I t’ll start getting cooler... you just watch,” President Trump said as he sat in a news briefing in Sacramento, California. It was September 2020, at the height of the California wildfires. A picture of burning trees was displayed on his left. This is one of the most recent examples of the Trump administration’s attitude toward climate change.

Over the last four years, the Trump administration’s climate agenda continuously revealed itself to be detrimental to the well-being of the environment. Under instruction from the Trump administration, the United States pulled out of the Paris Climate Agreement in 2017.

The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), under President Trump’s guidance, scrapped the Clean Power Plan, which ordered the energy sector to cut carbon emissions by 32% before 2030. More recently, the Trump administration opened the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge up for oil drilling. Trump championed weakening emissions standards nationwide and increasing fracking. Noah Greenwald, director of the endangered species program at the Center for Biological Diversity, said in an interview with The Intercept, “It’s been a terrible waste of four years at a time when we don’t have four years.” Which begs the question: What about the next four years?

The Biden-Harris administration’s website shows an overview of their plan to address climate change. They want to achieve a 100% clean energy economy and net-zero emissions no later than 2050. They also plan to rally the rest of the world around climate issues. There are many promises on Biden’s campaign website, including immediately rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement after he takes office. It is also important to note that Biden has not accepted the Green New Deal proposed by Senator Edward Markey and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez; however many are advocating for him to do so.

So, what does a “100% clean energy economy” mean? According to the Environmental Defense Fund, a clean energy economy means “producing no more climate pollution than we can remove.” Climate pollution, like CO2 and methane, is difficult to remove from the atmosphere, but scientists say that it is not impossible. With enough concentrated effort, which could be provided by Biden, a clean energy economy could be in America’s near future.

Biden also promised to help America achieve “net-zero emissions.” Attaining this goal is simple: We remove all man-made gases from the atmosphere. There are already several methods that have been introduced in this field of study, such as using carbon mineralization or direct air capture to remove pollution.

Biden’s plan goes on to pledge that he will invest more than $2 trillion in a “Clean Energy Revolution.” Among other things, this revolution would create 10 million clean energy jobs. There are valid concerns, however, that clean energy jobs pay less than those in the fossil fuel sectors. These concerns have yet to be addressed by President-elect Biden.

There are plenty of problems for Biden to address on the first day of his presidency. Climate change is a significant one. Lindsay Meiman, communications manager at 350.org, in an interview with IndyKids, shared 10 executive actions that the environmental organization demands on Biden’s first day in office. Those demands include ending fossil fuel extraction on public land, stopping fracking and prosecuting fossil fuel polluters.

As we move further into 2021, the path forward is becoming quite clear. “Our role is to hold the Biden-Harris administration accountable,” Meiman said. “There is a beautiful, powerful, global and connected movement for climate justice that needs every single person. Now is our moment.”
From School Closures to Child Labor

Hudson Mu • age 14

The pandemic has robbed millions of their jobs and, now with prolonged school closures across the world, many children in impoverished countries have been forced into backbreaking and often illegal work in an effort to make money for their families. According to an analysis by The New York Times, nearly 192 million children from 82 nations are working without the protection of law. Many are forced to leave their families in order to work in hazardous and illegal jobs, many of which can last from 12-14 hours. On top of this, the hardship is often exacerbated by the lack of shelter and food, and children often have to endure physical and sexual abuse.

A Boon to Billionaires, A Bust for Average Americans

Saman El-Hazari • age 11

The pandemic has caused a turning point. UNICEF predicted that a total of 672 million children by the end of 2020.

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The mission of IndyKids is to engage young people to become informed world citizens through the production of a current events and social justice news source that is created by kids, for kids.

When I was 9 years old, I walked into a former firehouse too nervous to speak above a whisper. Even with the soothing paper lanterns and fairy lights strung across the ceiling, shy kid that I am, I worried I didn’t have what it took to be a kid reporter. But looking back over the past seven years, I’ve realized how much IndyKids has taught me about research, and empathy in storytelling.

