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ENG 100

Research Paper

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WORK, Work work

The full-time American workforce is not legally obligated to a single day of paid vacation time. For many of the people reading this that may not seem too radical, but after, watching Michael Moore’s documentary Where to Invade Next, reading scholarly articles, research oriented websites, and to me most importantly being a member of the full-time American workforce, who is not legally obligated to a single day of paid vacation. I’ve realized that America does have a major flaw, and that flaw is that we do not have enough time to enjoy our lives. American’s are far too single mindedly, focused on making a living, and nothing more, compared to the rest of the advanced economies in the world, that understand the importance that vacation time, and family time.

**America Compared to the Rest of the World**

Davis points out that all 28 countries in the European Union are required by law to have four weeks of paid vacation. Four weeks of paid vacation may seem like an unfathomable amount of vacation time to Americans, but the four weeks; 20 days of paid vacation is just a minimal in the European Union (Davis). Many of the countries in the European Union are requiring much more mandated paid vacation time, with the countries being the most, France requiring 31 days, Spain and Germany requiring 34 days, and Portugal and Austria requiring 35 paid days of paid vacation days, these numbers of days off are including mandatory vacation time and public holidays combined (Alexander, Hess).

When we take a look at America’s legally obligated paid vacation days for full time workers, you will see that we are not entitled to not a single day of paid vacation. According to Jack Dickey, “The U.S. is the one and only advanced economy that does not require employers to offer paid holidays or time off.” This is extremely shocking as this is the “land of opportunity.” What good is all of the opportunity if there isn’t a way to spend time with your family, without worrying about bills, and responsibilities?

**Mental and Health Issues**

Without having a vacation to look forward to many Americans will develop above a healthy level of stress, leaving them in the feeling of being in a rut, which tears families further apart (Kolowich). According to Dr. Michael Jonesco, physician at the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, being overworked can lead to depression, higher resting heart rate, irregular sleep schedule, constantly being tired, hair loss, and being more prone to illness via a decrease functionality in the immune system. These symptoms will lead workers feeling restless, and ill, and will effect the individuals work productivity, and attendance (Dickey).

**Worker Productivity**

When thinking about working how happy your employees are may not seem to be too important, but that’s not true. Jonha Revesencio’s article Why Happy Employees Are 12% More Productive posted on fastcompant.com on July 22nd 2015. Claims “New research suggests we work more effectively, creatively, and collaboratively when we’re happy at work.” Which can increase a company’s productivity by 12% (Revesencio). Having a 12% increase of productivity may not seem far to pleasing, but with more than the majority of the full time workforce hating their work, and not being engaged in their work, the majority of the American workforce has a -10% in productivity (Revesencio). This makes a 22% difference in productivity from the rare happy workers; engaged workers and, the most commonly found unhappy workers; unengaged workers (Revesencio).

Johna Revesncio, also states how the happiness starts since you’re a kid, and having experiences such as vacation’s as a child will increase your happiness, social skills, and emotional skills, throughout life. Children with above average social skills and, emotion skills, are better while performing under stress (Jones). Many full time jobs and stress come as a combined package, in the full time American workforce. According to Harvard researchers, Phil Stone, and Tal Ben-Shahar, when children become adults they are able to bring their social skills, emotional skills, and resilience to stress, to the workplace, that they have learned as a child. These skills will help them create better bonds with co-workers, consumers, and even family members, which will give them a better chance to strive in the work force and provide themselves with a more luxurious style of life (Jones).

**Moore’s Italy Argument**

Michael Moore’s video documentary Where to Invade Next starts off his invasion with the line, “Have you ever noticed, that Italians always look like they just had sex?”. Now that may seem very confusing at first but, Italians have so much vacation time, and their government prioritizes vacation time, that the Italian Government mandates unused paid holidays go into the following year. Italians also have a two hour lunch break every single day, These are some of the main reasons that the individuals of Italy always “look like they just had sex.”, which is key to why on average Italians live four years longer, than the typical American (Moore).

The most impactful moment in Where to Invade Next was, when the Italian couple was telling Michael Moore how it is a goal for most Italians to move to America, to fulfill the American dream. Michael Moore, informs the couple how by law they are not entitled to a single day of vacation. When the news is presented the couples faces looked as if they just saw a ghost, and the results stayed the same for the rest of the people, That Michael Moore have the news to.

Michael Moore closes the scene in Italy talking about how The United States, and Italy are both among the top 15 most productive countries in the world, even though American’s work a tremendous more amount of hours than Italians. American’s on average work 47 hours a week (Isidore). While Italy only works a total of 37 hour a week, that means American’s work a total of 10 hours more or; %21.2 increase in time spent working (Claudio). This is very reinforcing on how vacation time leads to employees’ being much happier, and how happier employee’s lead to much more productive employees in the work place (Revesencio).

**Counter Argument**

I understand that there are many possible counter arguments that may be able to think of on why mandatory vacation time does not seems feasible, but in the world we live in anything is feasible. Vacation time is one of the most important things in life for many Americans. Having the mind set of being able to go on a vacation gives many people a purpose in life, especially when a vast majority of the people in our country do not in joy their workplace (Abigail, Hess). The most common reason a person will give why they should not pass a law mandating vacation time, is that the company would have to hire more people to cover the person when they go on vacation (Mazie). This seems more of an advantage in my eyes. If more people are working in a work place, this will lead to much happier Americans, and at the end of our lifetimes, what really matters most? Spending more time with your family and friends seeking great adventures, or working all the time?

**Conclusion and Implications**

Being an American worker does have its benefits, American’s truly can become what ever they desire, if they are willing to put all of their energy and focus into achieving their goal, but not every American wants to focus their entire life to occupation. Life is about more than working your 9 A.M. to 5 P.M., job.

During one’s lifetime a person should have the opportunity to spend quality time with their family, and friends, without the fear, of not being able to pay the next month’s rent, or mortgage. In our society we only have one focus, and it’s to work our hands down to the bones, until we can no longer work anymore. This nation must change its policy on full time worker’s vacation days, so that families, and friends are able to build bonds with each other, and not have a nation of unhappy individuals who have nothing to look forward to, and become trapped in this rut.

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