# **Framework**

#### **Plan Text: The United States federal government should recognize an unconditional right of workers to strike.**

#### **I value morality, as per the evaluative term, ‘ought’ in the resolution.**

#### **The standard is maximizing expected wellbeing.**

#### **Prefer utilitarianism because**

#### **1] State obligations –governments can only act on aggregates.**

Robert **Goodin 90**, [professor of philosophy at the Australian National University college of arts and social sciences], “The Utilitarian Response,” pgs 141-142,

My larger argument turns on the proposition thatthere is something special about the situation of public officials that makes utilitarianism more probable for them than private individuals. Before proceeding with the large argument, I must therefore say what it is that makes it so special about public officials and their situations that make it both more necessary and more desirable for them to adopt a more credible form of utilitarianism.Consider, first, the argument from necessity. Public officials are obliged to make their choices under uncertainty, and uncertainty of a very special sort at that. All choices – public and private alike – are made under some degree of uncertainty, of course. But in the nature of things, private individuals will usually have more complete information on the peculiarities of their own circumstances and on the ramifications that alternative possible choices might have for them. Public officials, in contrast, are relatively poorly informed as to the effects that their choices will have on individuals, one by one. What they typically do know are generalities: averages and aggregates. They know what will happen most often to most people as a result of their various possible choices, but that is all.That is enough to allow public policy-makers to use the utilitarian calculus– assuming they want to use it at all – to choose general rules or conduct.

#### **[2] Extinction outweighs**

**Pummer 15** [Theron, Junior Research Fellow in Philosophy at St. Anne's College, University of Oxford. “Moral Agreement on Saving the World” Practical Ethics, University of Oxford. May 18, 2015]

