Ava Cybulski

Jefferson Middle School

**MLK Racial Injustice Essay**

Dear President Trump,

The biggest challenge facing 1960s America mentioned by Dr. King that remains our greatest challenge for 2019 and beyond that I feel you should make a priority is racial injustice. Racial injustice is the inequality between different races within America that are displayed in the issues of wealth, power, and life opportunities, that affect people based on their race or ethnicity. The reasons I believe that racial injustice remains America's greatest challenge for 2019 and beyond are: some police forces used against African Americans are more brutal than used against Caucasian Americans, African Americans have a higher poverty rate than Caucasian Americans, and African Americans are incarcerated more than Caucasian Americans. By recognizing that these are real issues, I feel we, as Americans, can come to a solution to fix racial injustice, which I feel remains our greatest challenge for 2019 and beyond.

First of all, some police forces used against African Americans are more brutal than forces used against Caucasian Americans. In 2017, 223 African Americans were fatally shot by police. According to Smithsonian.com, “African Americans make up 13 percent of the US population, but account for 24 percent of people fatally shot by police.”   Although some police officers have used more force than needed when encountered with African Americans, I still support police officers who take the correct protocol when dealing with certain situations. I think a promising solution that could fix police brutality is realizing that it is a major problem and taking steps, like educating our police officers more and offering more protection and separation from the suspect instead of assuming they are dangerous. This is one reason why racial injustice needs to be addressed in 2019 and beyond.

Second of all, the incarceration of African Americans has a higher trend than the incarceration of Caucasian Americans in the United States. In 2014, out of the 6.8 million people in the correctional population, 2.3 million people were African American. While Caucasian Americans make up 64 percent of the total U.S population, they only make up 30 percent of the prison population. On the other hand African Americans make up twelve percent of the total U.S. population, but account for 32 percent of the people incarcerated in America. This leads into the thought of why are so many more African Americans being sent to prison? The Washington Post conducted a study testing if African Americans were being sent to prison for longer periods of time than Caucasians. The results for 2011-2016 shows that African Americans were being sent to prison 19.1 percent longer than Caucasians for doing the same crime. This is my second reason why I feel racial injustice is our greatest challenge facing 2019.

Lastly, my third reason why I feel racial injustice is our greatest challenge facing 2019 and beyond, is that African Americans have a higher poverty rate than Caucasian Americans. In 2016 the percentage of African Americans living in poverty was 22 percent, while the percentage of Caucasian Americans living in poverty was 9 percent. This could be because so many more African Americans are being incarcerated and being sent to prison longer for doing the same crime as Caucasian Americans, and when they come out it is harder for them to find jobs, which leads to them becoming impoverished. Another reason why African Americans have a higher poverty rate is because jobs in America are more likely to hire a Caucasian. Povertyactionlab.org conducted an experiment in which two professors, Mullainathan and Bertrand, examined nearly 5,000 resumes that had an African or Caucasian sounding name, also with a variety of experiences within each resume, all of which was random. The results indicated the resumes with Caucasian sounding names got 50 percent more call backs than those with African sounding names. The lack of call backs for jobs for African Americans leads to more of them living in poverty than Caucasian Americans. This is my final reason why I feel racial injustice is our greatest challenge for 2019.

In conclusion, out of all the challenges facing 1960s America mentioned by Dr. King, I believe that racial injustice remains our greatest challenge for 2019 and beyond. I believe this way because some police force used against African Americans are more brutal than used against Caucasian Americans, African Americans are incarcerated more than Caucasian Americans, and lastly African Americans have a higher poverty rate than Caucasian Americans. As Dr. King said, “It is an unhappy truth that racism is a way of life for the vast majority of white Americans, spoken and unspoken, acknowledged and denied, subtle and sometimes not so subtle- the disease of racism permeates and poisons a whole body politic. And I can see nothing more urgent than for America to work passionately and unrelentingly- to get rid of the disease of racism.” This is real to my core to support the fact that racial injustice is real, and like Dr. King I look to rid the poisons of racism for a better future for all.

Sincerely,

Ava Cybulski