

EDITORS' NOTE

Hello, readers! As students and staff settle into the rhythm of the new school year, The Axe staff has been hard at work making big changes to both the accessibility and quality of our student publication. First and foremost, we have implemented a complete overhaul in the design of the newsmagazine — one of the many modifications immediately visible to the eye.

However, the team has also been initiating less obvious changes, such as building a mail-home subscription system for our monthly print issues.

We hope that these innovations allow us as a student publication to better connect with our constituents within the South community and are looking forward to becoming a more visible facet of student life at South Eugene High School.

Adviser

Bobbie Willis

Editors-in-Chief

Miyako Iwata
Melissa Wang

Managing Editor

Miyako Iwata

Design Chief

Phillip Bindeman

Graphic Artists

Julia Chou

Reporters

Julian Fahrion
Alyssa Gao
Jaelen Hodges
Venessa Lopez
Marilyn Molstrom
Jackson Naugle
Jonathan Newsome
Madeleine Rowell
Jake Sabitt
Rylie Sollars
Analise Thomas
Tony Unger

Photographers

Phillip Bindeman

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CLIMATE CHANGE LAWSUIT RESUMES

MIYAKO IWATA

Sept. 13 marked a momentous occasion for climate change activists in the South Eugene community and beyond when an ongoing lawsuit filed against the federal government for its alleged failure to protect the environment was resumed in a hearing at the Eugene Federal Courthouse.

Lawyers representing some of the world's most prominent oil conglomerates petitioned once again for the dismissal of the suit, while the 21 youth plaintiffs suing the federal government testified that because government officials had failed to protect the American people's constitutional rights to a healthy climate — and therefore the opportunity to life, liberty, and property — the case deserved a proper trial at the district court level.

As previously mentioned in the April issue of *The Axe*, the most high-profile plaintiff involved in the case is a recent South Eugene graduate, Kelsey Juliana. In fact, the case proper is formally known as Juliana, et al v United States of America, et al.

"Within [the case], we're suing President Obama, the Environmental Protection Agency and the head of [the EPA], as well as the Food and Drug Administration and the head of [the FDA]," Juliana said. "We're suing specific members in our government and federal agencies who are responsible for contributing to the problem and are inhibiting solutions... to deal with it."

Backed by Our Children's Trust, an environmental advocacy organization based in Eugene, Juliana and 20 other youth sued the U.S. federal government for failing to adhere to the Public Trust Doctrine and thus infringing upon American citizens' rights guaranteed under the Constitution.

"The Public Trust Doctrine states that government has a legal and moral obligation to protect environmental natural resources needed for survival for all people living and generations down the line," Juliana said. "With the government contributing to climate change, which equals rising sea levels, home relocation, ocean acidification, food shortage, summer drought, and loss of agriculture... [all of the youth plaintiffs] have been personally harmed or are facing harm in the near future."

The case was originally filed in the summer of 2015 and was immediately met with a request for dismissal from both the U.S. government and several key companies in the fossil fuel industry, such as Exxonmobil and BP. A hearing was set for the spring of the following year, which would determine whether the youth plaintiffs' case would advance to trial or not.

On April 8, 2016, U.S. Magistrate Judge Thomas Coffin, who presided over the case, ruled in favor of the youth plaintiffs by denying the federal government's motion for dismissal.

However, the defendants objected against Judge Coffin's ruling, which resulted in the case being forwarded to District Court Judge Ann Aiken. Rather than instantly dismissing or signing off on the initial ruling, Judge Aiken called for an additional hearing in which she personally would hear the arguments from both the defendants and the plaintiffs. This would become the highly-anticipated hearing that occurred on Sept. 13.

"Think of this September [hearing] as a 2.0," Juliana said in an interview with *The Axe*.

The event drew a massive audience, which was split up and directed into a number of overflow rooms within the courthouse. A camera and speaker system was installed to stream live footage of the hearing into the rooms where students, teachers, and other community members supporting the youth activists crowded to watch the hearing unfold in real time.

A crowd of approximately 60 South students led by the Earth Guardians 350 Club also marched to the courthouse and participated in the demonstration taking place outside of the building. Bearing sunflowers and signs, the group walked to the courthouse chanting:

"What do we want?"
"Climate justice!"
"When do we want it?"
"Now!"

The hearing itself centered on oral arguments from Julia Olson, Juliana's lawyer and the founder of Our Children's Trust, as well as those from attorneys Sean Duffy and Quin Sorensen, representing the U.S. Department of Justice and major players in the fossil fuel industry, respectively.

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During the opening arguments, Duffy acknowledged the damaging effects of climate change and its origins in human activity but challenged the plaintiffs' stance that the issue must be handled through the courts.

"Our position is that Congress and the Executive Branch should address climate change in the first instance and should do so by coordinating with other nations," Duffy argued.

However, Judge Aiken appeared to lean toward the plaintiffs' position during the defendants' final arguments when she affirmed that Congress had failed to provide due process to the case brought forward by the youth plaintiffs.

"[The case] has been heard in the halls of Congress, and the trouble is that branch hasn't responded adequately address the needs... So in many respects, the courts have the consistency to... keep an eye on the bigger problem and require people to move..."

Government officials have known that climate change is an issue since 1965 when they first started calling it a 'threat to national security'

KELSEY JULIANA

Climate change activist Kelsey Juliana pictured in New York City and Arizona during her walk across the U.S. to promote the harmful effects of Climate Change.

because there is this deprivation or these violations in place that are fundamental," Aiken said.