There appears to be lot of disagreement in moral philosophy. Whether these many apparent disagreements are deep and irresolvable, I believe there is at least one thing it is reasonable to agree on right now, whatever general moral view we adopt: that it is very important to reduce the risk that all intelligent beings on this planet are eliminated by an enormous catastrophe, such as a nuclear war. How we might in fact try to reduce such existential risks is discussed elsewhere. My claim here is only that we – whether we’re consequentialists, deontologists, or virtue ethicists – should all agree that we should try to save the world. According to consequentialism, we should maximize the good, where this is taken to be the goodness, from an impartial perspective, of outcomes. Clearly one thing that makes an outcome good is that the people in it are doing well. There is little disagreement here. If the happiness or well-being of possible future people is just as important as that of people who already exist, and if they would have good lives, it is not hard to see how reducing existential risk is easily the most important thing in the whole world. This is for the familiar reason that there are so many people who could exist in the future – there are trillions upon trillions… upon trillions. There are so many possible future people that reducing existential risk is arguably the most important thing in the world, even if the well-being of these possible people were given only 0.001% as much weight as that of existing people. Even on a wholly person-affecting view – according to which there’s nothing (apart from effects on existing people) to be said in favor of creating happy people – the case for reducing existential risk is very strong. As noted in this seminal paper, this case is strengthened by the fact that there’s a good chance that many existing people will, with the aid of life-extension technology, live very long and very high quality lives. You might think what I have just argued applies to consequentialists only. There is a tendency to assume that, if an argument appeals to consequentialist considerations (the goodness of outcomes), it is irrelevant to non-consequentialists. But ***that is a huge mistake.*** Non-consequentialism is the view that there’s more that determines rightness than the goodness of consequences or outcomes; ***it is not the view that the latter don’t matter***. Even John Rawls wrote, “All ethical doctrines worth our attention take consequences into account in judging rightness. One which did not would simply be irrational, crazy.” ***Minimally plausible versions of deontology and virtue ethics must be concerned in part with promoting the good***, from an impartial point of view. They’d thus imply very strong reasons to reduce existential risk, at least when this doesn’t significantly involve doing harm to others or damaging one’s character. What’s even more surprising, perhaps, is that even if our own good (or that of those near and dear to us) has much greater weight than goodness from the impartial “point of view of the universe,” indeed even if the latter is entirely morally irrelevant, we may nonetheless have very strong reasons to reduce existential risk. Even egoism, the view that each agent should maximize her own good, might imply strong reasons to reduce existential risk. It will depend, among other things, on what one’s own good consists in. If well-being consisted in pleasure only, it is somewhat harder to argue that egoism would imply strong reasons to reduce existential risk – perhaps we could argue that one would maximize her expected hedonic well-being by funding life extension technology or by having herself cryogenically frozen at the time of her bodily death as well as giving money to reduce existential risk (so that there is a world for her to live in!). I am not sure, however, how strong the reasons to do this would be. But views which imply that, if I don’t care about other people, I have no or very little reason to help them are not even minimally plausible views (in addition to hedonistic egoism, I here have in mind views that imply that one has no reason to perform an act unless one actually desires to do that act). To be minimally plausible, egoism will need to be paired with a more sophisticated account of well-being. To see