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Cuomo's Inaction for the Most Vulnerable

The Covid-19 outbreak has impacted the United States in a way no one believed it would. The United States failed to prepare its country for this pandemic and now, its own New York is struggling the most. New York became the epicenter of the virus and with the unemployment rate increasing and financial stability becoming an issue, many people have filed for unemployment and received a stimulus check of \$1200. Unfortunately, this is not something that every struggling New Yorker qualifies for. With New York being heavily populated with undocumented immigrants, many have found themselves struggling to make ends meet during the pandemic. In addition to the financial struggle during this time, many undocumented immigrants do not have healthcare which makes it all the more difficult to receive the proper treatment they will need if they test positive for the virus. Despite the fact that these issues should be made a priority, New York's governor, Andrew Cuomo, responded to a question about financial compensation for the undocumented immigrants in a video from New York Post by saying, "We're looking into it but we have real financial problems." Overall, undocumented immigrants living in New York deserve to be compensated with the same financial compensation like other New Yorkers during the pandemic because mitigation strategies are not sufficient enough to provide the proper relief, undocumented immigrants pay taxes as everyone else, and many are struggling to bring food to their tables.

As a response to the clip of Cuomo, Kathleen R. Page wrote a piece about this issue titled, “Undocumented Immigrants and Covid-19,” in which she explains how the relief being granted to undocumented immigrants during the pandemic is merely a “mitigation strategy” rather than the correct compensation they deserve. In Page’s article, she emphasizes her message using pathos and logos. Her central idea is that the actions being taken to protect undocumented immigrants during the pandemic are not enough to assist them through this hard time. With her statement, “These measures... will not reverse but may mitigate Covid-19’s impact on undocumented immigrants and the health of the public at large,” it is understood that mitigation strategies will not suffice to assist undocumented immigrants. Using words such as “reverse” appeals to pathos and allows for the reader to understand that the consequences of being neglected during a pandemic are very serious and should be taken care of. This statement is very relevant and one that Cuomo should take into account as it counters his statement on focusing his energy on something else. Additionally, Page writes, “... 8.3 million U.S. children live with at least one noncitizen adult and are at risk of losing Medicaid or Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) benefits, household nutrition assistance, or both.” With the use of logos in this statement and explaining the amount of children who will suffer, it also allows for the reader to feel sympathy for those struggling during this time. It is for these reasons that the undocumented population in New York is suffering the most. They are being neglected and these mitigation strategies are very close to insulting. While the rest of the population receives federal aid and financial assistance, the undocumented community is struggling and, as Page explained, will lose medical benefits. The entire nation is struggling, not just those who are lucky enough to receive aid. Therefore, it is mandatory that undocumented immigrants receive the same financial

compensation as the rest of their fellow New Yorkers. Page delivers a very convincing argument to this injustice which very clearly contradicts Cuomo's actions during the pandemic. With the incorporation of various data on the many groups that are suffering during this epidemic, this piece allows for further interpretation on the true ethics behind lawmakers, such as Cuomo, during this time. Therefore, going back to the clip where Cuomo responds to the question about undocumented immigrants, it must be noted that ethics plays a major role in this matter. It is unethical to exclude anyone struggling during a pandemic for any reason at all.

Accommodating the argument Page makes about mitigation strategies being insufficient, many others see this as a major issue and have offered to help. A New York Times article titled, "George Soros's Foundation Pledges \$130 Million in Coronavirus Relief" discusses the financial contribution by philanthropist, George Soros. Soros pledged \$130 million for New York to receive the coronavirus relief they need. \$37 million of that money will go to the at risk population in New York which includes undocumented immigrants. Soros joined together with the mayor of New York, Bill de Blasio, as his foundation will be managing the process. As mentioned earlier, undocumented immigrants deserve the same financial compensation as the rest of New York. Therefore, finding an alternative way to help, such as seeking a partnership with the mayor rather than the governor, emphasizes the importance of getting to these people's needs. This clear example of "no excuses" only further stresses Governor Cuomo's negligence to comply to the undocumented community. A global pandemic is no time to choose who receives financial assistance and who does not. This article uses logos to appeal to the audience and explains exactly which group of people are receiving money and why. Soros will be donating a large portion to undocumented immigrants specifically because they are an "at risk" group. The