My favorite part of writing an article was filling up my outline sheets with questions, or researching people I hoped to interview. The writing guides, tedious though they may have been for a younger me, made me a better student and a more engaged citizen. Even as my introverted heart beats faster every time I raise my hand in class, IndyKids instilled in me the importance of asking the who, what, when, where and why. Always why.

In my English classes, I scribble annotations wondering whose voices I don’t get to hear in the books we read, and in class, I restate the importance of not taking a single narrative at face value, a skill I learned when all of my IndyKids mentors would push me to check every fact and examine as many sides of the story and article angles as possible. In history, I use the research skills of youth journalism to quickly create bibliographies. I choose classes and electives that actively seek to expand from standard curriculums, and expand from a cherry-picked history to one that embraces hard truths and new stories. I’ve developed as a writer, basing my claims in fact. My intent in every class is to examine policies and acts of protest as an intellectual, and as a compassionate, engaged citizen. And I owe all those practices to IndyKids and their commitment to inspiring "a passion for social justice and learning to empower the next generation of critical thinkers, community leaders, journalists and activists."

Because of IndyKids, I stepped outside my comfort zone to meet interesting people at the forefront of social change in their communities. I remember the excitement and adrenaline I felt the first time I covered a protest, the 2013 Climate March. Taking in the crowd, trying to spot people to interview, I got to meet the legendary Amy Goodman. I was so nervous to speak with her; I was shaking. But she treated me like a serious journalist and helped me feel like my story was important.

IndyKids helped me realize that even though I’m shy, my voice is unique, it has value, and I have the power to make myself heard. At 11 years old, in a reporter profile for IndyKids, I was asked how my worldview had changed because of the program. “After working with IndyKids, I always have my eye out for a story,” I answered.

In a 2009 IndyKids interview, historian Howard Zinn emphasized the power every young person has to make history: “Great social movements start with lots of people doing small things. Join a group in your school or in your community that is working on some issue you think is important. What you do may seem small, but when these small actions merge at certain points in history, progress is made.” Programs like IndyKids push young people to be active, investigative and persistent in the pursuit of social justice, and exemplify the powerful writing and people that come from a curriculum dedicated to highlighting everyone’s story. IndyKids amplifies the voices of young people, and every word published changes the writer and the world they learn in for the better.
Trump’s Proposed “Patriciatic Education” Commission Seeks to Whitewash U.S. History

AUGIE WOLFE-ROCCA • age 12

This past November, President Trump announced an executive order for a so-called “patriotic education” commission, or the 1776 Commission. The order was called in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has caused schools to transition online and thus requiring the commission to be a group dedicated to delivering “pro-American” curriculums.

Prior to that, Trump had been calling about systemic racist equal to “a form of child abuse” and a “second-class citizen.” When announcing this order, Trump also attacked the late Howard Zinn, famed historian and native of the United States, a progressive history book, taught that it is unpatriotic to teach about the wrongdoings of the U.S. history and presents the idea that America isn’t such a great country ever. Zinn believed the contrary. In an interview with Zinn in 2005, he said, “Your government should be coughing on them because I think it’s a very bad thing to become a state senator.”

If widespread criticism of the teachers community’s concern for this issue, especially if we have to return to a classroom in the school building, while his student workers from outdoor tents on the sports field. His students and their parents are grateful to have the semblance of normal life. "Sure, student have in every single area and in the same opportunities as any other kids?"

One thing that I have learned from these challenging is that my voice is always heard by someone. As a kid, you have the same opportunities as any other kid?"

What are some things that you have learned from being a part of IndyKids, and how have these things impacted you and your writing?

How has being Black and queer influenced your political ideas. What does socialism mean to you, and why do you think social justice reporting is necessary?

As a kid journalist, why do you think your voice and your writing are important?

Meet IndyKids Reporter: Raya ElHajjaj, age 13

Raya ElHajjaj, age 13

How did you first hear about IndyKids, and how long have you been with them?

Why do you think social justice reporting is necessary?

As a kid journalist, why do you think your voice and your writing are important?

What subjects do you enjoy writing about?

