

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Attention Getter:** The picture shown on the board is an example of an unfair race. One of them not only starts farther behind, but they also have many obstacles to go through just to catch up to the same place as the other racer who is just inches away from the finish line. This can be used to describe the inequity African Americans face and/or have faced.
- B. Credibility Statement:** As a young black woman who has grown up in several different low-income neighborhoods consisting primarily of African Americans, I have seen first-hand the inequity our neighborhoods have compared to that of a predominantly white neighborhood.
- C. Audience Relevance:** This topic is relevant to all of us no matter your skin color or how you grew up because it is about the future of our country and how we can make it a better place.
- D. Thesis/Overview:** Today I will convince you as to why America should pay reparations for slavery, why those reparations should be in the form of free college education for African Americans, and how this can be accomplished.

II. BODY

- A. Why should America pay reparations for slavery?
1. The real question here should be, why not? See, America has done a lot of horrible things. It is nowhere near a perfect country. But with a lot of horrible things that were done, most times reparations were paid. The historical timeline on the library website of the University of Massachusetts Amherst titled "Reparations in the United States," shows all the reparations America made from 1700 to present day. For example, the website says how in 1988, "President Ronald Reagan signed a bill providing \$1.2 billion (\$20,000 a person) and an apology to each of the approximately 60,000 living Japanese Americans who had been interned during World War II." Another example found on the website is one of which Native Americans were giving reparations for the land taken from them. It states "In the United States Court of Claims case Tlingit and Haida Indians of Alaska v. United States, the plaintiff tribes won a judgment of \$7.5 million as just compensation for land taken by the United States government between 1891 and 1925." These examples are just few of many reparations that have been made for others. So why not also pay reparations for the horrific and disgusting acts that were done to black people while they were enslaved?

2. Some may argue that because slavery ended nearly 157 years ago, that it is too late to pay reparations since there are no longer any former slaves living in our present-day time. This argument has flaws to it. Although slavery itself was somewhat abolished, I say somewhat seeing as the 13th amendment allows slavery as a form of punishment such as imprisonment, what came next was discrimination and segregation. African Americans had reclaimed their legal rights such as citizenship and voting, but they had not yet reclaimed their societal rights. If the government did not even give African Americans their full, basic human rights, they were not going to pay reparations to them. In which they didn't and still haven't. And although there may not be any former slaves living amongst us, that does not mean that there are not any former victims of the Jim Crow Era, which ended around 1965, only 57 years ago. Although it was not slavery, the things done in those times were nearly just as worse. For example, on the Ferris State University News Website titled "Jim Crow Violence" an example reads "At the beginning of the 20th Century, much of the anti-black propaganda found in scientific journals, newspapers, and novels focused on the stereotype of the black brute. The fear of black men raping white women became a public rationalization for the lynching of black...Most of the victims were hanged or shot, but some were burned at the stake, castrated, beaten with clubs, or dismembered." This goes to show just how horrible African Americans were treated during this era.

TRANSITION: With that, we have established why reparations should be paid. Now it is time to move on to the topic of this speech.

- B. Why should those reparations be in the form free college education for African Americans?
 1. An article titled "Average Salary by Education Level: The Value of a College Degree", found on the website of Northeastern University by Tim Stobierski, published on June 2, 2020, shows a chart consisting of data provided from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. As you can see from the chart, the higher the college degree, the more money you make. But we all know college in America is expensive and not every African American household can afford to take on the financial responsibility that college brings or take on the debt that it will bring. Thus, giving free college education will not only allow for all African Americans to go to school, but also allow them to rise in social status and be able to earn just as much as others and be able to obtain lifelong careers instead of jobs.
 2. Some may argue that free college education for African Americans is unfair and a contradiction because it displays "racism" by showing favoritism to black people. This argument has flaws. See, free college education would be given as reparations. According to the Oxford Dictionary the definition of reparations is "the making of amends for a wrong one has done, by paying money to or otherwise helping those who have been wronged." Using the

historical Jim Crow Museum Timeline found on the Ferris State University News Website, black people were wronged for approximately 345 years. 246 years spent in slavery, the other 99 dealing with things such as Jim Crow Laws, segregation, discrimination, injustice, wrongful incarceration, etc. A wrong was done and for a long time, so it is time to make amends for it. Not only will getting a free college education help the African American community, but as stated earlier, they will earn more money from obtaining a higher education.

TRANSITION: So now we all understand why the reparations should be free college education for African Americans, but if this did happen, how would it even work?

C. How will this be accomplished?

1. To make this dream a reality, all we need is two things. Rich people and taxes. We all pay taxes and the government uses that to fund things. For example, free school lunches at public schools for those who fit the income criteria for it. So, to fund free college education for African Americans, those who are wealthy will pay more in taxes. This will also help to close the economical gap between white and black people. According to an article found on the website called Brooking.edu, titled "Examining the Black-White Wealth Gap", published on February 27, 2020, it states "At \$171,000, the net worth of a typical white family is nearly ten times greater than that of a Black family (\$17,150) in 2016." Showing the economical inequity between white and blacks.
2. Some may argue that this is unfair to make rich people pay or be punished for an act they did not commit. And to that I respond with this. They are not being punished. As stated earlier, taxes are something we all pay and we the people, do not control where it goes, the government does. There is really no difference. They are not going to jail, being killed, or anything of the sort. They are still doing their regular American duties. Paying taxes. Whether its for military equipment, free school lunches, or free college education, there will be no major or abrupt changes in their lives. If some still think its unfair, allow me to be a little blunt. It was not fair that a whole race was enslaved and that their human rights were taken from them all because of their skin color. It wasn't fair that a 14-year-old black boy named George Stinney was wrongfully executed for the murder of two white girls, making him the youngest American in modern time to be executed. A quote from the Stanford University "Say Their Names" Library Website Exhibit reads as so, "He was so small he did not fit into the electric chair. They had to sit him on several books, but his tiny head didn't fit the electric shock helmet, which kept slipping off and revealing the terrified, twisted, and tear-stained face of a little child." I think I do not need to go any further with more dreadful examples of the unjust and unequal treatment African Americans faced in this country. The point being that for 345 years, the inhumane treatment of African Americans

was acceptable. Why is it that the suffering of African Americans can be acceptable for so long, but when it comes to the benefit and helping of African Americans, it's suddenly unfair?

III. CONCLUSION

- A. Summary /Review:** In conclusion, we went over why reparations should be paid, why it should be in the form of free college education, and how it can be accomplished.
- B. Thesis:** I stand by my statement that America should pay reparations for slavery in the form of free college education for African Americans.
- C. Memorable Close:** Doing so will help fix the inequity within our country. And just like this picture on the board, we can be a country where we all stand at the same starting line.

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