

Thesis Statement: Although there was tremendous human cost, the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire increased access to the American Dream for workers due to government intervention.

Topic Sentence :: **Context for Evidence** :: **Evidence** :: **Analysis** :: **Conclusion Sentence**

Counter - Argument:

The deaths of innocent workers in the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire demonstrated the cost of inadequate safety regulations to workers' future. When the fire broke out, the lack of resources available to workers immediately demonstrated the inadequate fire safety precautions. Workers attempting to exit via the Washington Place Staircase found the door locked, meanwhile workers attempting to exit via the window fire escape suffered the collapse of the old structure and its detachment from the building, leaving workers stranded with no potential exit. By the end of the day 146 workers died, either trapped in their workrooms or by jumping to their deaths.¹ The deaths of 146 workers and the failure of emergency exits demonstrated the inadequate protection offered to workers and the high cost of human life as a result. Bystanders to the fire watched in horror as young women, failing to find an escape from a fiery death, jumped from the windows to their own demise. In the words of William Shepherd, a reporter recounting his first-hand experience at the fire, "...On the sidewalk lay heaps of broken bodies. A policeman later went about with tags ... and I saw him fasten tag no. 54 to the wrist of a girl who wore an engagement ring. A fireman who came downstairs from the building told me that there were at least fifty bodies in the big room on the seventh floor."² Shepherd's account referenced the over 100 girls that died, and he connected the reader to the loss of human life in his specific reference to the woman with an engagement ring. By personalizing the loss of their future and family to individual workers. Shepherd showed the human cost associated with the tragedy of the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire. Though the loss of life

¹ Cornell University, "Fire!," Remembering the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire, accessed May 6, 2019, <http://trianglefire.ilr.cornell.edu/story/fire.html>.

² William Shepherd, "Testimonials," in *Remembering the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire*, [Page #], excerpt from "Eyewitness at the Triangle," *Milwaukee Journal*, March 27, 1911, accessed May 6, 2019, http://trianglefire.ilr.cornell.edu/primary/testimonials/ootss_WilliamShepherd.html.

in the fire resulted in a tragic end to their “American Dream” for the fallen workers, their legacy served to inspire workplace safety reform and helped unite workers to protest for their rights.