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**Contact:** Meg Ward, 503-341-8590, [meg@ourchildrenstrust.org](mailto:meg@ourchildrenstrust.org)

**Legal Counsel Contact:** Guy Burns, (813) 225-2500 ext. 2100 or Andrea Rodgers, Senior Attorney, Our Children's Trust, (206) 696-2851, [andrea@ourchildrenstrust.org](mailto:andrea@ourchildrenstrust.org)

## **Florida Youth Sue Gov. Rick Scott, Adam Putnam for Endangering Their Future**

*Eight youth plaintiffs allege state government officials are  
abdicating their responsibility to protect their constitutional rights to a safe climate system*

**Tallahassee, FL** – Today, eight Florida youth, including well-known climate activists Delaney Reynolds and Levi Draheim, filed a constitutional climate lawsuit against the state of Florida, Governor Rick Scott, and several state agencies in Leon County Court. The [complaint](#) asserts that in causing climate change, the state of Florida has violated the youngest generation's constitutional rights to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness, and has caused harm to Florida's essential public trust resources, such as beaches and marine life. The youth are supported by the nonprofit organization Our Children's Trust.

The youth plaintiffs filed the case, *Reynolds v. State of Florida*, because the state of Florida is violating their constitutional rights by creating and perpetuating an energy system that is based on fossil fuels. The plaintiffs are asking the state of Florida to adhere to its legal and moral obligation to protect current and future generations from the intensifying impacts of climate change.

**Guy Burns**, who serves as lead counsel for the youth plaintiffs, said:

“It is the responsibility of the state to uphold the constitution, and these young people have a fundamental right to a stable climate system.”

The complaint, brought by youth from Miami-Dade, Alachua, Broward, Brevard, Escambia, Monroe, and Hendry counties, asks for a court-ordered, science-based Climate Recovery Plan as well as multiple other actions, including that the state of Florida acknowledge that climate change is real and that climate change impacts are harming the youth plaintiffs. The plaintiffs ask that Florida does its share to reduce global atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations to below 350 parts per million (ppm) by 2100, the prescription scientists have developed to achieve global climate stabilization.

The complaint alleges climate change's catastrophic impacts, both current and future, injure youth and other Floridians. These impacts include ocean acidification, sea level rise, saltwater intrusion into

drinking water wells, health-related threats from insect-borne diseases, lower agricultural yields, severe droughts, increased frequency of extreme weather events, such as hurricanes, and reduced availability of fresh water due to increased evaporation and sea water intrusion.

**Delaney Reynolds**, 18-year-old plaintiff from Miami, said:

“The reason that I’m a part of this lawsuit is because I believe that the climate change crisis is the biggest threat that my generation will ever have to face. Right now we live in what I like to call the state of denial because the state of Florida is doing nothing to address climate change, but everything to cause it. That is completely immoral. If we ever want to have a future of living here in Florida, if my children ever want to live here in Florida, we need to start working together to implement solutions for climate change or the state of Florida won’t exist.”

*Reynolds v. State of Florida* is not about the government’s failure to act on climate. Instead, the eight young plaintiffs assert that the state, through its *affirmative actions* in creating an energy system that causes climate change by resulting in dangerous levels of greenhouse gas emissions, has violated their constitutional rights to life, liberty, property, and pursuit of happiness and has failed to protect essential public trust resources.

**Levi Draheim**, 10-year-old plaintiff from Satellite Beach and one of the 21 youth plaintiffs in the landmark climate case, *Juliana v. United States*, said:

“We can’t delay anymore because climate change is a huge problem. We must deal with it right now and start reducing the emissions that are causing it. We need to fix the problem not just talk about it.”

**Isaac Augspurg**, 12-year-old plaintiff from, Alachua County, said:

“Since I was little, I’ve seen changes in the environment due to climate change. Just in our local springs I’ve noticed more algae, they’re warmer and overall not as healthy. The weather has been erratic and not healthy for plants, like the peaches in our orchard. I’ve really wanted to do something about climate change and this lawsuit is something that I can do that will help. Sometimes I feel like, being a kid, it’s hard to help a lot, but this has made me feel like I can actually make a difference.”

