who the country swore to protect and support abuse the system's help for their personal wants. The American dream can be preserved if the relationship between the government and the people became mutual. The relationship of aiding one another in which not only one benefits, but both benefit from each other. In order for the American people to achieve success and consummate their American dream, they must not only receive help, but also give back help as well. If the American people abuse the rights given to them by this country, abuse the inadequately regulated aid, and lack of wanting to pursue success can devastate the American dream and leave it in turmoil. Certain powers given to the American people like the power to vote given to the teenagers at the age of 18 can discredit the American dream. Voting can affect the American dream because electing the wrong candidates would have many consequential problems. For example, a candidate who believes that more funding for other fields than in education is the necessary adjustment then it can lead to less people having a college education and progressing towards being successful. The American dream primary objectives are success and happiness, if success is believed to be directly related to happiness, then people not being successful can deprive their American dream. Voting has been a concern before; in 1971 when the 26th amendment was ratified in

which the voting age was decreased from 21 to 18 because it was said that if old enough to go to war, then they are old enough to vote. The Independent magazine asserts that " Young teens were given the right to vote to take the attention off the draft that was being conducted for the Vietnam War" (Levenson). What society fails to realize is that most of the teenagers that age do not pay enough attention to politics, as much as they should, to know which political party can run the country the best. Also, an article in the Daily Caller states " If you're over 25, you've probably forgotten how bad your judgment use to be. If you're under 25 you probably don't know how bad your judgment is. A Harvard study showed that for the average person their frontal lobe, which controls reasoning and judgment, has not fully developed until their mid-twenties" (Tucci). The article explains how most teenagers under the age of 25 are unable to make an accurate judgment through acute reasoning. That is why the voting age should be increased so that we can support the American dream rather than aid in its downfall. As an 18 year old undergraduate, I am fully capable of apprehending my abilities in judgment, and thus I know I should not be allowed to vote because I do not have a strong enough understanding in politics as well as most of my colleagues at Cleveland State University. Most people that I have conversed with about the 2012 election only know what the mass media commercialization has told them. The vote has become more about popularity than about politics. The Washington Post proclaims that in the election between Mitt Romney and Barrack Obama over 400 million dollars were spent by each party for political ads in only the 10 key states (" The Spending Race"). Of the ads that were aired in those states, over 85% of which were negative towards the opposing

party. The reason behind this onslaught of ads is because more teens watch television and use it as their primary information provider. Most teens are incapable of figuring out the ad hominem arguments made against a particular candidate in the commercials. The only way to change this is to limit teens from voting to save the American dream from being trampled by people who have no idea on how a country should be governed and without considering how their futures will be affected. Voting is a crucial factor that can compromise the American dream, but greed is the most capacious of them all. Greed has run its full course in today's American society where the beneficial relationship, which was meant to be mutual between the government and the people, is turning drastically to favor one side. In his inaugural address of January 20, 1961, John F. Kennedy states " Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country"(par 24). For example, if someone gives a child everything he/she wants and never learn to earn things, then that child becomes spoiled and keeps wanting more and more without thinking about what it is costing others. Same with the nation today, where people want the government to pay for everything. This is the biggest problem because people do not realize it is not the government paying for their non-essential wants, but It is the people who make a living by working and paying their taxes. The aid that is given to people is being under regulated and they are taking advantage of it. For example, a person buys carbonated energy drinks, chips, and other junk foods that are paid for by the food stamps card, and then the person pulls out cash to buy tobacco and alcohol. I know this because of my personal experience as a cashier at a convenient store. This is not the only example of

aid that is being taken advantage of, there are many more that are abused. The nation is spoiled where amenities they cannot afford are paid by the government, while abusers make no effort to change their lives as the aid intended to do. Instead people are using their aid given to them as their secondary income of which they think can be spent on luxuries they could not normally attain. The American dream is to succeed and the nation will help achieve it if the people are willing to make the journey and help others do the same by giving back the same alleviation they received to other people in need of it. What happened to the Great Society? Lyndon B. Johnson said in his Great Society Speech, " The purpose of protecting life of our nation and preserving the liberty of our citizens is to pursue the happiness of our people. Our success in that pursuit is the test of our success as a nation" (193). He envisioned a society where the American people not only wish to achieve success, but also try and pursue it. The nation today no longer wishes to pursue success but would rather have it handed to them. A poem on the American dream says, " When you seem to arrive, the journey continues" (Inada 198). Achieving the dream is never a final destination, but an ongoing process. In the pursuit one will find success and in turn this nation will be successful. Success is a major factor of the American dream. Without the most important factor, the American dream would cease to exist. In the Great Society speech, it also declares " The Great Society is not a safe harbor, a resting place, a final objective, a finished work. It is a challenge constantly renewed, beckoning us toward a destiny where the meaning of our lives matches the marvelous products of our labor" (Johnson 194). By the people not pursuing success and striving for happiness, we cannot move

forward as a nation which leads to the degradation of the American Dream. This country is not like any other country; it is unique with the highest of statures and to keep it from being devastated, and the nation must be willing to help. Poet, Lawson Fusao Inada says, " Distinctions are earned and deserve dedication" (197). We must support this nation so its individuality is not sacrificed for minor problems. There is never a solution to a problem faced in today's society, but there is always a way to make it easier to cope with. For instance, the aid that is given to the people who are in need of assistance should be regulated with stricter laws that make sure that the system is not taken advantage of. Also the issue with the vote for teenagers that can desecrate the American dream must be changed and if they can apprehend the power of the vote then know they are not fit to make the decision. In doing so will help the nation to succeed and in turn help the people succeed. John F. Kennedy's address at Rice University states, " The greater our knowledge increases, the greater our ignorance unfolds"(187-88). The nation is advancing at a rapid rate, the people should live above the ignorance and not cause any concerns that will jeopardize the American dream. Work Cited Inada, Lawson F. " On Being Asian American." American Dreams. Pearson Education, 2009. 197-98. Print. Johnson, Lyndon B. " Great Society Speech." American Dreams. Pearson Education, 2009. 192-96. Print. Kennedy, John F. " Address at Rice University: The New Frontier." American Dreams. Pearson Education, 2009. 187-91. Print. Kennedy, John F. "" Ask Not What Your Country Can Do For You"" Historical Document. Independence Hall Association, n. d. Web. 27 Nov. 2012. Levenson, Ellie. " The Voting Age Should Be Raised, Not Lowered." The Independent. Independent Digital News

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