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Abstract

America has long been hailed as the land of opportunity. However, in recent years we have experienced unprecedented levels of income inequality and a widespread increase in the working poor. Despite the United States' long held belief of the self-made, thriving family, today's world paints a much different picture. I put together ideas and statistics from books such as *Corporations are not People*, *The Big Squeeze*, and *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*, scholarly articles, and information I learned firsthand from my recent work with Beneficence Family Scholars, a nonprofit operating in Muncie, Indiana. Throughout the paper I lay out the case for why we have a systemic problem with how we treat the poor in the United States and how making education more accessible allows individuals and communities to escape the shackles of generational poverty.

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