

MEDIA ADVISORY

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CAMPUSES NATIONWIDE TO ENGAGE CONGRESS IN “VIDEO DIALOGUE”

*Youth seize new leadership opportunity to engage politicians
on energy, the planet, the future*

Portland, OR.—On February 4th, Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) will slip out of a Congressional session to engage in a direct dialogue with a hundred college students—but not in Washington, DC. The students will be in an auditorium on the campus of Lewis & Clark College, back in his Portland, Oregon district. Blumenauer will be joining dozens of Senators and Representatives in this historic, web-based conversation. On one day, young people across the country will be united with Congress over the internet to talk about plans to slow climate change.

“This is an incredible opportunity for thousands of students to get face-time with decision-makers,” said Kirsten Fix, a student at Lewis & Clark. “Decisions that Congress is making this year will determine how hot the planet is going to get for us, and for our kids, and we deserve a voice.” In Washington, Congressman Blumenauer was equally enthusiastic: “Young people are pioneering this new kind of dialogue, a new way to contribute on this critical issue that will have its greatest effect on generations to come,” he said. “They are helping us shape the decisions that will impact their lives and their world.”

The video-dialogue is part of the National Teach-In on Global Warming, involving over 700 campuses across the country. Teach-In organizers worked with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s office and technology company SightSpeed® to equip computers in the Capitol building to hold the conversations. Using this technology, members of Congress will be able to step into a Capitol conference room and face questions from a political science or economics class back home.

Congressman Edward Markey (D-MA), Chair of the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming, and the new chair of the Subcommittee on Energy and the Environment, said, “Now is the time for student leaders to speak up in the fight against global warming. Congress is poised to write climate legislation that will grow our economy, create millions of green jobs and protect our planet for generations –the National Teach-In gives students around the country a seat at the table.”

Justin Lee, 22, of Macalester College in Minnesota, says many youth are ahead of the curve. “Youth need opportunities to speak directly to Congress, and to send them a message. As advocates, our projects range from campus energy competitions to the development of innovative new models of for/non-profit businesses in action. We are working in every city, town and rural area across the country, and our message is this: ‘Youth have already started, and we need Congress to join us.’”

The National Teach-In is directed by Dr. Eban Goodstein, author and professor of Economics at Lewis & Clark College. “Today’s young people are truly the greatest generation,” said Goodstein. “This generation will have to rewire the entire planet with clean energy technologies, redesign every city on earth. As educators, we need to give them the chance to talk to Congress about the tools they will need to change the future.”

For interviews with National Teach-In Director Professor Eban Goodstein, national organizing staff, faculty and student organizers across the country, or a member of our advisory board, please call 503-806-6370.

NOTE TO EDITORS: To localize your story, go to <http://www.nationalteachin.org/actionmap/> to find a list of events state-by-state and contact organizers via the information they have posted. For a list of Congresspeople who will participate in video-dialogue, please visit <http://nationalteachin.org/campustocongress.php>

The National Teach-In on Global Warming is a new effort to engage decision makers in direct conversation with young people who will inherit the challenges associated with climate change. Involving thousands of Americans through hundreds of campuses, congregations, and civic groups, the NTI is helping put solutions to climate change and energy policy at the top of the congressional agenda. For more information, please visit www.nationalteachin.org