

[BRANDON MOLINA] No one said that being part of activism was easy. But you cannot stay silent when your communities are under attack.

I was born in the United States. I am an 18-year-old freshman at Los Angeles Harbor College. My dad is Guatemalan. My mom is Salvadorean. They migrated here in 1991. My dad is a construction worker. He's a labor foreman, while my mom cleans houses.

I'm the first person in my family to go to college. I am involved with addressing environmental justice issues in communities of color and low income. More affluent communities are being protected. So it's about environmental racism. People need to know about what is going on because climate change starts in the hood.

[POLICE SIREN]

[GLADYS LIMON] Wilmington is a neighborhood in the city of Los Angeles. It's a neighborhood with over 50,000 residents, the great majority of whom are Latino. It is a working class and low income community, and is burdened by multiple polluting sources. It is the third largest oil field in the country. They have three huge refineries. They have oil drilling that's peppered throughout the neighborhood. Kids on a daily basis walk by operations on residential streets on their way to and from schools.

*Run through. Run through. There we go. There we go.*

[CHATTER]

*That a boy! Come on. Come on.*

There is a huge drilling operation right next to a little league baseball field. You have the Port of Los Angeles, which is a major source of diesel pollution. So you have the 710 corridor and the Alameda corridor which have major diesel truck emissions.

Environmental injustice is the disproportionate siting of polluting sources in particular communities that these industries feel are not going to speak up.

[BRANDON MOLINA] They're polluting our air. They're polluting our water. They're polluting our soil. My community is at a 60% higher risk of developing cancer than other communities. There is asthma. There's a lot of bronchitis. I have asthma. My little sister's 9 years old. She's having the symptoms of asthma.

We have a human right to have clean air, clean water, clean soil. We shouldn't have to be subject to leaving because of the fact that there is pollution. The pollution should leave, not the people.

[GARY GONZALES] This year, I met Brandon. He's a new student to the ASO, which is the Associated Student Organizations. And when we've talked about his things that he wants to do to make a difference in our school and our community, I was very impressed.

[BRANDON MOLINA] *So the first resolution I will be presenting today is the Green Technology Implementation Act. And whereas the lack of proper environmental education...* My activism has led me into being interested in politics. I'm a senator in my student government. And currently I am running for president for my student government. All these refineries, all these oil drilling sites, they fund a lot of things in our community. They fund Youth in Government. They fund the YMCA. They fund businesses. That's a way to silence our community.

[GARY GONZALES] LA Harbor College is thinking about restarting a program called Process Plant Technology to help students from our school get jobs in the refinery. Brandon doesn't feel that's a good thing. He's concerned that we shouldn't have a collaboration with them. We should work with them to find ways to not be polluting our community.

[BRANDON MOLINA] There's obviously an argument about the fact that the [INAUDIBLE] provides jobs. But these are jobs that not only pollute the community, but pollute the workers as well. Our communities shouldn't have to settle for polluting jobs. We can do much better than that. And that's why we believe in a just transition from an economy based on oil to an economy based on clean energy.

I think that we should put people over profit, not profit over people.

[PROTESTERS CHANTING]

[GLADYS LIMON] This is really about saving our species, our livability, our habitat, preserving our environment as a whole for future generations and really respecting our natural resources and everything that composes the fabric of our environment that we are dependent on. It's really about self preservation.

[PROTESTERS CHANTING]

[BRANDON MOLINA] What if this happened to your community? What would you do to fight this? The fight will never stop until it's all shut down. That's the goal, to have no more polluters in our community.

*Up, up with the people. Down, down with the pipeline.*

I will be loud. And we will not stop fighting until we have the right to clean air, clean water, and clean soil.

*Down, down--*

[GARY GONZALES] Now I'm going to get into the election results. The students that came in second place with 36% of the 210 vote was Brandon Molina and Joseph Reyes. And our election winner was Elijah [INAUDIBLE]..

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE] Good job.

[BRANDON MOLINA] It never leaves my mind. The fight for environmental justice never leaves my mind. And that motivates me to do good in school. After I get my bachelor's in political science, I want to go to law school. I want to become a civil rights lawyer.

*What we need is a healthy and sustainable community.*

And I want to run for public office one day.

*Climate change starts in our hoods, and we must represent.*

Being a congressman, a US senator, even president one day, we'll see about that.

*We will resist. We will build. And we will rise. Yay.*

We need to empower one another in order to create change in our communities.