

**Resolution of the Harmony Union Teachers Association responding to
the climate crisis by urging CalStrs to divest from fossil fuels, urging
Congress to end climate neglect, and urging all education leaders and
organizations to speak up for climate justice
January 2020**

WHEREAS the climate crisis is a serious threat to young people and future generations in California and around the world;

WHEREAS Harmony Union School District has been closed for 14 disaster days due to 4 climate-related disasters in the last two years alone: Tubb's Fire (2017-5 days), Camp Fire (2018-2 days), Russian River Flooding (2019-2 days), Kincade Fire (2019-5 days);

WHEREAS more than [70 medical and public health organizations](#) have issued a collective call-to-climate action to protect vulnerable populations from climate harm, especially young people;

WHEREAS all mandated reporters and organizations representing mandated reporters have a duty to speak up to help end neglect, including climate neglect by Congress;

WHEREAS more than 100 education sector organizations, including more than [69 school boards](#) and [27 student councils](#), in 16 states have passed non-partisan climate action resolutions as a result of the [Schools for Climate Action campaign](#). State and national education organizations that have spoken up to help end climate neglect include: the [California Association of Student Councils](#), the [California Association of School Psychologists](#), the [Colorado Association of School Boards](#), the [National Black and National Hispanic Councils of School Board Members](#), the [Massachusetts Association of School Committees](#), and the [National Association of School Nurses](#).

WHEREAS, HUTA recognizes and understands the significant negative impact that rapid and ongoing climate change has on America's schools, students, and their communities;

WHEREAS members of Congress from Northern California including [Tom McClintock](#) and [Doug LaMalfa](#) are leading proponents of federal climate neglect and publicly reject mainstream climate science;

WHEREAS, education sector organizations have not yet accurately informed Congress about the full negative impacts of the climate crisis on American students, schools, and future generations. For example:

- a. The National School Boards Association (NSBA) considered a strong climate action resolution in March of 2019, but a last minute revision by the Florida Delegation [stripped it of any mention of climate change](#) turning it into a "natural disaster resolution" instead. It appears that the NSBA, representing all 90,000 school board

members in the country, intentionally chose language to avoid making Members of Congress who favor climate neglect uncomfortable.

- b. In March of 2019, the Executive Director of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) explained that the [NASP](#) would not speak up for climate justice because NASP did not consider climate change to have a “very direct” impact on “schools...student learning...or children’s...mental health.” NASP is one of the leading organizations educating Congress about policies good for student mental health. On October 25th, 2019 6th, 7th, and 8th graders in the Salmon Creek Climate Advocacy Class were reading emails from the ED of NASP stating that NASP would not speak up for climate action while smoke from the Kincade Fire made hazardous air quality outside. All of these students were subsequently evacuated from their homes for up to 5 days due to the Kincade Fire.
- c. In June of 2018, a youth-adult team with [Schools for Climate Action met with a senior staffer of the California School Boards Association](#). She informed the S4CA team that there was not open discussion of climate impacts on California schools and students because the words “climate change” were considered “too controversial” within the CSBA. Thanks largely to the S4CA campaign, the CSBA created a climate crisis committee in December, 2019 and they will likely speak up for national climate action in 2020.

These three organizations lobby Congress regularly about policies that are good for schools and students, yet no Member of Congress has received information from these organizations specifically about the devastating impacts of the climate crisis on US schools and students. Only about 200 of the 75,000 education sector organizations in the US have spoken up for climate action in any formal way. This silence from the education sector enables climate neglect by Congress.

WHEREAS, the [Climate Psychiatry Alliance](#) asserts that “in the face of desperate and obvious need to act to slow climate change, **lack of action on climate change by institutions, teachers, parents and governments** to mitigate global warming has multiple traumatic effects on children, including demoralization, development of hopelessness and defiance, and experiences of neglect and abuse that are associated with poor long term educational and emotional outcomes.”

WHEREAS, despite more than 2 years of appeals from the teachers and students in Harmony Union School District, the National School Boards Association and the California School Boards Association have not yet spoken publicly about the negative impacts of the climate crisis on American schools and students, nor have they called on Congress to take commonsense climate action to protect students and future generations;

WHEREAS, 195 nations at the 2015 COP21 in Paris set a path to keep the global temperature rise well below 2°C and to make efforts to limit the temperature rise to 1.5°C;

WHEREAS, current climate science has established that in order to keep global warming below 2°C (3.6°F), 80 percent of known carbon reserves must be left in the ground,

unburned; to keep global warming to 1.5°C, 85-90 percent of carbon reserves must be kept in the ground.

WHEREAS, unburnable carbon is causing a carbon bubble, with a projected \$28 trillion loss over the next 20 years due to stranded assets;

WHEREAS, for the purposes of this resolution, a fossil fuel company is defined as any publicly-traded company that produces and extracts coal, oil, or gas.

WHEREAS, studies by Impax Asset Management, the Aperio Group, and MSCI show that there is no negative impact on performance when investors exclude fossil fuel companies from their portfolios;

WHEREAS, fossil fuel investments have met all three criteria of the CalSTRS Divestment Policy;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE HARMONY UNION TEACHER'S ASSOCIATION, A CHAPTER OF THE CTA, STRONGLY URGES CalSTRS TO:

1. Immediately instruct asset managers to stop any new investment in fossil fuel companies;
2. Ensure none of its directly held or commingled assets include holdings in fossil fuel public equities or corporate bonds, beginning immediately.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT HUTA calls on Congress and our State Legislature to swiftly enact common-sense state and national climate policies in order to restore the climate to protect young people and future generations, such as:

+revenue-neutral carbon-fee-and-dividend;

+100% clean energy transition plans that include safety nets and training for transitioning workers;

+green infrastructure and technology investments that meet the urgency, scope, and scale outlined in the [IPCC's Special Report, "Global Warming of 1.5 Degrees Celsius."](#)

+investments in forestry and regenerative agriculture to drawdown CO2 from the atmosphere and sequester in soils and biomass.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT HUTA calls on the National School Boards Association, the California School Boards Association, the California Teachers Association, the National Association of School Psychologists, the National Association of School Superintendents,, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Association of Elementary School Principals and all other state and national education sector organizations to join non-partisan advocacy efforts to move Congress to end decades of climate neglect which harms our students and future generations by passing climate action resolutions;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT HUTA calls on all staffers and other influencers of Members of Congress who do not accept mainstream climate science and/or who favor federal climate neglect (such as Representatives Tom McClintock and Doug LaMalfa) to speak with the Members about the significant negative impacts of climate change on young Americans and future generations. Our students have already borne a significant burden from climate neglect and our county is predicted to face rising impacts due to the climate crisis. Climate denial and delay does not have to be the final climate legacy of any Member of Congress and no Congressional staffer has to abet or silently enable climate neglect by a Member.

Names and signatures of Executive Board of CTA Chapter:

1. _____ / _____,
President

2. _____ / _____,
Vice-President

3. _____ / _____,
Secretary

Please send copies of approved resolution to:

1. ***Fossil Free California, PO Box 21022, Oakland, CA 94620***
2. ***CTA/NEA State Headquarters, P.O. Box 921, Burlingame, CA 94011-0921***
3. ***Schools for Climate Action campaign---empower@schoolsforclimateaction.org***

***Please let us know that your chapter has passed the resolution. Email us at:
divestcalstrs@fossilfreeca.org***