

## **ETHICS & ECONOMICS**

### **Taylor McDowell**

The fact of the matter is the United States government does not have the funds for taking care of the homeless, putting forth billions of dollars towards the problem goes against the American system of government. We need to look at priorities and the cost of other issues before the problem of homeless is addressed. The War in Iraq and Afghanistan, health care, stock market, housing market, and education all need to be addressed and revised before the homeless problem. This may be pushing the homeless problem to the side, but I deem it necessary to establish priorities.

America was based on a capitalistic government; meaning if one wants to make money that person needs work in the free market. In this form of economy, persons who do nothing receive nothing from the government; that would come in the form of communism. In capitalism, one must give to society to receive anything in return. I don't believe that America is turning its back to the problem; I believe America has its hands tied.

It is true that homeless people are sick and need help, but aren't there many other people in that same situation? I know a few people who are chronically ill, and they have worked very hard to pay for their own health care. Homeless people are in a difficult situation, and I understand this. I also know that there are many more people out there who also have it very hard, but they're contributing to society and making something of themselves.

### **Spencer Stilwell**

Our topic to cover for this semester has been homelessness. This statement will focus on possible solutions for homelessness through economics. Two of the economic issues which are going to be covered in this statement involve balancing wealth and providing finances for institutions.

Money and financial backing are one of the main problems that have inflated homelessness. Our country's balance of wealth is expanding, and more people are making more and more money. The others are making less and less money. Increasing amounts of football and baseball players are making nine-figure salaries and taking money away from those who can barely make five-figures. According to a 2001 survey, the poverty line was \$9,034.00. (Vickery, Williams, Lugo). That's just below five-figures. A journal in Fairfax County says we have to "change policies on distribution of public and private financial resources for an efficient and effective eviction prevention response." (Fairfax County).

On the other hand, financial padding for institutions such as mental care or drug rehabilitation will keep more off the street who cannot support themselves. We should "work to end the practice of discharge or release from institutions to homelessness." (Fairfax County). This will provide and fulfill the proper attention that many physically or mentally ill homeless need. In effect, this will not only lower the homeless population, but it might take away some of the street's troublemakers.

### **Clancy Rybur**

Do social programs need more social funding or are there more important things in the United States that need the money? Our countries leaders spend the money given to them on the things that they think are most important for the safest environment. Some people say that we need to spend our money on homeland security and the war instead of all the homeless suffering people that live here. They may be onto something but if we help these struggling people then we can build a sturdy base to form the strongest possible society. Then if we have a well-built base we can function with other countries in a more sophisticated and safer way. We will have a strong backing and support from all of the USA's people.

There are many great ideas to help these ill homeless people onto their feet and off the streets. We just need the money to support these methods to get the homeless into an apartment and healthy again. There are many committed and people willing to commit to help out this cause to give these people what they need for recovery. This topic would be a great discussion topic in a large group. People with thought on this topic may blurt out or raise their hand. Not every one needs to speak. Can we raise money to benefit both sides of the government? Do you think either of these struggles will every have a resolution? The funding of social programs and where that money should go to will be an easily discussed and successful topic.

### ***Chad Sievers***

The homeless situation in our country is a growing problem that can no longer be ignored. In us 101 this year, we have read the Gladwell essay and The Soloist. These pieces of literature have helped me and others become aware of the homeless problem, and through this awareness many of us have developed opinions on how this situation should be dealt with.

My particular research has lead me to the area of programs for the homeless. This part interests me because I believe that the best way to solve and help the homeless problem is through the programs being pursued throughout the country. The question that I ask is, what program for the homeless is the most effective? I have found that there are successful programs that help veterans in Texas. There is also a program that provides housing to the homeless and it appears to be very successful. Much of what I have found is that the homeless do better when they shape their own recovery.

In the Town Hall Meeting, I would like to discuss how to help the homeless problem locally as well as nationally. Also, what are ways that this can be accomplished? It would also be beneficial for other people in the meeting to give ideas on what they think might be the best course of action. Together I hope that we can discuss the homeless situation and come up with real ideas to solve the problem.

### ***Joseph Sweeney***

My Town Hall topic will be the economic impact the homeless have on our society as a whole. The main research question I have discovered, is comparing the costs of giving the chronically homeless (and their families if they have them) their own place of residence at no cost to them. According to a survey by the Lewin Group, the cost of actually giving the homeless a home is exponentially cheaper than allowing them to self-destruct on the dangerous open streets. At this point, they only serve to burden the hospitals with healthcare costs that can potentially be reduced by an incredible degree if the right action is taken. Also, it seems to be interpreted as a crime in the eyes of the justice system to be homeless, i.e. affecting businesses on a street with a large homeless population. Imprisoning the homeless costs money, which could be spent on cheap apartment rent rather than complete alienation from society.

These positions are controversial because they demand the question between fairness and effectiveness. Costs would undoubtedly be reduced, saving millions annually, but would that take away incentive for Americans to go to work knowing they could have a home they wouldn't have to work to stay in? Is this fair? However, there would potentially be less homeless if they were actually allowed to stay somewhere besides the street. Thus far I am inclined to believe the pros of just giving the homeless homes weighs out the cons, but an open discussion will probably offer other compelling perspectives.

### ***Joseph Guerri***

I am in the group discussing the economic problems and ethics regarding the chronically homeless. This group of homeless people put a significant strain on our economy and it is our job to consider ways of dropping the cost of this group while staying ethical and fair to others that are a part of the working class but still cannot

afford to support their family. Throughout the semester, I have gained a respective knowledge about homelessness collectively from a series of articles and books. The main idea from the text I have acquired is that the chronically homeless account for millions of dollars in medical bills and that every case is different, making it hard to find an all-encompassing solution.

One idea I would like to discuss is that the chronically homeless are costing tax payers millions of dollars and that by giving them their own apartment will save much of that money from going toward their medical bills. This would make sense economically, and it would be especially easy to purchase an apartment or piece of land in the current market. As a concerned United States citizen I would like to see money going toward the homeless minimized.

Along with this solution comes ethical problems. Most people do not want to see a person living on the street with no motivation to succeed receive shelter of their own while there are working couples with a family to support who would benefit far more and are much more deserving.

I would like to see the conversation bounce between the ethical and economic facts, ultimately coming to a conclusion of whether or not free housing is ethical. Further research will involve finding more facts and figures to see which outweighs the other.