undocumented community has been at risk since before the pandemic as they are constantly neglected. Therefore, they should receive assistance throughout this crisis. Furthermore, in Brian MacQuarrie's article, "As Coronavirus Spreads, Undocumented Immigrants are Losing Jobs With No Financial Safety Net," he stated that Congress gathered roughly two-trillion dollars for coronavirus stimulus checks and "not a penny will go to millions of undocumented immigrants." Through the use of logos, it is apparent how absurd it is to neglect the undocumented community with that much money being handed out. A pandemic should have served as a time in which the neglect comes to an end, at least temporarily, yet many lawmakers refuse to see it that way. It is for those reasons that more fortunate people, like Soros, have been of great assistance in granting this community the financial relief they were lacking during these troubling times.

Moreover, a U.S. representative from Michigan, Rashida Tlaib proposed an act to combat this issue. In an article from Fox News titled, "Democrats Push For Illegal Immigrants to Get Coronavirus Stimulus Cash," the recent attempts and actions regarding the denial to grant undocumented immigrants aid during Covid-19 are discussed. Tlaib's act will grant a preloaded \$2000 debit card to every American who pays taxes in the United States. In addition, the article states that the act will, "include "non-citizens, including undocumented people, permanent residents, and temporary visitors whose stay exceeds three months." To reiterate, undocumented immigrants in New York City are suffering a great deal of financial negligence as Governor Cuomo refuses to acknowledge this as a real issue during the global pandemic. Not only is Representative Tlaib's decision one that will provide assistance to undocumented immigrants, but it is one that will allow for lawmakers like Cuomo to understand that undocumented immigrants deserve financial compensation. In addition to suffering through a pandemic, a large

majority of undocumented immigrants pay taxes just as everyone else does. This article emphasizes logos in order to be direct about the issue. It has already been noted that Cuomo has neglected the undocumented community and it is clearly unethical. However, by including the fact that a large amount of the undocumented community pay taxes as well, it allows for more than just a sentimental response. It is proof that the undocumented community should be granted equal services during this crucial time.

In addition to those previously mentioned, a Queens Assemblywoman, Catalina Cruz, is providing relief for the undocumented community during the pandemic. Through an article titled, “‘If We Are Going to Call Ourselves a Sanctuary City We Have to Wear the Pants and Protect Immigrants’: Assemblywoman Catalina Cruz Defends Undocumented Workers,” it is explained how Cruz addresses the governor and his lack of assistance. Although her way to provide relief is not through direct financial assistance, Cruz organized a community pantry which includes fruits, vegetables, and a hot meal for the neighborhoods she represents in Queens, New York. This goes to show that there are many ways that public officials can help their communities. Without an income or a stimulus check, the ability to provide for a family can be difficult. Cruz’ community pantry is a very generous and effective method to assist those struggling during this time. In reference to Page’s article, she explained how children of undocumented immigrants will not be eligible for certain food services. Although these circumstances vary throughout every state, it is another way in which this group is being neglected. Cruz does an excellent job at combating this issue as a response to Cuomo’s failure to comply to the undocumented’s financial needs. With this action, she demonstrates the inclusion of everyone she represents and that no family, regardless of their immigration status, should be struggling to pay for basic necessities

such as food. Leaders, such as Cruz, must be applauded for the initiative to step up when the basic needs of people are not being met. This example of Cruz points out the issues that the governor refuses to take to his own hands. Altogether, undocumented immigrants deserve the same financial relief as the rest of New York and it is urgent that Cuomo stops excluding them.

