

# Lieberman endorses student 'go green' message

By **SUSAN SILVERS**  
Staff writer

TRUMBULL — Even in sixth grade, the politically savvy students from Hillcrest Middle School can appreciate what hosting a U.S. senator can mean.

"It was a very good opportunity for us to get the message out about going green," Julianne Boggs said Monday after Sen. Joe Lieberman stopped by. "He really helped us."

"Going green" for Hillcrest students means a plan to encourage classmates to walk or bike to school, use automatic sensors to shut off lights and faucets, and opting for reusable lunch trays.

The result? A \$1,000 prize won by 11 students competing in the recent state "Cool It" contest, financial savings for the school system and a visit from Lieberman, the four-term, self-proclaimed "independent Democrat" from Stamford.

He shared with about 125 students his own odyssey as an environmentalist determined to cut down on greenhouse gas emissions and also took some questions.

"What you have done in taking some responsibility for global warming is to give me some encouragement about the future," he said.

Lieberman said that when he first joined the Senate 20 years ago, visible evidence of environmental damage from greenhouse gas emissions was thin.

"You still couldn't really see it with your eyes. Over time that's changed," he added, referring to



Phil Noel/Staff photographer

**Sen. Joe Lieberman talks with Hillcrest Middle School students in Trumbull about their efforts to help protect the environment.**

melting polar caps captured on satellite images.

Indeed, he said, Asian security officials concerned with terrorism he met at a recent conference also were mindful of the environment. "The sea levels of the world are going to rise," he said,

potentially sending refugees inland and over international borders.

The Cool It Challenge is a three-year-old competition that encourages middle- and high-schoolers to investigate the reasons for climate change

and come up with local solutions for it. Competing last month at Eastern Connecticut State University, the Hillcrest team shared recognition in categories for innovation and collaboration, winning \$500 for each.

"I wish the students at the Hillcrest Middle School could all vote in the U.S. Senate," said Lieberman, bemoaning the failure under a filibuster earlier this month of a bill aimed at reducing greenhouse emissions to pass.

But asked by Stephen Kelly what he thought he could do to cross that 60-vote threshold, Lieberman noted that the objections of George W. Bush wouldn't stand with the next president.

"Either President [John] McCain or President [Barack] Obama will support the bill," the senator said, adding that advocates continue to discuss the matter with legislative opponents.

Still, Lieberman said finding an overall answer will be hard work.

When Matt Connelly wanted to know if ethanol, the corn-based additive, had "damaged the economy" because its ordered use in fuels made other products, such as food, more expensive, Lieberman acknowledged unfortunate by-products.

"Congress over-reacted and created a problem by trying to solve a problem," he said. "One of the things I've learned from this is that there's not going to be a single solution."

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