this, it is enough to consider, as Plato did, the possibility of a ring of invisibility – suppose that, while wearing it, Ayn could derive some pleasure by helping the poor, but instead could derive just a bit more by severely harming them. Hedonistic egoism would absurdly imply she should do the latter. To avoid this implication, egoists would need to build something like the meaningfulness of a life into well-being, in some robust way, where this would to a significant extent be a function of other-regarding concerns (see chapter 12 of this classic intro to ethics). But once these elements are included, we can (roughly, as above) argue that this sort of egoism will imply strong reasons to reduce existential risk. Add to all of this Samuel Scheffler’s recent intriguing arguments (quick podcast version available here) that most of what makes our lives go well would be undermined if there were no future generations of intelligent persons. On his view, my life would contain vastly less well-being if (say) a year after my death the world came to an end. So obviously if Scheffler were right I’d have very strong reason to reduce existential risk. ***We should also take into account moral uncertainty.*** What is it reasonable for one to do, when one is uncertain not (only) about the empirical facts, but also about the moral facts? I’ve just argued that there’s agreement among minimally plausible ethical views that we have strong reason to reduce existential risk – not only consequentialists, but also deontologists, virtue ethicists, and sophisticated egoists should agree. But even those (hedonistic egoists) who disagree should have a significant level of confidence that they are mistaken, and that one of the above views is correct. Even if they were 90% sure that their view is the correct one (and 10% sure that one of these other ones is correct), they would have pretty strong reason, from the standpoint of moral uncertainty, to reduce existential risk. Perhaps most disturbingly still, even if we are only 1% sure that the well-being of possible future people matters, it is at least arguable that, from the standpoint of moral uncertainty, reducing existential risk is the most important thing in the world. Again, this is largely for the reason that there are so many people who could exist in the future – there are trillions upon trillions… upon trillions. (For more on this and other related issues, see this excellent dissertation). Of course, it is uncertain whether these untold trillions would, in general, have good lives. It’s possible they’ll be miserable. It is enough for my claim that there is moral agreement in the relevant sense if, at least given certain empirical claims about what future lives would most likely be like, ***all minimally plausible moral views would converge on the conclusion that we should try to save the world***. While there are some non-crazy views that place significantly greater moral weight on avoiding suffering than on promoting happiness, for reasons others have offered (and for independent reasons I won’t get into here unless requested to), they nonetheless seem to be fairly implausible views. And even if things did not go well for our ancestors, I am optimistic that they will overall go fantastically well for our descendants, if we allow them to. I suspect that most of us alive today – at least those of us not suffering from extreme illness or poverty – have lives that are well worth living, and that things will continue to improve. Derek Parfit, whose work has emphasized future generations as well as agreement in ethics, described our situation clearly and accurately: “We live during the hinge of history. Given the scientific and technological discoveries of the last two centuries, the world has never changed as fast. We shall soon have even greater powers to transform, not only our surroundings, but ourselves and our successors. If we act wisely in the next few centuries, humanity will survive its most dangerous and decisive period. Our descendants could, if necessary, go elsewhere, spreading through this galaxy…. Our descendants might, I believe, make the further future very good. But that good future may also depend in part on us. If our selfish recklessness ends human history, we would be acting very wrongly.” (From chapter 36 of On What Matters)

