

Senate Hearings to be held Mid-September

Washington, DC—In the wake of destructive summer drought and in one of the hottest years on record, Senator M. Lieberman, Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, has announced that she will hold hearings on the topic of automobiles and environmental damage.

Explained Lieberman, "the idea is to explore the links between driving, air pollution, and global climate change." Industry spokespeople, environmental groups, academics, and policy experts from all points on the political spectrum are expected to participate in the hearings.

Senate Hearings: Overview

Hearings will be held the week of September 27. Each student will be assigned an organization, such as Daimler-Benz, and a hearing topic, such as a requirement for all new cars to get 200 mpg.

The primary task is to represent your organization in the hearing; your secondary task is to evaluate the merits of the arguments that are made by lobbyists.

What you need to do:

- 1) Research the issue so you can tell good science from bad and good arguments from specious ones.
- 2) Research your organization's position.
- 3) Prepare a one-page (you can use both sides) briefing sheet for the senators.

This is due the class period before your hearing. An excellent briefing sheet will include: clear statement of organization's position, justification of that position on scientific, economic, and ideological/emotional grounds, consideration of counter arguments, appropriate use and citation of primary sources/quotes, and good graphic design. Do not rely only on material from your organization's web site!

3) Prepare a 3 minute talk for the Senate hearing. The purpose here is to persuade your listeners...lay out your strongest arguments in a memorable way. Be prepared to answer questions!

4) After **each** hearing, evaluate each speaker on the following grounds: How did the speaker change your opinions about the hearing topic? If you had represented their organization, what arguments would you have stressed?

5) After the hearings, take a (mental) step back. Pick one hearing (it does not have to be your own) and write a report for Sen. Lieberman regarding possible legislation on the topic. An excellent report will do the following things: give an unbiased overview of the problem and its impact on American citizens, describe fairly the different stakeholders and their positions, give your judgement of their evidence, counter arguments, and proposed solutions, and provide a clear recommendation for policies that would be possible and legal for the government to implement. Sen. Lieberman is a busy woman, so keep the reports to 4-6 pp.