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IOWA SUPREME COURT DECLINES TO REVIEW CLIMATE CASE

Des Moines, IA – Yesterday, in one of the Midwestern states most severely affected by climate change, the Iowa Supreme Court has declined 14-year-old Glori Dei Filippone’s appeal for further review in her climate change case. Glori sought review before the Iowa Supreme Court last month, after the Court of Appeals ruled against her in her case to compel the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to adopt rules limiting greenhouse gas emissions. She has argued that the State of Iowa has an obligation to protect the atmosphere under the Iowa Constitution and the Public Trust Doctrine.

The decision is a minor set-back for Glori and the rest of the youth fighting for a healthy future in the state of Iowa, but Glori is not about to lose hope. Already, she has made plans to meet with Congressman Tom Latham today to discuss her next steps in Iowa.

“I’m disappointed, but I’m not going to give up on the state of Iowa and the country as a whole. I’m going to be continuing to combat climate change at the local, state and federal level. My generation will never stop trying to reverse the affects of climate change and to get our government to protect our future.”

Judge Doyle, on the three-judge panel of the Court of Appeals that heard Glori’s case, issued a strong concurring opinion inviting the Iowa Supreme Court to resolve the question of first impression – whether the atmosphere all Iowans depend upon for their very existence is a public trust resource. According to Judge Doyle, the legislative intent to protect the atmosphere is “as clear as a crisp, cloudless, autumn Iowa sky,” and although Iowa courts have never had the occasion to extend the Public Trust Doctrine to include the atmosphere, he believes “there is a sound public policy basis for doing so.”

“Trying to understand what issues a court will take for further review is guesswork at best,” said Channing Dutton, Glori Dei’s lawyer. “What we know today is that this particular court, on this narrow issue, declined Judge Richard Doyle’s express invitation to clear up judicial confusion of whether the atmosphere is an essential resource of the Iowa public trust doctrine.”

Channing stands behind Glori in her efforts to continue her fight. “We are not discouraged by today’s failure to act on the climate emergency,” he said. “The legal ramifications of the climate catastrophe will not go away and sooner or later our State Supreme Court will move to protect the people of Iowa. Until then, in Iowa we will retool, reboot, and try again to achieve the ultimate goal of climate protection for future generations of the people of Iowa.”

***Our Children's Trust** is a nonprofit advocating for urgent emissions reductions on behalf of youth and future generations, who have the most to lose. OCT is spearheading the international human rights and environmental TRUST Campaign to compel governments to safeguard the atmosphere as a "public trust" resource. We use law, film, and media to elevate their compelling voices. Our ultimate goal is for governments to adopt and implement enforceable science-based Climate Recovery Plans with annual emissions reductions to return to 350 ppm.*
www.ourchildrenstrust.org/

***iMatter** is a youth-led campaign of the nonprofit group, Kids vs Global Warming, that is focused on mobilizing and empowering youth to lead the way to a sustainable and just world. We are teens and moms and young activists committed to raising the voices of the youngest generation to issue a wake-up call to live, lead and govern as if our future matters.* www.imattercampaign.org/

***WITNESS** is the global pioneer in the use of video to promote human rights. We empower people to transform personal stories of abuse into powerful tools for justice, promoting public engagement and policy change. In partnership with the TRUST Campaign we seek to bring visibility to the challenges our youth already face because of the changing climate and call for a massive assault on fossil fuel emissions. Without an all out assault effects will range from drought to disease, from food shortages to tainted water supplies, from the loss of homes due to floods, erosion and fire to massive relocations. The human rights challenge is most succinctly summarized by Mary Robinson, “Climate change will, in short, have immense human consequences.” WITNESS partnered on this campaign in hopes that predictions will not become realities. To view Stories of TRUST: Calling for Climate Recovery told by our youth plaintiffs, go to www.ourchildrenstrust.org.*

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