

**Testimony Prepared for The Select Committee on Global Warming and Energy Independence
Billy Parish, November 5th, 2007**

Thank you, Chairman Markey, for inviting us here today.

Remember, remember, the 5th of November. An unstoppable movement has taken root in every school and every community in this nation. A generation has come to Washington today to lead, to be heard, and to find allies in this Congress who are ready to do what is necessary to solve our climate crisis. My name is Billy Parish, and I'm the coordinator of the Energy Action Coalition, a diverse alliance of 46 organizations working to support and strengthen the student and youth clean energy movement in the U.S. and Canada to create change for a clean, efficient, just and renewable energy future. I have brought with me our coalition's "Youth Statement of Principles on Climate and Energy" and a number of other supporting documents and reports for the Congressional record.

We come here today with three demands for Congress:

1. Create 5 million new jobs through a Clean Energy Corps to weatherize, solarize, rewire and rebuild this country. Green Jobs Now!
2. Cut Carbon at least 80% by 2050, 30% by 2020 and auction 100% of the pollution allowances from day 1. 80 by 50!
3. Pass an immediate moratorium on the construction of new coal plants. No Coal!

We will be heard because at 80 million strong, the Millennial generation outnumbers even the Baby Boomers by 3 million and represents the single-largest demographic age group in this country. Polling data, recent voter turnout, and the swelling ranks and increasing coordination of the youth climate movement all demonstrate that this young generation is engaged and ready to carry out a historic Power Shift. We are razing the old stereotypes of the apathetic, unengaged youth, as youth turnout in the past two elections hit the highest level in at least 20 years. Politicians would be wise to take note. Exactly one year from today, we will have a new Congress and a new President. You have one year to prove that you are worthy of being our "representatives" in this government – and if you don't, you will need to look for a new job, as millions of young voters throw their support behind more progressive, pro-environment candidates committed to ending the climate crisis and protecting the future of our generation.

We will be heard because we are the ones we've been waiting for. As the Bush Administration and our federal government has done almost nothing for the last seven years, young people have organized and made change. Through the Campus Climate Challenge, tens of thousands of young people have engaged in the hard work of making their schools models of sustainability for the rest of society. In just the last year, 426 colleges have committed to becoming climate neutral, and more sign on every day. We are building partnerships with community groups to block the construction of new coal-fired power plants and launch a green wave of urban and rural renewal. As our government abandoned the people of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, tens of thousands of young people dropped everything to serve and rebuild. Over 6,000 of us came to Power Shift this weekend, thousands more took part in Step it Up around the country - a generation of solutions, but we know

we cannot do it alone and have come to seek your help.

And we will be heard because we are, quite literally, fighting for our lives. This can no longer be a political issue – for the survival of our people and our planet, we must put aside partisan politics and come together as humans, as mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, to heal ourselves and our planet. This is no small task. As Evon Peter told us on Saturday night, this crisis is not only an ecological and economic crisis, it is a spiritual and cultural crisis that is centuries old. We must begin the long process of reconciliation with the original peoples of this land, with the people that were brought here against their will, especially those from Africa, and all the people that are poorly served by our society. We cannot sacrifice communities for our overconsumption today, not only because it is wrong for those communities today but because we will be sacrificing the basis of life for our children and future generations.

I'm 26 years old and about to become a father. I implore the members of this 110th Congress to hear our demands – but I ask that you hear them not as politicians, but as mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers.

1. Green Jobs Now!
2. 80 by 50!
3. No Coal!