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## **aCLIMATE DA**

#### **1. UQ – Investing High Now**

**Hannon June ’21** (Paul Hannon, Rhiannon Hoyle and Tom Fairless, “U.S. Economy Is Bouncing Back From Covid-19. Now Foreign Investors Are Rushing In.) WSJ June 21, 2021 <https://www.wsj.com/articles/turbocharged-u-s-economy-attracts-foreign-investors-11624263520> GL

The **extraordinary recovery in the US economy is expected to make the country the world’s top destination for**foreign **investment** this year and next, according to new United Nations projections, with foreign **companies drawn by the prospect of a rapid rebound and supported consumer spending and the Biden administration’s multibillion-dollar infrastructure plans.** According to UN figures released on Monday, **outward investment by companies around the world fell by a third in 2020 compared to the previous year. The United States saw a 40% drop in investment but narrowly retained its long-standing position as the top destination ahead of China. The UN estimated in January that the United States had lost first place.** For 2021 and 2022, the UN expects the United States to strengthen its leadership position, with China in second place, as foreign investors increase their capacities to meet huge post-pandemic demand. The Federal Reserve expects the U.S. economy to grow 7% this year, supported by nearly $ 6 trillion in approved stimulus spending and about $ 2.6 trillion in additional savings than households Americans have accumulated during the pandemic. “**We are incredibly optimistic about the US economy, even more so now**,” said Mark Vassella, Managing Director of BlueScope Steel Ltd., an Australian steel company expanding its capabilities in the United States to meet demand from automakers. and construction companies. As the **United States** and the wider world **economy recover at a faster rate than expected**at the start of the year, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, or UNCTAD, expects that companies around the world are increasing their foreign investment by 10-15% this year. and 20 to 30% more in 2022. **This would bring** foreign **investment back above pre-pandemic levels**. However, it seems unlikely that foreign investment flows will soon exceed the highs seen just before the global financial crisis.

#### **2. Link - RTS and Unionization steers employers and investors from riskier projects and investments.**

**Chen ’19** Jun Chen & Jamie Y. Tong & Wenming Wang & Feida Zhang, 2019. "The Economic Consequences of Labor Unionization: Evidence from Stock Price Crash Risk," Journal of Business Ethics, Springer, vol. 157(3), pages 775-796, July. GL

**Employees play a vital role in a firm’s value** creation. **Unionized employees have a greater ability to influence** a firm’s **operations** and financial reporting policy than their nonunionized peers. In this paper, we investigate whether **labor unionization affects a firm’s** future stock **price** crash risk (crash risk hereafter). The **impact of labor unionization** on crash risk is of particular interest to both practitioners and regulators not only because crash risk has received much attention in the past decades but also because labor unions in the USA are regulated by labor laws and can be changed over time. Defined as the frequency of extreme negative stock returns, crash risk is able to capture asymmetry in risk, especially downside risk, and thus **plays an important role in risk management** (Kim et al. 2014). Previous literature suggests that engaging in unprofitable and risky projects will accumulate and increase the future crash likelihood (Bleck and Liu 2007). We argue that labor unions are able to lower the probability of stock price crash risk by reducing managerial risk-taking behaviors. **Employees**, like creditors, primarily **hold a** fixed **claim on a firm’s cash flow in the form of wages and salaries**. Employees therefore prefer less risk than shareholders or managers since they have little to gain when a firm per forms better than expected, but have much to lose when it performs poorly (Faleye et al. 2006). Employees also require a premium in wages or benefits as compensation for unemployment risk that increases with a firm’s preference to risky investments (Li 1986; Hamermesh and Wolfe 1990). **Unionization enables employees to play a** more **influential role** in refraining managers from undertaking risky investment projects. The high concerns of **unionized employees** about downside risks also motivate them to urge the implementation of conservative information disclosure polices so that they are able to take protective actions upon receiving bad news in a timely manner, leading to lowered crash risk. Besides, the greater ability of unionized employees to extract above-market rents and capture future profits reduces returns on risky investments, while com pensation premium demand for increased unemployment exposures boosts the cost of risky investments. **Unionized firms are thus less willing to invest in risky projects on the margin**. The above argument suggests a negative **association between labor unionization and** crash **risk**. Following prior literature (Klasa et al. 2009; Chen et al. 2011), we use industry unionization rate, defined as the percentage of workers in a firm’s industry covered by unions in collecting bargaining agreements, to proxy for labor unions’ ability to affect the firm’s behaviors. Following prior studies (e.g., Chen et al. 2001; Kim et al. 2011b, 2014; Li and Cai 2016), we measure crash risk as the conditional skewness of return distribution. Our empirical results indicate that firms with higher unionization rates are less likely to experience firm specific stock price crashes in the future… Therefore, **labor unions have both stronger incentives and greater abilities to constrain the firms from high risky investments regardless of their present values.** Like debtholders, they are also likely to exert efforts to constrain managers from overstating earnings and assets for compensations they are not entitled to. In addition, **workers demand higher wages**, additional benefits, and improved working conditions to compensate for unemployment risk (Abowd and Ashenfelter 1981; Topel 1984; Li 1986; Hamermesh and Wolfe 1990), which increases with the riskiness of future cash flows. To the extent that **all stakeholders suffer from adverse consequences associated with risky** investment **projects,** unionized employees likely suffer more because of their locked-in firm-specific human capital investment and much longer time horizon in firms than that of managers or shareholders who can quit the firms more easily. Unionized workers would require additional compensation if expected future cash flow volatility is higher due to firms’ risky investments. Such compensation premium increases the marginal cost of **risky investments and decreases the returns** accrued to shareholders and managers. As a response, **unionized firms** could rationally **cut risky investments** to reduce the need to compensate unionized employees for their perception of unemployment risk.

