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**Sen. Merkley and Rep. Jones Lead Letters to President Biden and 165+ Orgs Join Letter to DOJ in Support of Children's Rights to a Safe Climate and *Juliana v. U.S.* plaintiffs**

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, members of the Senate and the House of Representatives sent letters to President Biden expressing their support for the fundamental rights of children to a safe climate and the [\*Juliana v. United States\*](#) plaintiffs. More than 165 organizations joined a separate letter to the Department of Justice, urging them to end their opposition to the *Juliana v. United States* case from proceeding to trial.

Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Chair of the Chemical Safety, Waste Management, Environmental Justice, and Regulatory Oversight Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, and Representative Mondaire Jones (D-NY), Vice-chair of the Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Internet Subcommittee of the House Committee on the Judiciary, led the letters to the president, which were signed by nearly 50 members of Congress. The *Juliana* lawsuit, which was filed in 2015 on behalf of 21 young Americans, seeks to hold the government accountable for actions that have caused -- and continue to exacerbate -- the climate crisis. Read Senator Merkley's letter [here](#) and press release [here](#) and Representative Jones' letter [here](#) and press release [here](#). Review the cosigners [here](#).

Nine Senators, including Senators Wyden, Booker, Markey, Sanders, Warren, Whitehouse, Padilla, and Blumenthal, in their letter noted that this is an opportunity for the "federal government to align itself with its expressed commitment to address climate change on behalf of our youngest citizens and future generations," and they urged President Biden "to carefully review any appropriate programmatic and executive options that he has available across his Administration to make progress..."

"Catastrophic wildfires, intense heat waves, and unregulated plastic pollution are quickly jeopardizing the survival of life as we've known it on our planet," said Senator Merkley. "If we care about the health, lives, and prosperity of our children and those who follow,

we must tackle the climate crisis with bold, immediate action and address environmental injustice.”

Similarly, 39 Representatives, including Representatives Schakowsky, Jayapal, Castor, DeFazio, Grijalva, C. Maloney, McEachin, and Raskin in their letter expressed that they believe the United States’ position should be brought in line with the Biden Administration’s stated goals and executive orders addressing the climate crisis and issues of environmental injustice. The Representatives wrote that they hope the defendant agencies within the Biden Administration and the DOJ will work with the *Juliana* youth to fulfill their commitment to “listen to science” and act with a “Government-wide approach.” These congressional letters follow the April 2021 reintroduction of the concurrent Children’s Fundamental Rights and Climate Recovery Resolution ([S.Con.Res.8](#) & [H.Con.Res.31](#)) and amicus briefs filed in the Ninth Circuit by members in support of the *Juliana* case in [March 2019](#) and [March 2020](#).

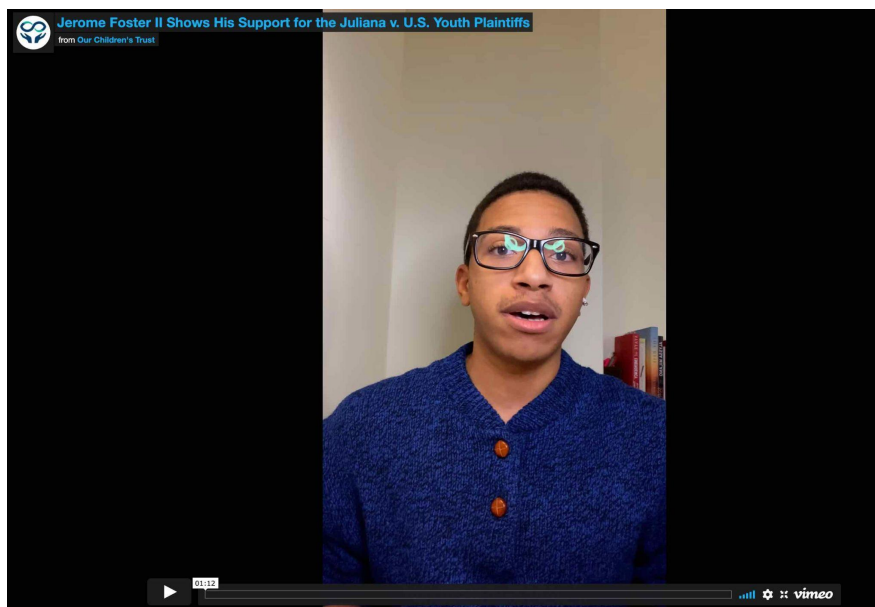
“The climate crisis poses an existential threat to the future of our planet and the young people who will inherit it. Specifically, young people like the *Juliana v. United States* plaintiffs,” said Representative Jones. “I’m proud to stand with them as they fight for their fundamental right to a safe climate and a livable future. Leaders from around the world recently discussed global solutions to the climate crisis in Scotland. Here in the United States, I urge President Biden to stand in solidarity with these young people and end the efforts of his administration to impede their path. It’s time our federal government finally aligns its actions on climate change with its rhetoric, and takes the bold action necessary to avert climate catastrophe. Our young people are counting on us.”

A separate [letter](#) was delivered today to the Department of Justice by Bill McKibben, co-founder of 350.org and Third Act, and Jerome Foster II, youth climate activist, executive director of OneMillionofUs and the youngest member of the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council, on behalf of 167 leading climate, public health, children’s, legal, environmental justice, labor, human rights, faith, and educational organizations. The letter expressed the signatories’ solidarity with the *Juliana* plaintiffs and urged the DOJ “to reverse its legal position in the *Juliana* case, pursue settlement discussions in good faith, and if those discussions do not achieve a resolution, allow the youth plaintiffs their day in court.” By joining this letter, the organizations also supported the member-led congressional letters. Review the organizational signatories [here](#).

Here is a brief video statement from Bill McKibben:



And here is Jerome Foster II sharing why he signed and co-delivered this letter to the DOJ:



On November 1st, settlement talks between the 21 Juliana youth plaintiffs and attorneys with the U.S. Department of Justice - which were ordered by U.S. District Judge Ann Aiken five months prior - ended without resolution. The 21 *Juliana* plaintiffs, who have faced incessant and unprecedented efforts by the DOJ to delay or dismiss their case, are now awaiting a decision from Judge Aiken on a motion to amend their case that

could set them on the path to trial. The Biden Administration and DOJ have a renewed opportunity to create a lasting legacy by enshrining science-based climate protection as a fundamental right for children and generations to come.

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[Our Children's Trust](#) is a nonprofit public interest law firm that provides strategic, campaign-based legal services to youth from diverse backgrounds to secure their legal rights to a safe climate. We work to protect the Earth's climate system for present and future generations by representing young people in global legal efforts to secure their binding and enforceable legal rights to a healthy atmosphere and stable climate, based on the best available science. We support our youth clients and amplify their voices before the third branch of government in a highly strategic legal campaign that includes targeted media, education, and public engagement work to support the youths' legal actions. Our legal work – guided by constitutional, public trust, human rights laws and the laws of nature – aims to ensure systemic and science-based climate recovery planning and remedies at federal, state, and global levels.