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ENG 1121

Homelessness & Economy

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Homelessness in New York City is a concern that we need to act collectively and put an end to. I personally believe greed has led to the rise of homelessness in New York City. With all the resources we have acquired over the years and technology advance, no living human being should be struggling with housing problem. I have noticed many people sleeping in subways during winter time and on the concrete pavement during Summer time and it really defile common sense. Homelessness is a reality in New York City and I'm appealing to law makers to dig deep into the root cause of homelessness and up root the cause of the problem the sooner the better for the city and tax payers.

More than half of New York population are worried of losing their apartment within a month if they were to lose their job. What I'm trying to stress on is that, New Yorkers are living hand to mouth yet we heard politicians over and over fooling us about raising the minimum wage to a living wage. How many times do we witness minimum wages and housing prices rise simultaneously? This same old method of eradicating poverty in New York City will never work. I want every New Yorkers to stand up to lawmakers and let them know that affordable housing for every New Yorker is a most.

I felt homelessness is an issue of concern in New York City. I never knew how homelessness have eaten very deep to the very fabric of New York City. Sometimes I analyze the paradox of homelessness in a city with multiple skyscrapers, clusters of empty buildings and hotels but couldn't make an aorta of sense from the pitiful condition.

There are currently about 59,000(www.cityandstateny.com/articles/opinion/commentary/homelessness-housing-problem.html) New Yorkers staying in homeless shelters and several thousand more sleeping on the streets, figures fluctuate seasonally. This year's street homeless winter population count was, 3,675 people. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which uses a different methodology, pegged the total homeless population at more than 75,000 in a report released in December. As statistic shows, New Yorkers lack a roof and a pillow to lay their head on, they stay awake till late hours in the night. As a result of this, they ply the trains back and forth for the whole night and blend with sleeping New Yorkers in the morning time when they are going to their regular routines.

Homelessness is a reality in New York City and I'm appealing to the general public and the local government to do something about this unfortunate circumstances. More than half of New York populace are worried of losing their apartment within a month, if they were to lose their job. What I'm trying to stress on is that, New Yorkers are living hand to mouth yet, we heard politicians over and over fooling us about raising the minimum wage to a living wage. How many times do we witness minimum wages and housing prices rise simultaneously?

Location	12/31/16	12/31/17	12/31/18	12/31/19	12/31/20	2021*
NYC - Large Employers (of 11 or more)	\$11.00	\$13.00	\$15.00			
NYC - Small Employers (10 or less)	\$10.50	\$12.00	\$13.50	\$15.00		
Long Island & Westchester	\$10.00	\$11.00	\$12.00	\$13.00	\$14.00	\$15.00

Location	12/31/16	12/31/17	12/31/18	12/31/19	12/31/20	2021*
Remainder of New York State	\$9.70	\$10.40	\$11.10	\$11.80	\$12.50	*

General Minimum Wage Rate Schedule

Real Gross Rent History for New York

Date	US Median	New York Median	New York Average
2018	\$1,012	\$1,326	\$1,405
2017	\$996	\$1,313	\$1,301
2016	\$987	\$1,207	\$1,281
2015	\$956	\$1,175	\$1,245
2014	\$924	\$1,133	\$1,203
2013	\$912	\$1,113	\$1,188
2012	\$912	\$1,108	\$1,177
2011	\$927	\$1,105	\$1,179
2010	\$931	\$1,088	\$1,176
2009	\$947	\$1,095	\$1,183
2008	\$899	\$1,033	\$1,112
2007	\$909	\$1,042	\$1,112

Is there still anyone who doubts homelessness is a reality in New York City, follow me to the shelters. I have a certain degree of empathy for homeless people in New York City, this compels me to visit a family shelter in Brooklyn under the canopy of Samaritan Village. The shelter is located at, 652 Willoughby Avenue, Brooklyn New York. At the shelter I had the privilege to talk to Mr. Jones who is living in the shelter for seven months with his stepson who is 17 years old, a nine-year-old son and his wife. I asked

Mr. Jones who happen to have a regular job as a janitor, he usually left the shelter early in the morning and comes home late. I asked him, "if you had the opportunity to quit the shelter, would you he?" He answered was "yes" with grin on his face staring at me eye to eye. I then follow up with this question, "how comes you are such a hardworking man yet, living in a shelter with your entire household?" He said it was difficult for him to get another apartment in his previous neighborhood after losing his apartment. I asked him, "why did you lose your apartment?" He answered, "my landlord loses the mortgage to the bank and the new owner terms and conditions were impossible to meet so I and my entire household were evacuated from the apartment".

For Mr. Jones interview, I was avoiding to be offending him. I figured that he wasn't ready to delve deeper into the conversation. I also talk to Samar Battle, another household head in the shelter. He is living in the same mentioned shelter above with a girlfriend and a four-year-old son. I asked him, "How long did you live in this shelter?" He responds, "Bro, I have been in this shelter almost a year now, but I'm craving to move out of this place." He then further continued, "First of all, security harass me and my girlfriend anytime we coming in and going out by making us signing papers." I told him, "I feel your pain bro." And he was like, "Thank you." He further told me being in the shelter is terrible and unpleasant feeling for him and his girlfriend and their little boy. He told me he been to college and was able to acquired ninety-four credits but didn't graduate. He told me he also gets a felon on his record and this has make it difficult for him to get a reasonable job. I also spoke to a third resident, but I was surprise about the uniformity of their answers.

