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QuickPoint! - Amending the Constitution Is Not a Children's Game

By John A. Charles, Jr.

A decade ago, 21 youth plaintiffs in Oregon filed a lawsuit asserting that the government had violated their due process rights of life, liberty, and property by encouraging and permitting the combustion of hydrocarbon fuels such as oil and gas.

The plaintiffs were represented by Our Children's Trust, a litigation firm based in Eugene.

The case, known as *Juliana v. United States*, was dismissed by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in 2020 for lack of standing and upheld in February 2021. An amended suit was dismissed by the Ninth Circuit in May 2024 again over lack of standing, and the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear the case in March 2025.

The proponents are now attempting to put their hydrocarbon paranoia into the Oregon Constitution. On March 26 the state legislature held a hearing on [SJR 28](#), which would add the following language to the Constitution:

All people, including children and future generations, have the fundamental right to a clean, safe and healthy environment.

This is just performative politics. Hydrocarbons power the modern world; but if lawmakers think the public wants to return to the 18th century, they should vote to outlaw fossil fuels right now and run for re-election on that record.

John A. Charles, Jr. is President and CEO of Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization.

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