**Oscar Psychas**, 20-year-old plaintiff from Gainesville, said:

“Last spring I walked to 280 miles from my home in Gainesville to Tallahassee to demand our state’s leaders protect our wild places. During my walk I saw climate change firsthand during the hottest spring ever recorded in Florida and forests dying from sea level rise along the Gulf Coast. I’m back in Tallahassee today because I’ve seen that when our leaders destroy a stable climate, everything we care about -- our wild places, our communities, our basic rights to life, liberty, and property -- is endangered.”

**Jose (“Andres”) Phillips**, 12-year-old plaintiff from Miami, said:

“Since we’re kids, people don’t really think we can do something that would affect the government because we can’t vote and we can’t do a lot of stuff, can’t fix a lot of problems because usually it’s adults that can do something about it. It’s hard to get adults to do something if they don’t believe in it. I want this lawsuit to bring recognition that children can and will do things if they’re inspired to do it.”

**Lushia (“Luxha”) Phillips**, 14-year-old plaintiff from Miami, said:

“I’m excited that children like us can do something about sea level rise. A lot of people know the issues, but they don’t speak out against them. Climate change is only going to get worse and adults are leaving it to our generation to fix it. Our generation wants to fix climate change *now* and we can’t do it alone.”

**Valholly Frank**, 15-year-old plaintiff from Big Cypress, and member of the Seminole Tribe, said:

“I’m suing because I don’t want to see the environment I grew up in and still am growing up in go to waste. I don’t want something beautiful being destroyed. Our politicians can’t drive us forward into an unstable and unsafe future. I’m suing because I want to live out my best life possible. I want every kid to be able to grow up and watch their kids grow up on the beautiful planet we live on.”

**Oliver Chamblin**, 14-year-old plaintiff from Pensacola, said,

“I’m joining this lawsuit so that those in power are forced to recognize that action is needed today. I also want to make a difference for my generation and stop the destruction of our environment.”

**Andrea Rodgers**, counsel for the youth plaintiffs and Senior Attorney for Our Children’s Trust, said:

“The Florida Constitution recognizes that these young people have certain fundamental rights that state government must not violate. Unfortunately, when it comes to climate change, Florida state government has actively pursued and implemented policies that result in dangerous levels of greenhouse gas emissions and threaten the life, liberty, and property of these youth. The court needs to step in to ensure that the rights of these young people are protected.”

The lawsuit is the latest in a series filed by attorneys representing youth from across the country, all with support from pro bono attorneys and the nonprofit Our Children’s Trust.

Our Children’s Trust also supports the climate lawsuit, *Juliana v. United States*, which was brought by 21 youth plaintiffs and the youth-led nonprofit, Earth Guardians who, like young plaintiffs in this lawsuit against the state of Florida, argue that the United States government is violating their constitutional and

public trust rights with its energy policies responsible for the creation of climate danger. [Trial](#) for *Juliana v. United States* starts on October 29, 2018 in Eugene, Oregon.

To view the filed complaint visit: <https://www.ourchildrenstrust.org/s/20180415FL-ComplaintFINAL.pdf>

Counsel for the plaintiffs include prominent Florida trial attorneys, including Guy Burns, F. Wallace “Wally” Pope, Mitchell Chester, Jane West, Erin Deady, Deb Swim, Matthew Shultz, Sandy D’Alemberte, and Andrea Rodgers.

*Our Children’s Trust* is a nonprofit organization, leading a coordinated global human rights and environmental justice campaign to implement enforceable science-based Climate Recovery Plans that will return atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations to below 350 ppm by the year 2100. We elevate the voice of youth, those with most to lose in the climate crisis, to secure the legal right to a healthy atmosphere and stable climate on behalf of all present and future generations. [www.ourchildrenstrust.org/](http://www.ourchildrenstrust.org/)

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