



# Road to Self-Confidence College Scholarship

## Essay Submission

**Tyler Williamson: 1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner**

**\$1,000 Scholarship Award**

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### Essay Prompt

Please identify three social, economic or community issues in today's society; analyze each issue and discuss how would like to resolve each one.

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### Essay Response

We live in America: the land of the free, home of the brave. Yet, there are so many disparities in America, such as educational deficiencies, rising incarceration rates, voting rights and a range of many other social injustices. From the beginning of our country's founding, every American has dreamed of living the "American Dream" and that has become a social issue. It simply is not fair, and it is unethical to create a dream that is not optimal for every American to achieve. If the dream can only be acquired by those who can afford it, then it is not a dream but more of aspiration with a cost.

The "American Dream" is a hoax; it is the national ethos of the United States, and it is our nation's identity. Many say the American Dream is the belief that all people, no matter the class, race, or ethnicity, can achieve their own success in society. This is a social issue because how can you be afforded opportunity and access to your own success when you are not even seen equal to everyone else. As they say "All men are created equal...", but it cannot be true because of society's unseen rules and regulations. Those who do not understand these issues likely have always had the dream accessible to them with no acknowledgment of the misfortune it caused for other "Americans".

Educational deficiencies are often experienced by minorities or people of color. Minorities have been battling a war of social injustice due to their appearance and stereotype for many years. Educational disparities often occur depending upon one's income and location. Education is determined by area code. Sometimes a school has better resources, educators, facilities, and funding. Education brings a lot to the table; depending on one's foundational years, it can determine one's success in high school and college. Area code sometimes deter you from certain schools and that can make a different outcome for you in life and this is due to redlining, a discriminatory practice by most banks, insurance companies, etc., that refuse or limit loans, mortgages, and insurance, within specific geographic areas, especially inner-city neighborhoods. A solution to evening the playing field is to provide the same level of education to districts regardless of their zip codes and income. I personally went to a district school where zip code did not matter, and I believe this prepared me for my future because we were from all over Cleveland and received the same resources and type of education. No one was ahead of each other and we worked hard for our scale of honors and AP only courses on a 4.0 scale. Through personal experience I believe the solution of equality is the best way. Through personal experience, I believe the solution of equality is the best way.

When kids grow up into adults some go on to pursue their careers and others get lost along the way. The ones that fall short often make a mistake that leads them to incarceration. Mass incarceration rates have been rising in the U.S. since 1971. In particular, minorities are incarcerated at a disproportionate rate. A system designed by the oppressor cannot be resolved. The mentality has to be revamped. Society has to be renewed into learning a new perspective.

Sentencing guidelines should be reviewed and revamped to see why minorities are disproportionately incarcerated.

Changing sentencing laws will start the solutions process. Black or people of color should be afforded the “second chance”. Society can help by renewing their regulations. My suggestion is that jobs inhabit an encouragement policy for felons so they can have a bonus for every year they remain clean after incarceration. Resources like shelters and living programs to assist in the felons in the process.

I conclude with the issue of voting. Voting in a nation that is supposedly a democracy means that it should be the fairest right. Voting for people of color and women, both groups are underrated and severely underrepresented. Society makes women feel as if they should be seen and not heard. I think that my generation is going to open doors for women to be liberated. Women in today’s society have vocalized their power with the MeToo movement, MyBody, MyChoice Campaign and more. Women today are amplifying their voices to the next degree. Ratified on August 18, 1920, the 19th amendment gave women the right to vote and in 1920 “The African-American Women’s Suffrage” movement was formed to focus on the challenges of black women and people of color. Some still live in areas that do not allow them to vote or they are not given the resources to even become registered voters. In Guatemala, the Organization of American States (OAS) did not tally all the votes and some believed to be fraud. Many people from Guatemala try to leave before election time of a new term to come to the U.S. They leave to gain better opportunities by “voting” but get shortchanged upon arrival in the U.S.

I have personally always wanted to vote because I’ve been longing to leave my mark on the world to be able to speak for what I believe in and get to have an opinion on issues that affect my community. Voting impacts me because for so many years we have not been able to speak for what we agree with or believe in. According to CDC.gov there are 4,021,726 people born in 2002 that have not been able to vote in 17 years. So, 2020 is our election to be heard. Being able to vote gives you an unspeakable power because without even saying a word you are the loudest voice. My solution to voting challenges is to start voting drives and voting think tanks so youth will understand the importance of voting. Voting is essential right that must be exercised by all.

Even though these social, economic and community issues will not fully be eradicated by my stances, but it is definitely a start. I will continue to use my voice, take my stance on problems, and get with others who believe in being radicals for change to make America the land of the free and home of the brave. Ultimately, once these issues are addressed the “American Dream” will truly be obtained by all.