

Student Council Climate Action Resolution Calling on Congress to Act on Climate

WHEREAS, there is consensus among scientists that human activities which create greenhouse gas emissions are the dominant cause of climate change; and,

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

WHEREAS, we believe that climate change is not a partisan issue and that local, state, and national policies should be guided by the best available science; and,

WHEREAS, young people are disproportionately impacted by national climate inaction because greenhouse gases will continue to accumulate over the coming decades and will create a profound burden throughout our lives, as well as the lives of future generations; and,

WHEREAS, “climate change is a generational justice and equity issue”-Jonah Gottlieb. While climate change impacts *all* people and disproportionately impacts *all* young people and future generations, it disproportionately affects people of color and low-income communities, thereby exacerbating existing inequities and limiting equality of opportunity which is a foundational aspiration for modern America;

(WHEREAS, 1450 students and 250 teachers/school employees lost their homes in our county in a climate-related firestorm in 2017; specific to Sonoma County Schools and more will lose to the storm of climate change)

WHEREAS, in 2015 the California PTA declared that climate change was a “children’s issue”;

WHEREAS, we support the 21 youth plaintiffs who are currently asserting a constitutional right for a livable climate in the [Juliana v. U.S.](#); and

WHEREAS, since December of 2017 more than 30 school boards and 17 student councils in 10 states and the District of Columbia have passed non-partisan resolutions building political will for national climate action to protect students;

WHEREAS, the Lowell student council recognizes and understands the significant negative impact that rapid and ongoing climate change has on America's schools, students, and their communities.

WHEREAS, we have heard different perspectives on this and we think there should be climate action. We feel neglected.

NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT . . .

1. We declare climate change a generational justice, human rights, and equity issue;
2. We call on Congress to swiftly end 30+ years of climate neglect by enacting commonsense national climate policies, such as:
 - +revenue-neutral carbon-fee-and-dividend, and/or
 - +100% clean energy transition plans, and/or
 - +green infrastructure and technology investments, and
 - +investments in forestry and regenerative agriculture to drawdown CO2 from the atmosphere and sequester in soils and biomass; in order to restore the climate for the good of young people and future generations;
3. We thank the school boards who have spoken up for climate justice by passing their own climate action resolutions. We encourage the remaining 13,000+ school boards in the country, including the _____ State Board of Education to break silence about climate justice and speak up to protect our generation and future generations. We encourage our own local board, _____, and our county board _____ to follow our lead and clearly articulate the will for Congress to act boldly on climate change.
4. We encourage all student councils, teachers' unions, PTA's, and education support organizations (such as the state and National School Boards Associations, the state and national school administrators' association, and the state and National School Psychologists Association) to pass climate action resolutions similar to ours, calling on Congress to enact climate policies to protect current and future students.;
5. We want the awareness to pass around that it is predicted that we only have 12 years to prevent climate change from occurring.

NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT

The student council of Lowell Middle School celebrates existing district sustainability initiatives such as:

- The existing Environmental Committee and its work*
- The Zero Waste initiative*
- The yearly Brighton Clean Sweep*
- The Lorax Club's work to plant trees around BHS*

We encourage our school district to develop a Climate Action Plan addressing these areas:

- Buildings and Grounds
- Operations and Transportation
- Food Service---plant-forward, climate friendly meals
- Direct Greenhouse Gas Measurements and Goals for Net-Zero
- Climate Literacy and Climate Advocacy in the curriculum and graduation requirements
- Institutional Advocacy for Climate Action
- Partnerships with local, regional, state, and national agencies and organizations to advance our response to climate change

We direct a member from student council to transmit official copies of this resolution to our school administration, the Schools for Climate Action campaign, all student councils in our district and neighboring districts, our district, county, and state school boards, our district teachers' union and PTA, the State School Boards Association, all California members of Congress, the Congressional Climate Solutions Caucus, and the National School Board Association (NSBA).

Votes: Ayes: 9 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0

Signed:

Ava Ava Co-President
[Signature] Co-President
Bella Treasurer
Lucy Miller Secretary
[Signature] Ethan 6th Grade Representative
Harry 6th Grade Representative
[Signature] 7th Grade Representative
Ben 7th Grade Representative
Alise 8th Grade Representative
Ben 8th Grade Representative

Witnessed by Student Council Advisors:

NA and
[Signature]

On

April 2, 2019

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 Impact 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.

How do we make our resolution official?

To make it official here's what we need:

A. Make sure your student council spends some time discussing the resolution and chooses language that makes sense to you and fits with your beliefs and values. Many student councils

will be fine with most of the language in here and will only change a few words and phrases. Some may wish to change more. The most important things to keep in are:

I. "Climate change is a generational justice, human rights, and equity issue"

II. "Congress should act quickly and boldly on climate change to protect current and future students."

III. Communication clause (see example resolution)

You can edit the model resolution here:

 [Simplified Middle School Student Council Resolu...](#)

B. Once you agree on specific language vote on it. Record the number of Ayes/Noes/Abstentions.

C. Print a copy. Make sure it says "Resolution of the _____ Student Council calling for Congressional Action on Climate Change" If you have school letterhead, please print it on school letterhead. This makes it look more official, but it's not required to have school letterhead. The signatures also make it official.

C. Record the votes (Ayes/Noes/Abstentions) and have the SGA/Student Council officers sign it **(but they should only use their first names or just their initials---no last names please)**. Also, date it and have your student club faculty advisor also sign it with his/her full name.

D. You might also take some photos of the student council in front of the resolution (serious pose and don't forget the powerful-advocate-flexing-fun-pose). These pics can make for great outreach later on, but be sure to get school/parent permission before sharing pics of students. You might even take some short video snippets of students talking about why they passed the resolution. This could be turned into outreach materials later on.

D. Take a close up picture of the resolution and email it to me empower@schoolsforclimateaction.org . Please cc the faculty student council advisor on the email as well. In addition, please email me a word doc as well.

Then it'll be official.