

## CASEY LIBONATE



**W**hen Casey was in second grade, she led a group of her friends in a penny drive for the local animal shelter and from that moment, she was addicted to community service. In high school she was a student leader for a yearlong service learning program that culminated in a 10-day service trip to New Orleans. From that experience, Casey became interested in food security and nutrition, ultimately leading her to co-found a community garden at her high school to provide the town's food pantry with fresh produce. At Penn, Casey has been involved with civic engagement and philanthropy in a variety of ways. She has mentored at West Philadelphia High School, taught an academic summer program at Comegys Elementary School and had the pleasure to direct PennCORP 2015. Casey also served as her sorority's second-ever Philanthropy Chair, focusing on working with and raising funds for Ronald McDonald House Charities. As both a Civic Scholar and Benjamin Franklin Scholar, Casey has been able to integrate her love for civic engagement, political science and environmental science throughout her time at Penn, culminating in her capstone project. Next year she will be living in Washington, D.C. recruiting for a global law firm.

## CAPSTONE PROJECT

### **IT'S ALWAYS SUNNY IN AMERICA: RENEWABLE ENERGY POLICY AND THE SOLAR ECONOMY**

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Renewable energy, specifically solar energy, has become increasingly popular over the past two decades. It is clear that the United States must take a stand to decrease carbon emissions and its related impact on the environment and climate change. What is not clear, however, is whether this increase in popularity has been due to policies implemented by the government or simply market supply and demand. This study seeks to answer this question through taking a broad historical approach to examine relevant renewable energy policies since 1978 and the impact these policies have had on fostering the solar energy market. This thesis has found numerical and anecdotal evidence showing that there is a connection between federal policies and growth-promoting investments in solar energy and provides policy recommendations to keep the solar economy growing in a similar fashion.