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Spring 2021

Dominion Energy and the South Carolina Department of Education's Strong Men & Women in South Carolina History

Many Americans are confronting the long history of racial violence in the United States that is often ignored and that has manifested itself in our political and social systems. One definition of social justice describes it as justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society. What does social justice mean to you? How has a lack of social justice throughout American history affected minority communities? What actions can you take in support of social justice?

Advocacy for social justice comes in many forms, from non-profit organizations dedicated to gender equality to a grassroots movement to fight conversion therapy. As a black immigrant woman who has resided in America for the worst part of five years, I have witnessed that the strongest form of advocacy comes from those who have suffered a plight and those who are often pushed to the back burner of the conversation. Social justice, to me, is more than equality, it is standing up for equity. While equality is giving the same treatment to everyone, equity is giving everyone what is necessary for them to be successful. A prime example of this is someone with poor eyesight who has to wear prescription lenses compared to someone with perfect eyesight. The person with poor eyesight is provided the resources to be just as successful as the person without. It may appear to be *unfair* to some, but it is commonly known as “evening the playing field,” giving everyone an equal opportunity, but not necessarily equality.

Throughout American history, minorities have been misrepresented, misjudged, stereotyped, bruised, broken, and forced to be subservient to the white man who is seen as the epitome of the ‘American Dream.’ This is a result of a lack of both equality and equity and often brings about a negative effect upon future generations. This is most evident in the black community, from two hundred years of “the peculiar institution” to a society in which the only thing that has changed is that our hardships are now taped and vaulted onto televisions and social media where everyone can witness. The lasting ramifications of this generational trauma present themselves in a gift-wrapped box of insecurities and disadvantages within the black community. There are major disparities in the varying career departments, such as the medical, law, and even engineering fields. Lack of education is generational, starting from grandparents and their grandparents who were not allowed the same level of education as those who were white. Minority communities in the past ten years more than often are the main recipients of the ‘First Generation Student’ title.

I plan to major in psychology, follow a pre-med track and become a psychiatrist who can help in the African-American community where there is a large disparity in the number of black physicians (including psychiatrists) in the field. This also shows through the statistics that minorities have a higher mental illness rate in the United States and this is also in part because of

the lack of physicians and/or psychiatrists of minority races. Minorities feel less inclined to speak of their trauma and seek the help they need. This comes from the stereotypes in society that black people don't feel hurt, both physically and mentally, as much as 'the dominant race' does. I hope to open my own private practice, modeled after my late grand-aunt who inspired me many years before to pursue the medical field. I hope to assist and enrich the black community in the United States, especially due to the trauma we have that spans years and years.