

## **The California Association of Student Councils' Commitment to Sustainability**

WHEREAS, we believe that the United States is a nation that takes pride in addressing humanity's most pressing problems;

WHEREAS, we believe it is important to advocate for climate action leading to climate restoration to curtail one of the greatest threats facing communities throughout the world; and,

WHEREAS, we believe that climate change is not a partisan nor political issue and that local, state, and national policies should be guided by the best available science; and,

WHEREAS, there is a broad scientific consensus among scientists that human activities, contributing to increases in greenhouse gas emissions, are the dominant cause of climate change; and,

WHEREAS, children represent a particularly vulnerable group because greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere will continue to accumulate over the coming decades and will profoundly impact our current students throughout their lives, as well as the lives of future generations; and,

WHEREAS, the Sonoma County Office of Education has encouraged local districts to engage in non-partisan climate advocacy and 29 school boards in California, Colorado, New York, and Virginia have passed climate action resolutions;

WHEREAS, the California Association of Student Councils recognizes climate change as a generational justice and human rights issue;

WHEREAS, climate change is a social justice and equity issues. While climate change impacts *all* people and disproportionately impacts *all* young people and future generations, it disproportionately affects people of color and people in poverty, thereby exacerbating existing inequities and limiting equality of opportunity;

WHEREAS, 21 youth plaintiffs are currently asserting a constitutional right for a livable climate in the *Juliana v. U.S.* case currently in federal courts and dozens of other youth claimants are making similar claims in state courts around the country; and

WHEREAS, the global impact, urgency, and magnitude of the challenge of addressing climate change calls for leadership in all sectors of society, all institutions and all elected leaders; and,

WHEREAS, national and state elected leaders working in a bipartisan fashion to enact carbon pricing policies could substantially reduce human-made greenhouse gas emissions, thereby protecting our current and future students; and,

WHEREAS, we work to ensure that all students in California graduate as climate literate citizens;

WHEREAS, the California Association of Student Councils recognizes and understands the significant negative impact that rapid and ongoing climate change has on America's schools, students, and their communities.

**LET IT THEREFORE BE RESOLVED THAT**, the California Association of Student Councils shall establish a Multi-stakeholder Climate Change Committee to develop recommendations for taking action on climate change that are within the purview of the organization, such as:

- (a) Waste reduction at conferences;
- (b) facilities and operational priorities and projects including transportation, purchasing, maintenance, landscaping, and construction;
- (c) climate-friendly food service: including initiatives to increase plant-based and lower meat recipe menu planning and food waste reduction programs;
- (d) targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and carbon budgeting; and,
- (e) engagement and non-partisan advocacy with local, state and federal jurisdictions for commonsense climate policies that protect current and future students.

The Committee shall be open to participation by board members, State Council members, staff and parents and shall provide quarterly reports of its activities to the Board of Directors and State Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the California Association of Student Councils calls on Congress, California State Legislature, California State Board of Education, and local governments to pass swift and effective legislation on climate change, such as enacting a revenue-neutral carbon fee and dividend, to protect current and future students.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the California Association of Student Councils will reduce its plastic and paper consumption by at least fifty percent one year after the passage of this resolution, by doing the following:

- (a) Requiring delegates bring their own reusable water bottles to decrease the number of single-use plastic water bottles.
- (b) Digitizing conference evaluations, including all pluses and deltas.
- (c) Utilizing white-boards and dry erase markers instead of paper posters at meetings.
- (d) Promoting online registration for conferences by making registration more accessible and consistent.
- (e) Seeking organizations and coalitions to financially support or sponsor our initiative to reduce single-use plastic and paper consumption.
- (f) Evaluating the waste produced by duplicating binders relating to the Staff Development Program and Summer Camp, and taking appropriate action on the findings.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the California Association of Student Councils will reduce its food waste, furthering both environmental justice and food justice, by increasing awareness of food waste at the organization's events using posters and other educational means.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the California Association of Student Councils shall organize at least one environmentally oriented activity at each in-year conference.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the California Association of Student Councils will partner with organizations and coalitions who are currently pursuing similar climate justice agendas in order to be more effective with advocacy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the California Association of Student Councils will support school districts in emphasizing the importance of climate change reform.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an official copy of this resolution be transmitted to the following: all California county Superintendents of Schools, the State Superintendent of Education and the California State Board of Education, the Education Committees in the California State Senate and Assembly, the Congressional Climate Solutions Caucus, the California State School Board Association, the National School Board Association, all California members of Congress, and the Schools for Climate Action campaign.

### **Rationale**

Research demonstrates that climate change adversely affects students' physical and mental health and negatively impacts student achievement.

The damages caused by natural catastrophes and extreme weather events devastate local economies and therefore schools.

In 2017, the Government Accounting Agency reported that the impact of climate change to the United States was approximately \$350 billion for the preceding 10 years, and is projected to cost at least \$35 billion annually from now until 2050 when it will increase to as much as \$112 billion annually by the end of the century.

A report by the Universal Ecological Fund places the annual cost at \$240 billion. These figures did not include the devastating California wildfires of 2017/2018, the destruction caused by Hurricane Harvey in South Texas, loss of Alaskan permafrost and coastal land mass, significant droughts in the western United States, increases in insect population growth leading to destruction of crops, and projected loss of low lying land in Florida, Virginia, Texas, California, and Louisiana.

Research by the World Meteorological Organization concluded that 80 percent of natural disasters between 2005 and 2015 were in some way climate related.

The insurance industry has recognized the impact of climate change. In 2010 the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) adopted an Insurer Climate Risk Disclosure Survey in response to The Potential impacts of Climate Change on Insurance Regulation white paper released by the NAIC in 2008. “The disclosure of climate risk is important because of the potential impact climate change can have on insurer solvency and the availability and affordability of insurance across all major categories.”

In addition to the projected costs due to major flooding affecting coastal schools, there will be increased electricity demands due to heat and air quality for inland schools requiring increasing amounts of air conditioning and possible indoor gyms for physical education and athletics.

The specific costs to school infrastructure including the loss of buildings and lands as well as declines in tax revenue and increases in insurance rates has not been determined, however it is expected to be billions of dollars. It is vital that climate change be slowed so that school districts and their communities can spend precious dollars in classrooms to support the students of today and for future generations.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the California Association of Student Councils on 21 July 2019.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Avery Reed', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Avery Reed  
State President 2019-2020  
California Association of Student Councils