

Reflection

Although I live in Las Vegas, I am lucky enough to not live in a food desert. I have the privilege of being able to bike 5 minutes to my nearest grocery store, where I have access to fresh and affordable food. Millions, however, are not as fortunate as me. 23.5 million Americans, or 8.4% of our total population live in food deserts, where they do not have access to healthy, nutritious food. This is simply ridiculous, and as the greatest country in the world, we cannot let our own citizens dry up.

The redlining that has existed in our society for centuries is at the root of the problem. Food deserts are usually in low-income areas, where people have little knowledge of nutrition and cannot afford expensive foods. Because of this, grocery store profits are vastly lower than in higher income areas, which causes stores to move away from this area, perpetuating the vicious cycle. Government action is needed to solve this issue. First, it is an education problem. If lower income individuals were taught how detrimental processed foods are, they would be much more inclined to buy fresh food. To enact this, the federal government needs to mandate nutrition classes in schools all across the country, which will teach us all how to eat right. After this, fresh and affordable foods need to be introduced into these food deserts. Now, suppliers will not face the problem of lack of customers, as citizens will know the importance of good food. Although the issue is more complex than this, I believe that the root of the problem is lack of access, and the root of this problem is lack of demand, and the root of this problem is lack of education.

Plan

The most important thing, as I outlined in my reflection, is education. Although I believe it is the government that needs to enact legislature to deal with this, I can still do my part in my community. This is why, as president of my school's environmental club, I am setting up an environmental education and gardening section, which serves to educate the youth, particularly low-income youth on what foods are good, and seeing how the foods are grown.

The first part of the plan is locating food deserts in Las Vegas. Here, I have found a map from a reputable source of where food deserts are. Next, I need to find schools located in these food deserts. To do this, I overlaid a map of all public schools in Las Vegas over the food desert map. Next, I selected the schools that overlap in the food deserts. The students at these schools live in the food deserts, and most likely have little access to fresh foods. After this, I am going to design an education system which will teach students the importance of the fresh foods. I will consult with experts and learn the true nature of nutrition and take what is most important and present it to the food kids. Finally, it is time for the garden. Learning how vegetables and fruits are produced can be a real eye-opening experience, as it was for me, and can get students to take food waste and food nutrition a lot more seriously. I plan to try and open small gardens, and put teachers in place, at as many as these schools as possible. These moderators will show

students the process of growing vegetables, and in the end how to cook with the vegetables and fruits they grew.