How do you feel being Black and Queer influences your political ideas? What does socialism mean to you, and why do you think social justice reporting is necessary?

As a kid journalist, why do you think your voice and your writing are important?

Meet IndyKids Reporter: Someday You Could Be a senator like Jabari Brisport

VIENNE LINSALATA • age 9

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Who Am I?

LINNEA QUAMMEN • age 10

1. I was born on July 30, 1924, in Boonville, Missouri.
2. I led my first sit-in, which sought to desegregate Barto’s Cafeteria in Peoria, Illinois, in 1947.
3. I dropped out of college to become a minister and was an inspiring leader in the civil rights movement of the 1960s.
4. On April 19, 1960, I was one of thousands of demonstrators who marched on City Hall in Nashville, Tennessee. Ultimately, we managed to persuade then-Mayor Ben West to publicly say that racial discrimination was morally wrong.
5. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said I was one of his closest advisers and the best preacher who has ever lived.
6. In 1961, I participated in Freedom Rides to Mississippi and was arrested.
7. “You can turn your back on me, but you cannot turn your back upon the idea of justice,” I famously said to Sheriff Jim Clark during a drive to promote Black votes outside the courthouse in Selma, Alabama, in 1965.
8. I was very important in the civil rights movement, and due to our sustained efforts, by the end of 1965, Congress finally passed the Voting Rights Act.
9. In 1966, I started VISION, now known as Upward Bound, by helping 700 students in the state of Alabama to get scholarships for college.
11. President Obama presented me with the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2013.
12. I died in Atlanta on July 17, 2020, at age 95.

Thank you for your continued support!

Now more than ever, we need sources of media for our youth that center the stories of people of color, immigrants, women, workers and LGBTQIA+ communities. IndyKids is the nation’s only social justice-oriented newspaper written by kids for kids. Now in its 16th year in print, IndyKids is distributed to classrooms and households in 35 states, helping thousands of youth think more critically about the news of the world. Plus, it’s free and ad-free!

Subscription costs cover only the cost of mailing issues to subscribers. We rely on donations to cover all other costs of producing IndyKids and running our Kid Reporter Program, through which more than 200 youth have been trained as journalists.

Can you contribute today to help us continue printing IndyKids and training the journalists of tomorrow? Thank you for your continued support!

Give online today at http://indykids.org/main/donate/
To donate via mail, send a check made out to “IndyKids” to P.O. Box 2281, New York, NY 10163

ENDANGERED RABBIT SPECIES LOSES LARGE PORTION OF ITS HABITAT DUE TO WEST COAST WILDFIRES

Mona Delgado • age 10

The small gray mammals known as the Columbia Basin pygmy rabbits lost more than half of their population during the Pearl Hill and Cold Springs wildfires in Washington. In early September, the wildfires destroyed the pygmy rabbits’ natural habitat.

Columbia Basin pygmy rabbits are the smallest breed of rabbit in North America. Due to their size, they are prey for a lot of animals, such as coyotes, badgers and owls. Pygmy rabbits live in and eat a dry woody plant called sagebrush. The sagebrush acted as fuel for the fires to burn through 60 miles in just 24 hours.

Many homes and businesses were also destroyed in the fires, but the pygmy rabbit species has been hit particularly hard. The rabbits have been struggling to remain around since before the dangerous wildfires.

Pygmy rabbits have been an endangered species for 17 years. In 2004, they started to disappear from the wild because of land development, agriculture and wildfires. Many had been introduced back into the wild in 2011 after they had been kept in captive breeding programs. But even the areas the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service protect with the captive breeding programs were greatly impacted by the wildfires. It will be difficult to get the population back to normal without the area to breed them.

Scientists agree that the wildfires are largely caused by climate change. Because of the wildfires, we are losing endangered animals, plants and even human lives. A United Nations report from 2019 revealed that at least 1 million species could be facing extinction due to climate change.

Getting wild with...

Wordsearch

Q I G M H R B E F C M B J U M
A M H S A W T H I W C E E
R M S D E R K U C A V L O M T
S I U I N B A U N D U L I S
O G P A L R E I K G E I R S Y
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