#### **3. IL - Risky investments are key to stop climate change**

**Meltzer 18** (Joshua P. Meltzer Senior Fellow - Global Economy and Development, December 3, 2018, “Sustainable infrastructure investment, climate change, and global development” <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/planetpolicy/2018/12/03/sustainable-infrastructure-investment-climate-change-and-global-development/>) [Twinz]

As the 24th Conference of the Parties (COP24) gets underway in Poland this week to finalize implementation guidelines for the Paris Agreement on climate, member countries and assembled experts would do well to emphasize the public and private capital needed to co-finance global sustainable infrastructure. Their task is more challenging and urgent than ever. Every dimension of the climate change and global development agenda must shift from business as usual to urgent, an imperative made clear from the October report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as well as in the Annual Statement on the State of the Climate Report issued by the World Meteorological Organization on November 29. Joshua P. Meltzer Senior Fellow - Global Economy and Development @JoshuaPMeltzer As the IPCC report warns, unless the world embarks on large-scale economic transformation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, in approximately 10 years, average world temperatures will increase 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels, leading to more severe droughts, increased Arctic ice loss, a sea level rise, and further irreversible loss of biodiversity. There will also be significant health impacts. The World Health Organization estimates that 150,000 deaths annually are attributable to climate change; this is set to increase to 230,000 deaths by 2030. The global economic impacts will be profound too, with disproportionate fallout in the developing world. So far, a key response to reducing emissions has been to price carbon. A carbon price should reflect the environmental externalities of producing and consuming carbon-intensive products, creating an incentive to invest in low carbon alternatives. A comprehensive carbon price consistent with decarbonization is essential. Yet existing carbon-pricing schemes do not price carbon high enough and remain piecemeal. Despite state-level carbon schemes in California and the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative—a cap and trade arrangement that includes New York and other mid-Atlantic states—there is no prospect of a federal carbon price. While the EU has a cap and trade scheme, it remains too low to drive needed economic transformation. Perhaps even more significantly, only a few developing countries have adopted a carbon price, yet are now responsible for over 60 percent of greenhouse gas emissions. A focus on the role of private capital in addressing climate change by financing sustainable infrastructure is vital. As the 2014 New Climate Economy Report highlighted, the world needs to build around $94 trillion in new infrastructure out to 2030. This would be equivalent to a doubling of the world’s capital stock, with over two-thirds built in developing countries. Around 70 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions come from carbon-intensive infrastructure. As a 2015 study by Amar Bhattacharya and colleagues highlights, unless the new infrastructure is sustainable—featuring low carbon energy, energy efficient buildings, and mass transit systems—the world will lock itself into a high carbon pathway. A 2017 OECD study found that investing in sustainable infrastructure can be good for growth and the climate. Building renewable energyinstead of coal-fired power stations can reduce air pollution and lead to better health outcomes. Building compact cities with access to mass transit affects access to other key services such as health and education. Yet budget constraints mean that public finance from governments and international organizations such as the World Bank are unable to meet global infrastructure needs. Therefore, increasing private investment into sustainable infrastructure is essential. Globally, private capital abounds. A 2016 McKinsey study estimated there was $120 trillion in assets under management. Yet allocations of capital into sustainable infrastructure remain low—at around 1 percent by institutional investors globally. The lack of private investment is due to the high risks of investing in sustainable infrastructure. In addition to permitting, construction, and market risks associated with infrastructure projects, sustainable infrastructure comes with other challenges. For instance, limited investment track records for new climate technologies such as offshore wind and thermal power generates technology risk. Reliance on government support, such as in the form of feed-in-tariffs or subsidies, creates political risk. Risks are even higher in developing countries, which often face political instability, poor investment environments, and currency risks. Without action to reduce these risks, private capital will continue to flow into lower-cost but higher-carbon infrastructure projects. Using public capital to reduce infrastructure risk can lower the cost of finance and boost rates of return, thereby crowding-in private sector capital. Multilateral development banks such as the World Bank have the knowledge and financial capacity to play a transformative role. As I detail in a recent working paper, this includes blending with concessional climate finance from the Green Climate Fund and the Climate Investment Funds by assuming a first loss position, thereby reducing risk for private capital and supporting innovative financial instruments such as green bonds. RELATED CONTENT Adelie penguins stand atop a block of melting ice on a rocky shoreline at Cape Denison, Commonwealth Bay, in East Antarctica, January 1, 2010. Picture taken January 1, 2010. REUTERS/Pauline Askin - RC153CA1ED40 OP-ED We’re almost out of time: The alarming IPCC climate report and what to do next Nathan HultmanTuesday, October 16, 2018 An attendant stands behind flags ahead of the opening ceremony of the fifth World Internet Conference (WIC) in Wuzhen, Zhejiang province, China, November 7, 2018. REUTERS/Jason Lee - RC19C66AD7D0 PLANET POLICY Around the halls: Brookings experts on what to watch at the COP 24 climate summit Todd Stern, David G. Victor, Samantha Gross, Sahil Ali, Rahul Tongia, Nathan Hultman, Timmons Roberts, Jeffrey Ball, Colette D. Honorable, and Amar BhattacharyaThursday, November 29, 2018 FILE PHOTO: Power-generating wind turbines are seen at a wind park near Greneville-en-Beauce, France, November 30, 2017. REUTERS/Christian Hartmann/File Photo - RC170168A5E0 REPORT Blending climate funds to finance low-carbon, climate-resilient infrastructure Joshua P. MeltzerWednesday, June 20, 2018 Better allocation of capital in sustainable infrastructure also requires the private sector to report on the climate risk of high carbon infrastructure investments. Bank of England Governor Mark Carney and global investment giant BlackRock have emphasized the need for transparency by investors regarding exposure to climate risk. Climate risk includes the environmental impacts faced by investments as well as costs related to meeting climate-related regulations. Ensuring the needed infrastructure we build for the future is sustainable will require partnerships that leverage public and private capital. In the absence of such partnerships, our ability to tackle global climate and development challenges will fall short.

#### 4. ! - **Climate change is the greatest threat-it magnifies every extinction risk**

**Torres 16** (Phil Torres, PhD candidate @ Rice University in tropical conservation biology, affiliate scholar @ Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies, July 22, 2016. “Op-ed: Climate Change Is the Most Urgent Existential Risk”. <http://ieet.org/index.php/IEET/more/Torres20160807>)