At first, I always blame homeless people in the subways with their smelly garments and nappy hair and reward the system that causes homelessness in most cases. Not all homeless people are lazy and not all lazy people are homeless. I'm not trying to fully blame the broken system that causes homelessness neither I'm I going to blame homeless people. I understand that some people get into substance abuse and alcohol as a result, they couldn't be in control of their lives and they end up being homeless in the streets. But the serious fact of the matter is that some hardworking people end up being homeless because the broken system fail to reward them enough to make ends meet. As a result, they end up in the streets of New York City and subways transit desperate and depress, therefore the only solace they could turn into is drug and alcohol. So the broken system cause lot of alcoholic and drug addicts.

I can't understand why should people work nine to five, six days a week yet they can't afford to put a roof over their head. This is a pitiful condition. I started having empathy for homeless people when I was working in a family shelter in Brooklyn. Most of these homeless families have a job they report yet those jobs can't afford to put a roof over their heads, yet those they work and make tons of money for have billions stored for future generations. What an irrational society are we living in. The poor are being exploited by the rich and being fool by politicians.

I start thinking deeply about the issues of homelessness in New York City when I read this article about homeless from Adler. In this article, he breakdown the figures of homelessness in the city year in and out, but the figures seem pitiful. Base on Adler's article, the average figure of homelessness per annum is fifty-nine thousand. This figure Adler reported exclude those homeless people sleeping in the streets and subways.

Adler wrote about how homeless people protested in the heart of Manhattan with boards inscribed with messages to New York City mayor. Well, Adler's article emphasizes on how preceding mayor's fail to address homelessness in New York City properly and I couldn't agree more. The current mayor Bill de Blasio is make profound effort to tackle the issues of homelessness but yet, his effort is being impede by various political factors and also the public not wanting a homeless facility to be constructed in their neighborhoods.

I just want the general public to know that, being without a roof over one's head, is not a thing one wish for. Having a homeless person as a neighbor should be a pride and a chance to reach out to help. The government is barely doing enough to tackle homelessness in the city of New York. It has been revealed by research that homeless people are prone to diseases such as HIV, Diabetes, pneumonia and asthma. This finding has always been true and is increasingly becoming true because homeless facilities are not properly taking care of, therefore, a breeding place for diseases causing organisms. Micro shelters, in NYC are totally untidy with twenty people sharing a dorm with tiny beds little lockers to keep their belongings. What a breeding place for disease causing organisms. Based on empirical observation, most of the homeless people in a micro shelter health deteriorate the longer they continue to live in the shelter. Some people in shelters are over sixty-five years I would recommend for them to be in nursing homes instead of such deplorable condition. Some are mentally ill and others could easily be recycling into the society. This could be done by providing a psychiatry to help them quit their old habits. I think this could be a healthy solution for this people to be productive once again and be useful to the society and

themselves. Keeping them in such a horrible condition, given them food and unemployment benefits is not helping at all. Most of them still keep their old habits of drug abuse, therefore, the willingness to work for a living continue to diminished. Youth homelessness continue to rise to an unprecedented level, this doesn't tell well about the future of our labor force. Youths are the backbone of our economy, losing one to homelessness and loose drugs in the streets is exposing our city and nation to a gloomy future. Youth empowerment should start with the environment youths are exposed to.

Homelessness is primarily cause by

1. Lack of employment
2. Low wages
3. Drugs and alcohol
4. Rise in housing cost annually
5. Gentrification

We would like to urge the city government and the general public for us to join hands and address this issues that keep leading some hardworking New Yorkers to homelessness. It's obvious that the economy is the driving tool to homelessness. As a result of bad economy policy, many youngsters result to selling drugs and prostitution is on the rise as well.

The problem of homelessness could be solved by:

1. Good economy policy. This could be achieved by lawmakers in Congress and the city of New York in particular to work for the interest of the masses than few businessmen who propel them in offices. Economy policy should always be drafted to favor the majority of our community. We both could bear witness that in most instances, our very

lawmakers, both in Congress and the city council are being highjack by those with finance capabilities. This is something the masses need to stand and get rid of the sooner the better for our beloved city. Lawmakers need to make sure, every working person in the city of New York is being paid a wage that quadruple the cheapest apartment in the city of New York. That being said, the city local government need to have power to determine the prices of rent and other basic amenities in the city of New York. Without these being addressed at a higher level, the issues of eradicating homelessness in the city of New York is going to be nothing but a fleeting illusion to be pursue.

2. The first solution is kind of entangle with low wages. Low wages are more common within minimum wage workers and this group both individual is predominantly those without college degree. We need to encourage youths to attain some level of tertiary education in order to be able to increase their earning potential. We also need to make sure minimum wage and price of commodities and rent cost cease to rise simultaneously.

3. Drugs and alcohol is another major issues that led so many youths to live a carefree and nonchalant attitude. This has led higher percentage of youths in our community to unemployment and finally homelessness. Drugs prevalent in our streets is a security flaw and endangering our youths to become drugs addicts. Drugs is a major concern and the city local government need to further scrutinize the potential sources of drugs in our streets. Those people who are responsible for the importation of drugs in our community need to be fetched out and face maximum consequences. Drugs and

alcohol is single handedly the major cause of homelessness. A study has been conducted, over ninety percent of those homeless use drugs or alcohol.

4. Housing cost should be determined by the city government, any landlord who refuse to comply should face the full consequences of the law.

5. Gentrification shouldn't be a factor to the rising price of a certain neighborhood.

References

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Journal of Adolescence; www.elsevier.com/locate/jado

