

# Leadership Across Generations to Respond to the Dangerous Impacts of Climate Change

In 2018, a young Swedish activist named Greta Thunberg started criticizing world leaders for their lack of action against the climate crisis. Almost 5000 miles away, young Ethan Reed took notice and started questioning the legislature in his own city of Denver, Colorado.

In June of 2021, he sat down with his former State Representative Edie Hooton to remember how they first met, and the work they've done together to help protect the environment.

## Transcript:

**Ethan Reed:** Reading all those constant reports from organizations like the United Nations about how we're going to be seeing some devastating effects from climate change and how it's going to be irreversible, and it's just going to cause such a daily impact on our lives in the future. And then also watching Greta Thunberg, I was just really motivated by seeing her stand up for our generation and for future generations.

**Edie Hooton:** What do you remember about the day that you met me?

**Ethan:** I remember coming back from school, and I was so excited because there was a town hall I heard about. I was kind of fan-girling a little 'cause I'm like, these are people I look up to. And when it was my turn, I really wanted to speak with you, because I felt like you would listen.

**Edie:** You had this very innocent, in awe demeanor. It's always impressive when someone young shows up at a town hall meeting, and there were hundreds of people there. And I was just so impressed with how well-informed you were.

**Ethan:** As a youth activist, I've been disappointed by so many from past generations not taking this seriously.

Last year was definitely the worst wildfire season, and I know young people severely impacted to this day still about what they had gone through, losing their home.

The heat and the drought and natural disasters are really going to impact everyone in one way, shape, or form.

**Edie:** We do not have a lot of time, as you know, and youth are going to pay for it. I'm 63 years old. I spent most of my life outside. Things are changing rapidly. It is alarming what my generation and the generations before me have done and the jeopardy that they're putting their planet and the people on it in.

**Ethan:** I really do hope that if I do ever get elected to Congress, that I will be making bold action and bold legislation to better the lives for American families.

**Edie:** I just see you as a leader. Any legislator worth their salt will make as much time as they can to explain the bills that they're running and how you can testify in committee, which you did many times. You've brought so many of your peers to the Capitol, and that gives me a lot of hope. And it motivates me because we need you.

**Ethan:** I'm so thankful that there are lawmakers like you out there. Words can't really describe how appreciative I am of you always taking the time to meet with me.

**Edie:** Right back at you, my friend. I'm grateful for our friendship, Ethan. We are partners. If the past is any indication of the future, you're going to do great things.