Heather Griers writes a compelling piece about the undocumented community during the pandemic. Her article, “Maybe if I Had Papers, It Would Have Been Different’: Undocumented During a Pandemic,” is composed of many short narratives of struggling immigrants in New York. Griers explains an unfortunate situation in which Raul, an undocumented Mexican immigrant, has been left jobless, cannot provide for his family in Mexico, and constantly fears ICE will come after him. He does not qualify for unemployment checks or a stimulus check and is struggling to pay his bills. Through the use of pathos, Griers allows for the reader to feel compassion for Raul and therefore, delivers her message which is that undocumented immigrants are struggling and deserve to be helped. It is unfair that a hardworking man is out of a job through no fault of his own and still has to worry about putting food on his table and paying his rent. Without any help from the government and no income, it is nearly impossible to continue his life in New York. The message of this article should speak to lawmakers who refuse to see everyone equally during this outbreak. To reference Page again, she stated that it is not enough to introduce mitigation strategies. Until lawmakers choose to see it that way, a fast recovery will be difficult. To touch upon the video clip of Cuomo again, the way in which he quickly disregards the question and suggests that he does not care for the issue makes Grier’s article so much more significant. This article highlights the damage that is happening due to Cuomo’s negligence. In

order for the state to properly recover from the pandemic, everyone must be receiving the same benefits.

Ultimately, it is extremely important that Governor Cuomo takes all of the struggling lives of undocumented immigrants into account when he creates policies. It is unethical to allow a group of people to struggle to survive during a pandemic simply because of their immigration status. Watching other people create policies that help undocumented immigrants should serve as a wake up call that everyone is equally struggling and everyone deserves a helping hand in such dark times. His lack of remorse for the continuous fight that the undocumented community is facing is absolutely unacceptable and although many have stepped up to provide aid, this should be a top priority for a governor.

Reflection

Coming up with a thesis statement was a bit more complicated than I anticipated. I found that with my topic, there were so many issues regarding undocumented immigrants and the pandemic, that it became difficult to only focus on one. I decided to make my thesis, “Overall, undocumented immigrants living in New York deserve to be compensated with the same financial compensation like other New Yorkers during the pandemic because mitigation strategies are not sufficient enough to provide the proper relief, undocumented immigrants pay taxes as everyone else, and many are struggling to bring food to their tables”. I decided to discuss mitigation strategies, immigrants paying taxes, and the struggle to bring food to the table because they all fall under financial neglect from Cuomo.

I had trouble finding information because my topic is about the pandemic which we are living through currently. With information constantly being updated and new policies being put in place, I had to look through the most recent articles to make sure my information was up to date. It was also very difficult to find my three scholarly articles on the topic because, in general, most of the information regarding the coronavirus can be found on simple current news outlets such as *The New York Times*, and CNN. It was very tedious to read through scholarly articles only to realize that “New York” was not mentioned at all in the article. I limited my essay to only discuss the issue in New York. I figured that because I live here and it is the epicenter of the virus, there would be an abundance of articles about my topic. However, when it came to the scholarly sources, I realized that was not entirely true. When looking through secondary sources, it was very quick and simple to decide which ones would be relevant to my essay. For instance, the article, “If we are going to call ourselves a sanctuary city we have to wear the pants and

protect immigrants’: Assemblywoman Catalina Cruz defends undocumented workers”, was a very essential part to my essay. I have a close connection to this article because my family benefitted from her services so I knew very well that it was a reliable source. In addition, I chose this article because although Cruz does not directly provide people with stimulus checks, she found an alternative way to assist her community, which I found to be just as important. Therefore, I felt the need to include this article.

I found it very difficult to analyze my sources. The most difficult source to analyze was, “As coronavirus spreads, undocumented immigrants are losing jobs with no financial safety net”. This was because the information presented in this article was very similar to the claim I was making. Therefore, it was difficult to form my own opinion on it because our opinions were basically the same. When I analyzed my sources, I decided to analyze the ethos, logos, and pathos within the articles because I made the argument that Cuomo’s decisions are unethical. Most of my sources included data and personal stories that proved this argument to be true.

Overall, the sources I chose helped me form my main argument which is that undocumented immigrants deserve to be financially compensated the same way as the rest of New York. All my sources provided examples of ways that people of higher positions are providing aid for undocumented immigrants. I chose these articles so that they can counteract Governor Cuomo’s decisions during the pandemic. They provided me with proof as to why my claim was important and pointed out the issues in Cuomo’s ideas.

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