

My name is Jane Schaefer. I am a junior at Harwood Union High School, and I live in Waitsfield. I am a ski instructor at Sugarbush and want to protect our winters. I spend my summers by the Mad River and am tired of the droughts and floods, and I'm terrified of what is becoming of our country at the federal level. That is why I sit before you today. But if you were to ask any of the kids in this room, or, truly, any kid you come across, they would tell you their reasons for wanting to prevent climate change. It's our future that we are fighting for.

I hope you have noticed us around the State House today in these black T-shirts, but as a formal introduction, we are Youth Lobby. Youth Lobby began with one simple question: what about us? In a civics class in 2015, a Harwood student learned about lobbyists. People who have more power and resources are able to spend money to hire professionals to lobby for them. The student raised her hand and asked "Do the youth have lobbyists?". The answer was no. Thus began her Civic Action Project. If students can form a group of very well informed young people and are willing to organize and use their voices and ideas, they have just as much power as any adult.

Flash forward more than a decade later, and here we are, still in the State House, still a group of dedicated young people. Youth Lobby was here when the Global Warming Solutions Act was written into law and we came back again last year to make sure it stayed there. On my very first Lobby Day, we squeezed 50 people into the senate chamber and watched the first vote on the Climate Superfund. In the following weeks, we watched it make its way to becoming a bill. Every year since the group started, we've had Lobby Days along with a Rally for the Climate towards the end of the legislative session. Last year we changed that up and hosted it in March instead. Rather than a big carnival on the front lawn, we had a record breaking number of students march down Main Street and have a rally on the front steps. It followed with the dedicated few coming in and speaking with legislators. We're not here to disturb, simply to show up and be heard. We are constantly changing and shifting to work towards our climate goals, and we ask the same of you. That part has never changed.

So please, listen to us, work with us, ask us questions. Because we are here to speak for all the youth of this state, and we are its future.