Humanity faces a number of formidable challenges this century. Threats to our collective survival stem from asteroids and comets, supervolcanoes, global pandemics, climate change, biodiversity loss, nuclear weapons, biotechnology, synthetic biology, nanotechnology, and artificial superintelligence. With such threats in mind, an informal survey conducted by the Future of Humanity Institute placed the probability of human extinction this century at 19%. To put this in perspective, it means that the average American is more than a thousand times more likely to die in a human extinction event than a plane crash.\* So, given limited resources, which risks should we prioritize? Many intellectual leaders, including Elon Musk, Stephen Hawking, and Bill Gates, have suggested that artificial superintelligence constitutes one of the most significant risks to humanity. And this may be correct in the long-term. But I would argue that two other risks, namely **climate change** and biodiveristy loss, should **take priority** right now over **every other known threat**. Why? Because these ongoing catastrophes **in slow-motion** will frame our **existential predicament** on Earth not just for the rest of this century, but for literally **thousands of years** to come. As such, they have the capacity to **raise** or lower the **probability of other risks scenarios** unfolding. Multiplying Threats Ask yourself the following: are **wars** more or less likely in a world marked by **extreme weather events**, **megadroughts**, **food supply disruptions**, and sea-level rise? Are **terrorist attacks** **more** or less **likely** in a world beset by **the collapse of global ecosystems**, **agricultural failures**, **economic uncertainty**, and political instability? Both government officials and scientists agree that the answer is **“more likely.”** For example, the current Director of the CIA, John Brennan, recently identified “the impact of **climate change**” as one of the “deeper causes of this rising instability” in countries like **Syria**, **Iraq**, **Yemen**, **Libya**, and **Ukraine**. Similarly, the former Secretary of Defense, Chuck Hagel, has described climate change as a **“threat multiplier”** with “the potential to exacerbate many of the challenges we are dealing with today — from infectious disease to terrorism.” The Department of Defense has also affirmed a connection. In a 2015 report, it states, “Global climate change will aggravate problems such as **poverty**, **social tensions**, environmental degradation, **ineffectual leadership** and **weak political institutions** that threaten stability in a number of countries.” **Scientific studies have further shown a connection between the environmental crisis and violent conflicts.** For example, a 2015 paper in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences argues that climate change was a causal factor behind the record-breaking 2007-2010 drought in Syria. This drought led to a mass migration of farmers into urban centers, which fueled the 2011 Syrian civil war. Some observers, including myself, have suggested that this struggle could be the beginning of World War III, given the complex tangle of international involvement and overlapping interests. The study’s conclusion is also significant because the Syrian civil war was the Petri dish in which the Islamic State consolidated its forces, later emerging as the largest and most powerful terrorist organization in human history. A Perfect Storm The point is that climate change and biodiversity loss could **very easily** push societies **to the brink of collapse**. This will exacerbate **existing geopolitical tensions** and introduce entirely **new power struggles** between state and nonstate actors. At the same time, advanced technologies will very likely become increasingly powerful and accessible. As I’ve written elsewhere, the malicious agents of the future will have bulldozers rather than shovels to dig mass graves for their enemies. The result is a perfect storm of more conflicts in the world along with unprecedentedly dangerous weapons. If the conversation were to end here, we’d have ample reason for placing climate change and biodiversity loss at the top of our priority lists. But there are other reasons they ought to be considered urgent threats. I would argue that they could make humanity more vulnerable to a catastrophe involving superintelligence and even asteroids. The basic reasoning is the same for both cases. Consider superintelligence first. Programming a superintelligence whose values align with ours is a formidable task even in stable circumstances. As Nick Bostrom argues in his 2014 book, we should recognize the “default outcome” of superintelligence to be “doom.” Now imagine trying to solve these problems amidst a rising tide of interstate wars, civil unrest, terrorist attacks, and other tragedies? The societal stress caused by climate change and biodiversity loss will almost certainly compromise important conditions for creating friendly AI, such as sufficient funding, academic programs to train new scientists, conferences on AI, peer-reviewed journal publications, and communication/collaboration between experts of different fields, such as computer science and ethics. It could even make an “AI arms race” more likely, thereby raising the probability of a malevolent superintelligence being created either on purpose or by mistake. Similarly, imagine that astronomers discover a behemoth asteroid barreling toward Earth. Will designing, building, and launching a spacecraft to divert the assassin past our planet be easier or more difficult in a world preoccupied with other survival issues? In a relatively peaceful world, one could imagine an asteroid actually bringing humanity together by directing our attention **toward a common threat**. **But** if the “**conflict multipliers**” of climate change and biodiversity loss have already **catapulted civilization** into chaos and turmoil, I strongly suspect that humanity will become more, rather than less, susceptible to dangers of this sort. Context Risks We can describe the dual threats of climate change and biodiversity loss as “context risks.” Neither is likely to directly cause the extinction of our species. But **both will define the context in which civilization confronts all the other threats** before us. In this way, they could **indirectly** contribute to the **overall danger of annihilation** — and this worrisome effect could be significant. For example, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the effects of climate change will be “severe,” “pervasive,” and “irreversible.” Or, as a 2016 study published in Nature and authored by over twenty scientists puts it, the consequences of climate change “will extend longer than the entire history of human civilization thus far.” Furthermore, a recent article in Science Advances confirms that humanity has already escorted the biosphere into the sixth mass extinction event in life’s 3.8 billion year history on Earth. Yet another study suggests that we could be approaching a **sudden**, **irreversible**, catastrophic **collapse of the global ecosystem**. If this were to occur, it could result in “widespread social unrest, economic instability and loss of human life.” Given the **potential** for environmental degradation to **elevate the likelihood of nuclear wars**, **nuclear terrorism**, **engineered pandemics**, a **superintelligence takeover**, and perhaps even **an impact winter**, it ought to **take precedence over all other risk concerns**— at least in the near-term. Let’s make sure we get our priorities straight.

