

*Abstract:*

The current rates of carbon emissions and pollution of the environment have reached a level that will cause imminent global collapse if not addressed. These carbon emissions are resultant largely of the Standard American Diet, a diet that relies heavily on the breeding and mass-production of animals and animal byproducts to be used for consumption. The emissions are approximately equal to those resultant of burning 235 gallons of gasoline per each cow that is raised for slaughter. While this remains true, a student sample assessed from Ithaca College's class of 2022 has a higher rate of plant-based eating than the national average of 2017 displayed. Based on the comprehensive survey responses of this same sample, the youth of today show a trend of desiring to work towards social change, which makes them fitting candidates to carry out political appeal for such change, principally through dietary change but also through the increased utilization of alternative energy sources. The survey responses collected also declared youth to feel they have a high impact in politics- rating their power a 7 out of 10- making the youth arguably the most realistic candidates to manage the brunt of the labor it would take to create true global change in regards to the environment. Furthermore, because the youth of the past were able to incite discussion that defined American history through cases such as *Tinker vs Des Moines Independent School District*, a precedent has been set regarding the ability of the youth to cause change of equal and greater proportions today, especially considering they now have the aid of social media. Through social media platforms, the youth are equipped to relay a message to a great number of people while exhibiting extremely low effort. Exposure even simply to the concepts of preservative action through social media can make the modern youth more open to changing their lifestyles to meet these principles. The best course of action,

however, would undoubtedly be improved education regarding the environmental crisis in school, as the data showed that only 10% of the respondents, or approximately 5 people, felt they knew “a great deal” about the state of the environment, compared to 45% who knew “a moderate amount” and 5% who knew “[nothing] at all.” Through education courses, the percentage of people who are highly educated will go up, therefore causing more students to take up arms to incite change. If more students possessed knowledge that pertained to the the crisis, they would not only be angered by the careless attitude surrounding it but would be equipped to make changes in their own lives to combat and even begin to reverse this deterioration, especially through contacting and appealing to their local government leaders for sustainable energy sources to fuel their towns and cities and to push for federal regulations to control carbon gas emissions. It is proven that, if small changes are enforced in daily life such as a plant-based diet or unplugging unused electronics, then the global carbon footprint will shrink and the environmental effects that have been prevalent of late will begin to recede. All that must be done to reach that point is to educate and mobilize the masses.