

Climate Change: Don't Isolate the Fight

Evident to the eyes of insiders and outsiders alike, issues surrounding climate and environment— amongst an abundance of problems that demonstrate the same magnitude as well as easily parallel the extremity of the aforementioned— always surface near the top: alarming, dire, and in desperate need of attention. Though inherently sitting at the top of a grand list of troubles, climate problems work behind the scenes, frequently overshadowed by more familiar problems with more substance. This is the unfortunate case: climate is not perceived as urgent or pressing in comparison to more popular problems, and, because of this, it is often disregarded. Undeniably, this needs to change; something needs to be done to address the looming threat that not only the United States, but the entire planet, faces. In August of 2017, the United States announced its intent to withdraw from the United Nations-operated Paris Climate Agreement, which promotes an ultimate goal of bettering the global environment. About two months prior, President Trump expressed that he would be willing to rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement should fairer terms be negotiated. This is the kind of attitude that must be eradicated. It is necessary to the health of the earth to recognize that not every issue is a personal issue; more often than not, issues of this degree and kind can be taken to a much larger and global scale. By setting an ultimatum of this like, the president encourages the shameful perspective that puts petty human issues above an entire planet; it invigorates the kind of viewpoint that prioritizes money's green over planetary green; most of all, it rallies the outlook that would sooner see a bit more wealth than treat the earth as it should be.

The same attitude is present in a great majority of the United States, and it is far from unprecedented. The problem is not one that can continue to be pushed off onto the next; everybody shares responsibility in destroying the planet, so everybody must share responsibility in fixing it. Competition has no place in an issue this critical. When a problem hosts such larger-

than-life circumstances, it is imperative that, instead of trying to get a leg up, people identify the importance of the situation and work to produce a solution. It is impossible to deny the change taking place at this point, and it is even more deplorable to pass off the blame on everybody else to avoid it. The issue around environment and climate is bigger than letting the world die because “why should some people have restrictions on gas and pollution when others don’t?”. Desmond Tutu was quoted in saying, “People of conscience need to break their ties with corporations financing the injustice of climate change.” The uncanny precision of this statement is unsettling at best, but, in reality, extremely concerning and disturbing. The climate is not something to play around with— in fact, since 2001, sixteen of the seventeen hottest years were recorded. Moreover, a shocking statistic from NASA reveals that arctic sea ice is now melting away at an alarming new rate of *thirteen percent per year*. Thirteen percent of many animals’ habitat and thirteen percent of the entire world is vanishing every year, but it is continuously neglected because the solution is not one people want to face. Nobody likes to think about having to cut back on waste or gas emissions; they’d prefer to let other people make the sacrifice so everyone can live comfortably. Too often, though, people fail to remember that one person or one country cannot singlehandedly restore the earth—it will take everybody and everything to fix the mistakes made, because, as so delicately put by former President Barack Obama, “Climate change is no longer some far-off problem; it is happening here, it is happening now.”