## **Think of the Children DA**

#### **1. UQ & L - The aff’s defense of unconditionality of RTS guarantees teachers the right to strike -> this directly harms public education and seriously threatens access to education, especially in more urban areas.**

**Matthews ’12** Dylan Matthews, “How teacher strikes hurt student achievement,” Washington Post, September 10, 2012 at 10:15 a.m. CDT <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2012/09/10/how-teacher-strikes-hurt-student-achievement/> GL

Talks between the Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Teachers Union broke down yesterday, and now the city's **teachers are on strike**, just as class was about to start for the 2012-13 school year. Labor will insist that the strikes lead to contracts that attract good teachers who promote student learning in the long-run, while Emanuel notes that the teachers are striking over his proposed evaluation system, which he argues will help achievement going forward. Leaving that debate aside, what does the strike itself mean for students? Nothing good, the best empirical evidence suggests. **Two of the best recent studies on the effects of teacher work stoppages and strikes** concern labor disputes in Ontario schools in the late '90s and early 2000s. One, by the University of Toronto's Michael Baker, compared how standardized test scores rose between grade 3 and grade 6 for students who lost instructional time because of the Ontario strikes, and for students who were unaffected.Baker found that if the strike happened when a student was in grade 2 or 3, their scores rose by slightly less. But if the strike happened when the student was in grade 5 or 6, their scores rose by a whole lot less. **Scores for strike-affected fifth-graders were a full 3.8 percent lower** than those for fifth-graders in schools and grades not affected. If that doesn't seem like much, it's 29 percent of the standard deviation (or the typical amount by which students differ from their class average). Wilfrid Laurer's David Johnson studied the same **Ontario strikes and also found that they hurt student achievement.** Like Baker, he found only small effects for students for whom the strike occurred in third grade, but large effects if the student was in sixth grade. In the latter case, **the percentage of students getting a passing score on math standardized tests fell** by 0.21 percentage points per day, and the percentage getting a non-failing score across all tests fell by 0.10 points per day. **The effects were much more dramatic in poorer and more socially disadvantaged school districts, where overall passing scores went down** by 0.35 points per day. Given that strikes typically last a week or more, these results can add up. A nine-day strike, for instance, reduces passing rates 3.15 percentage points. And it's not just Ontario. Michèle Belot and Dinand Webbink, now of the **Universities** of Edinburgh and Rotterdam, respectively, **found that work stoppages hurt student achievement, increased the number of students repeating grades and reduced higher education attainment** in Belgium. What's more, studies dealing with teacher absences for reasons other than strikes bolster these findings. A study (pdf) by Harvard's Raegen Miller, Richard Murnane and John Willett tracked the effects of teacher absences while controlling for teacher experience and skill level. They noted that **teachers who are absent more regularly may be less motivated and skilled,** and so they isolated absences due to poor weather, the idea being that even highly skilled teachers will be absent if the weather prevents them form getting to work. The study found that **absences lead to statistically significant drops in student math and reading scores.** The drops are lower than those found in the Baker and Johnson studies, but then again, the students in the Harvard study received instruction from substitutes, whereas students in strikes get no instruction at all. Studies by Charles Clotfelder, Helen Ladd and Jacob Vigdor at Duke and by Mariesa Herrmann and Jonah Rockoff (pdf) at Columbia found significant drops in student achievement because of absences in North Carolina and New York schools, respectively, with the latter finding that a lengthy absence had the same effect as replacing an average teacher with one at the 30th percentile. The only recent study (pdf) to find no significant results from teacher strikes was conducted by Harris Zwerling, a researcher at the Pennsylvania State Education Association, the state's largest teacher's union. That study compared Pennsylvania school districts that experienced strikes to those that didn't, and found no difference in outcomes once one controls for demographics and years of teacher service; this is much the same methodology as the Ontario studies. One could argue that because the study focused on U.S. schools rather than Canadian or Belgian ones, it is more directly relevant. But then again, Pennsylvania requires schools to make up lost time due to teacher strikes at the end of the school year, which Canadian and Belgian schools don't. Illinois schools are required to teach 176 days a year, and the union insists that agreements to make up lost school days are traditional in bargaining agreements. But the 176-day requirement is frequently ignored, with 400,000 Chicago schoolchildren only attending school for 170 days. So there's a real possibility that the Chicago strike will end up like the Canadian and Belgian ones, with real lost instructional time and big effects on student learning as a result, rather than like the Pennsylvania one, with no lost time and no effect on learning. One last thing — one could protest that all these results rely on standardized testing, which may or may not correlate to real learning. That's fair enough, but **there's a bounty of evidence**, from Harvard's Raj Chetty (pdf) and Stanford's Eric Hanushek, among others, suggesting **that standardized test scores correlate with higher education achievement, lifetime earnings and more. So** if the Chicago **strike does end up hurting student scores, it could affect their lives for years into the future.**