Attendees of the hearing overwhelmingly viewed the case as a success for the plaintiffs and are hopeful that Judge Aiken will rule in favor of Juliana and her constituents.

"I was surprised at how transparent [Aiken was] in that she almost showed her hand that she will rule in favor of the students who are bringing the lawsuit," Stan Paulic, an AP social studies teacher at South who observed the hearing, said.

Judge Aiken is expected to reach a decision as to whether Juliana and the other youth plaintiffs will be granted a trial by mid-November.

Despite the landmark case making impressive strides within the past year, however, Juliana maintains that this legal process is long overdue.

"Government officials have known that [climate] change is an issue since 1965 when they first started calling it a 'threat to national security,'" Juliana said. "It's just a matter of [whether they are] willing to take action on the people's timeline and on the planet's timeline, rather than their own timeline, which adheres to profits and their reelection. That's the question."

BIKE THEFT EPIDEMIC

JAKE SABITT

When the threat of a terrorist attack on American soil simmers uneasily beneath the surface, sealing our borders to refugees may be the most politically attractive decision. However, turning our heads is nothing but instant gratification and will be detrimental in the long term. The tragic events in Paris set off reactions around the globe, most notably the backlash against refugees flooding in from Syria. Turning these refugees away in their time of need clashes directly with the morals of equality, justice, and freedom that politicians — many of whom are currently banging their chests in.

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They're having a hard time adapting to a new reality of joblessness and poverty

JULIUS MORROW

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MARILYN MOLSTROM-WARNER

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HEATHER STEIN

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CANDIDATE POLICIES AND THEIR IMPACTS

ANALISE THOMAS

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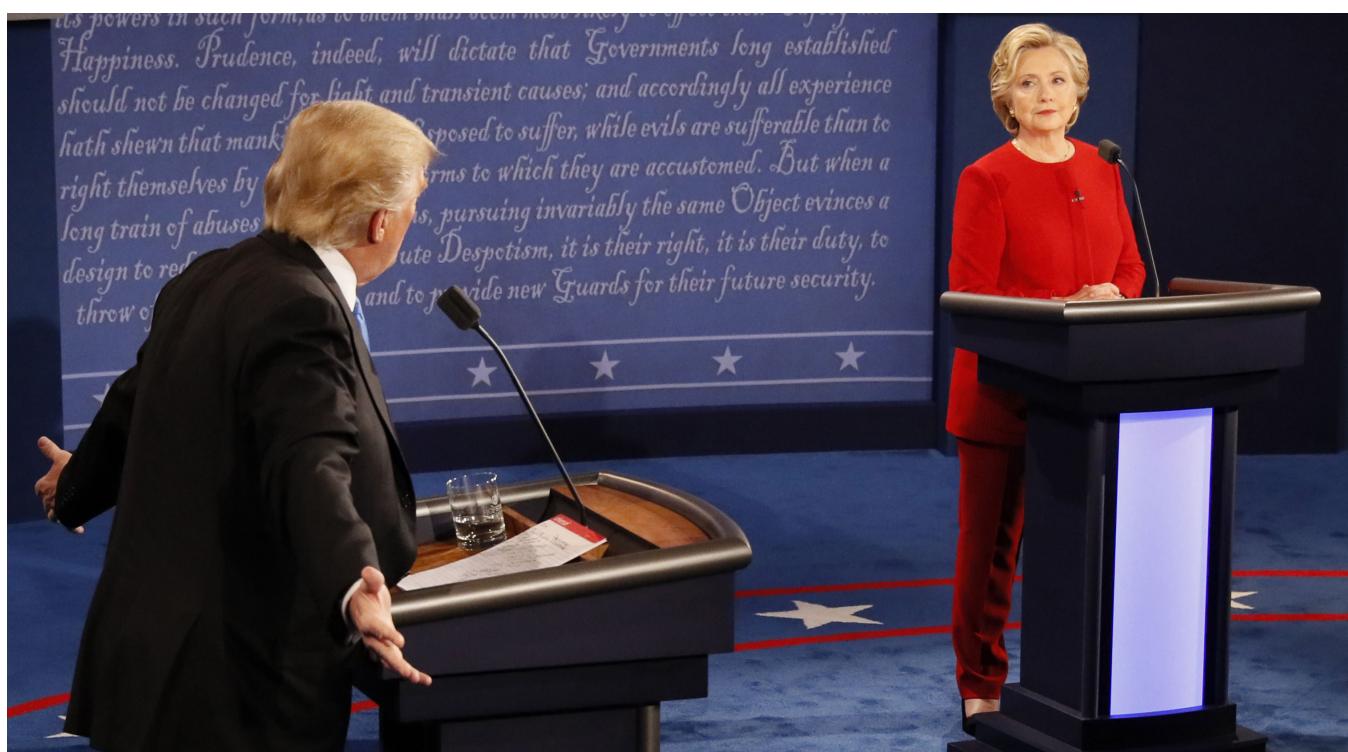
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In reality, according to the Migration Policy Institute, only three out of the 784,000 refugees taken in by the U.S. since 9/11 have been arrested in connection with attempted terrorist plots. By Rubio's math, that number should be 784. Many governors have even suggested America should only take in Christian refugees. These candidates are truly passionate about equality and liberty, their values should not just apply to Americans and Christians.

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CONSERVATISM AT SOUTH

A DIFFERENT POLITICAL VIEW

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SPRING AWAKENING PLAY SPARKS CONTROVERSEY

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It's hard to live and fit in when you do have the resources at your disposal.

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SOUTH WELCOMES NEW TEACHER

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