longer possible for most Americans, and that the government should enact policies to close the income gap.

We may have genuine inequality issues and a sizable divide between the rich and poor, and we might have an economy that is recovering too slowly for public interest. The American Dream, however, is based on perception, on the way someone imagines how to be successful. How can anyone claim that because there are more poor people than rich, or more power and wealth concentrated at the top, that the entire premise of the American Dream is dead? In fact, the safeguards of the welfare system, including the minimum wage and unemployment benefits, were long ago put in place to protect the poorest Americans. During the Great Recession, the federal government decided that raising the minimum wage would stimulate worker productivity and help close the income gap. In reality, however, it has done little to make the poor richer. In fact, raising the minimum wage, which makes labor more expensive, could force companies to cut back and hire fewer workers.

With a different approach to fixing the economy, some economists and politicians argue that supporting the richest sectors of the American economy will bring economic stability and a full recovery. They claim that a sizable income gap does not necessarily prevent individuals in the lower and middle classes from achieving the American Dream. I agree: government funding for Wall Street and struggling businesses makes the economy healthier. I believe that we should keep in mind the ways in which large businesses and financial institutions enable many others to attain economic stability and security. For example, providing money to businesses may encourage them to hire more people, thereby increasing job opportunities. Just last year, President Obama presented a proposal, later passed by Congress, establishing a $33 billion tax