#### **2. IL and ! - Access to education is key to prevent poverty and structural violence.**

**HRW 16** — Human Rights Watch, 2016 (“Summary,” *The Education Deficit: Failures to Protect and Fulfill the Right to Education through Global Development Agendas*, Published by Hu8man Rights Watch, ISBN 9781623133641, June, Available Online at <https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/accessible_document/educationdeficit0616_accessible.pdf>, Accessed 07-13-2017, p. 1-2)

Across the world, more than 120 million children and adolescents are absent from class.In recent years, many countries have been part of international and regional political drives to ensure that all children have access and complete education in the countries that lag behind the most. Such efforts have had some success, with tens of millions entering primary education, and more girls staying in school and pursuing secondary education, improving gender parity in more countries. Yet despite these and other advances, warnings sounded by the UN and global policy experts indicate that the global progress in education has“left behind” millions of children and young people. More children and adolescents are at risk of dropping out of school, and many are at school facing unsuitable learning conditions.Behind this failure stands governments, which bear responsibility for ensuring that no child or young person is without education, and lack of focus—both in implementation and in content—in development agendas on governments’ human rights obligations.This has resulted in an “**education deficit**”—a shortfall between the educational reality that children experience around the world and what governments have promised and committed to through human rights treaties. [end page 1] This not only undermines the fundamental human right to education, but has **real and dire consequences for global development**, and entire generations of children.The benefits of education to both children and broader society could not be clearer. Education can **break generational cycles of poverty** by enabling children to gain the life skills and knowledge needed to cope with today’s challenges. Education is strongly linked to concrete improvements in health and nutrition, **improving children’s very chances for survival**. Education empowers children to be full and active participants in society, able to exercise their rights and engage in civil and political life. Education is also a powerful protection factor: children who are in school are less likely to come into conflict with the law and much less vulnerable to rampant forms of **child exploitation**, including **child labor**, **trafficking**, and **recruitment into armed groups and forces**.