

My name is Eireann and I'm an organizer with Fridays For Future, an international climate change action group. I live in Philadelphia with my sister. My family, friends, and community and I have been affected by the climate crisis. This is not a future problem - it's happening now. But it will get worse in the future.

I am 40 years old and have a long future ahead of me because that is not very old and my family tends to live a long time. This also means that I have older parents and stepparents to worry for, because the climate crisis is actually affecting them right now.

In January this year when California was inundated with floods from the atmospheric rivers, my Dad and stepmom found the highway near their house flooded and they were unable to leave their house for a couple days. The year before that they went through a heatwave of 104 degrees without air conditioning. A few years ago my Grandma's house in Connecticut was damaged by a tornado. My sister has some health issues that make her sick and raise her heart rate too high when it's too hot and humid out. In the last two years Philadelphia has gotten so hot during the summer that she regularly cannot leave our house during the day. She has been living here for over 18 years and says it has never been this unbearably hot until the last few years. Scientists who study these extreme temperature and weather events conclude that they happen more often and with more strength because of global warming, especially warming ocean temperatures.

I have some disabilities which prevent me from being able to work full time. I can't work more than half time, which means I have been low-income for most of my adult life. I am afraid of growing old in the face of the climate crisis. My 94 year old grandma, who is mobility impaired, currently receives good in-home care, but when I am her age how can I expect to get the elder care that I need? And I might need it at a younger age than she did. If Pennsylvania has to allocate all resources to disaster recovery from even more extreme weather events, if not enough is done in the time that we have, then how are elderly and disabled residents going to be cared for? We need to mitigate and adapt before climate chaos gets so horrific that we have no capacity to meet people's basic needs.

Pennsylvania is one of the highest fossil-fuel emitting states in the nation, emitting more carbon, methane, and other greenhouse gases than most countries. It doesn't have to be that way. We have solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation that are within our reach. We are just not prioritizing them the way we should. These solutions include clean energy alternatives to fossil fuels, a robust public transportation system, home insulation and repair, and protecting our old-growth forests and other carbon sinks. We can and we must do better. Thank you.