Children’s Fundamental Climate Rights and Recovery Resolution

Introduced by Senator Jeff Merkley & Representatives Jan Schakowsky, Pramila Jayapal and Bobby L. Rush

Experts agree that human-caused climate change is adversely impacting our children. Renewed United States leadership is needed to immediately recognize that the climate crisis is affecting children’s fundamental rights and to demand a plan.

THE CLIMATE CRISIS DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTS OUR CHILDREN

There is an overwhelming scientific consensus that the present rate of global heating and ocean acidification is a result of the buildup of atmospheric greenhouse gas emissions, primarily carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions, largely from the combustion of fossil fuels. Our current climate crisis disproportionately affects the health, economic opportunity, and fundamental rights of children.

Congress must act now to protect our children’s rights, their health and our planet.

CHILDREN’S FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS ARE AT STAKE

Children are uniquely vulnerable to human-caused climate change. Today’s children were born into a climate system that is hazardous to their health and wellbeing. A climate system capable of sustaining human life is fundamental to a free and ordered society and is preservative of other fundamental rights, including the rights to life, liberty, and property. Our Nation’s children have called upon government leaders to take science-based and equitable action to address this crisis and ensure climate justice for their generation, future generations, and vulnerable communities, including communities of color, low-income communities, and indigenous peoples.

THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW

Scientists state that global atmospheric CO2 concentrations must be reduced from over 415 parts per million (ppm) to below 350 ppm by 2100 to restore the planet’s energy balance and stabilize our climate system. Experts have found technically and economically feasible pathways to place all sectors of our economy on a path to reach 350 ppm. Congress must demand a climate recovery plan that puts the United States on a trajectory consistent with reaching this target to uphold children’s rights.

THIS RESOLUTION RECOGNIZES CHILDREN’S RIGHTS & DEMANDS A CLIMATE PLAN

The resolution calls on Congress to:

- support the youth climate movement and children across our Nation, including children from frontline and vulnerable communities seeking climate justice;
- protect children’s fundamental rights to life, liberty, and property, and equal protection of the laws, which includes a climate system capable of sustaining human life; and
- demand a national, comprehensive, science-based, and just climate recovery plan prepared by the executive branch.

ourchildrenstrust.org
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ENDORSED BY

Alaska Wilderness League Action
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Public Health Association
American Sustainable Business Council
Amnesty International
Animal Law Society at American University Washington College of Law
Aytzim: Ecological Judaism
Bread for the World
Call to Action Colorado
Catholic Network US
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Earth, Energy, and Democracy
Center for Environmental Law and Policy
Chesapeake Climate Action Network
Children’s Environmental Health Network
Citizens’ Climate Lobby
Climate Action Families
Climate Action Youth
Climate Institute
Climate Justice Alliance
Climate Xchange
Earth Guardians
Environmental Law & Policy Center
Food & Water Watch
Forest Trends
Friends of the Earth

GreenLatinos
Greenpeace USA
Hazon
Higher Ground Initiative
Hip Hop Caucus
Interfaith Moral Action on Climate
Interfaith Power & Light
Labor Network for Sustainability
Lawyers for Climate Action: A Call to the Bar
League of Conservation Voters
League of Women Voters of the United States
Madhvi4EcoEthics
Moms Clean Air Force
National Children’s Campaign
National Congress of American Indians
Our Children’s Trust
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Schools for Climate Action
Science and Environmental Health Network
Sierra Club
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Sunrise Movement
350.org
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
WE ACT for Environmental Justice
Young Voices for the Planet
Zero Hour