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**Cup & Brew**

Poverty in the United States

**Introduction**

Cup & Brew is a locally owned coffeehouse in Auburn, Alabama. They serve an assortment of espresso-blended beverages, teas, and pastries while actively attempting to turn their profits into hope. Cup & Brew donates 100% of its profits to help fight poverty in Lee County, and they are deeply committed to serving their community well.

**Background Information**

Poverty is widespread in the United States, and according to the American Enterprise Institute, persistent poverty is directly tied to joblessness. Persistent poverty is defined as a person experiencing poverty by more than 27 months out of 36 months (Rachidi, 2018).

**Current Situation**

* **Effects of Poverty in the United States**

According to research conducted by ATD Fourth World, the U.S. has one of the highest poverty rates in the developed world. One in six Americans lives below the poverty line, which is as low as $11,700 for a single person or $24,250 for a family of four (Poverty Myths Busted, 2018). The official poverty rate in 2010 was 10.5%, based on information found in the U.S. Census Bureau, which means that around 50 million Americans live on incomes below the federal poverty level (Census, 2019).

* **Effects of Poverty on Adults**

Poverty runs rampant in the United States and can have incredibly negative effects on the behaviors and overall health of adults. The Center for Poverty Research at the University of California, Davis noted that the poverty rates for adults, ages 18 to 64, in the United States is 14% (Poverty, 2020). Poverty strains adults and oftentimes leads to malnutrition and stress. A lack of proper resources can lead to increased neurobehavioral and psychological disorders, according to the American Psychological Association (Effects of Poverty, 2020).

* **Effects of Poverty on Children**

In addition to adults, poverty greatly damages the well-being of children, and it can be devastating to both their physical and mental health (Effects of Child Poverty, 2020). The Children’s Society conducted research, which indicated that children living in poverty are more likely to:

* Have poor physical health.
* Experience mental illness.
* Underachieve at school.
* Experience employment issues in adulthood.
* Experience social deprivation.
* Feel unsafe.

Around 16.5 million children in the United States live in poverty (Marston, 2020). According to the American Psychological Association, children experiencing poverty are also at a much higher risk of experiencing the following:

* Impulsivity.
* Difficulty interacting with peers.
* Aggression.
* Conduct disorder.
* Anxiety.
* Depression.
* Poor nutrition.
* Risky behavior.
* Exposure to violence.
* **Poverty in Alabama**

While poverty is damaging to both adults and children nationwide, poverty in the state of Alabama is also particularly high. Data from the 2019 U.S. Census Bureau indicated that Alabama is the sixth poorest state in the nation and that 16.9% of Alabama residents live below the federal poverty line. This means that over 800,000 Alabamians, including over 262,000 children, are living in poverty (Census, 2020). Even more specifically, 19% of all Lee county residents are impoverished. These numbers are startlingly high and are cause for concern.

**Key Players**

To help alleviate some of the poverty in the state of Alabama and the Auburn community, certain policies will need to be altered and funds will need to be reallocated. In order to accomplish these goals, a partnership must be created with Gov. Kay Ivey. Furthermore, Sen. Richard Shelby and Sen. Doug Jones could also help fight for funding for their constitutions. These three governmental officials would serve as the best advocates for gaining necessary funds and employment opportunities for their constituents.

**Possible Solutions & Conclusion**

Poverty is a complex, global issue and cannot be solved overnight. Cup & Brew will continue to donate and to offer support to those in need. Ultimately, the federal minimum wage will need to be increased to give individuals a fighting chance at living above the poverty line. Without higher wages and appropriate compensation, poverty will continue. Furthermore, employment opportunities need to be created so that people have the chance to provide for themselves and their families. If unemployment rates continue to increase, poverty will also increase. Progress takes time, but each step in the right direction will help to lessen the overall effects of poverty.

This backgrounder should be sent to all state media outlets including (but not limited to): The Birmingham News, The Huntsville Times, and The Montgomery Advertiser. The backgrounder should also be sent to local media providers, such as The Plainsmen and The Opelika Auburn News. Additionally, it should be posted on the Alabama Local News website and the Opelika Auburn News website, as these online platforms receive thousands of views daily. Awareness needs to be spread within the state, as well as within the Auburn community to help alleviate this issue.

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