

Co-Chair Power, Co-Chair Dembrow, members of the committee,

My name is Zach Klonoski, this is my son Quentin Davis, we are both life-long Oregonians. I have the special distinction of being a “double-duck” meaning I received my bachelor’s degree and law degree from the University of Oregon. For the Beaver fans on the committee, please don’t hold that against me.

I’m appearing before you today as a terrified new parent. And yes, I mean terrified in the traditional sense of now being completely responsible for another life, but I am even more terrified because science has determinatively demonstrated to anyone who cares to listen that we have approximately 11 years to drastically reduce carbon emissions or risk unleashing a “climate nightmare” as early as 2040.

My son, Quentin, is 4 months old, which means his climate fate will likely be sealed before he is a teenager. And if we fail to get this right, he will be just 21 years old as the “climate nightmare” scenario begins to unfold.

According to the most recent IPCC report, avoiding the most serious damage requires transforming the world economy within just a few years. While they conclude that it is technically possible to achieve the rapid changes required, they concede that it may be “politically unlikely.”

The report emphasizes the potential role of **a price on carbon emissions**. “A price on carbon is **central to prompt mitigation**,” the report concludes.

So what are we to do? The transition is “technically possible, but may be politically unlikely.”

Enter Oregon. For decades Oregon has led the way on many critical issues: from the bottle bill, to public beaches, to our state-wide land use program that is the envy of the nation. Oregon has time and time again risen to the occasion to solve problems that others deemed “politically unlikely.” Indeed, in many respects, that is the Oregon story. Manifest destiny reimaged through public policy

But this is by far our biggest test, and we must not fail. While many issues allow for slow, intermittent progress with letter grades, climate change is a pass/fail issue. We either figure out a way to reduce emissions at the level demanded by science, or we don’t. There is no negotiating with Mother Nature. She bats last and she swings a big stick.

In 1956, John F. Kennedy wrote the Pulitzer Prize winning book, “Profiles in Courage.” The book tells several stories of celebrated and unknown American political leaders who, despite the conventional political thinking of the day, bucked their supporters to do what they knew to be right. By doing so, they helped break the political logjam on issues also deemed “politically unlikely” at the time.

More than anything else, we need climate change to rise above partisan divisions. After all, the effects of climate change don't only impact blue districts or red districts; it doesn't distinguish between rural and urban; and it doesn't care who you voted for in the last election. We are all in the same boat and we will either sink or float together.

Oregon finds itself in a unique position with an opportunity to break the political logjam on climate change. We can choose to come together and once again solve problems deemed "politically unlikely," or we can choose to retreat to our partisan corners and, yet again, kick the can down the road. The only problem is sometime soon, we may kick the can off a cliff.

I beg you as a new parent, choose courage even when it's hard, especially when it's hard. That's how you do something that is worthy of being remembered.

As a proud, life-long Oregonian, I am deeply offended by people who say that Oregon is too small and insignificant to make a difference. It's that same type of thinking that keeps people from voting. Not only that, it completely misses the point. Of course Oregon cannot solve climate change by itself – **no country on earth can do this on its own** – however, we can be an example of how to be courageous and come together to address difficult problems others deem "political unlikely." That's always been the Oregon way. Be the example that inspires others to set out on difficult journeys.

We are a state that embraces and celebrates courageous leadership. From Tom McCall and Wayne Morse, to Mark Hatfield and Betty Roberts, Oregon has a proud tradition of lifting-up and rewarding leaders who do what is right, not what is easy.

Let me close by saying that as a new parent, responsible for protecting and preparing my child for the future, please don't ignore this issue because it's hard. Quentin deserves so much better than inheriting a climate nightmare. So do your kids and grand-kids. All Oregon kids do.

Respectfully,

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**Zach Klonoski**

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