Town Hall, Democracy, and Informed Citizens

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The Course: POLS 155

600 undergraduate students
Majority are 1st year students
A General Education Foundation course

The Tasks

- Select a Social Issue
- Research the issue
- Determine a policy statement
- Participate in Town Hall
- Support the policy statement at the Town Hall Meeting

Social Issues, Spring 2013

Addressing Homelessness Birth Control and Reproductive Rights California Prison Overcrowding California Water Politics Campus Alcohol and Drug Use Crime Prevention Decreasing Un/Underemployment **Energy Policy** Food Politics Freedom of Press Funding College Gun Policy Human Trafficking Immigration Policy Improving K-12 Education: Curriculum/Program Design Improving K-12 Education: Funding Internet Privacy and Freedom

LGBTQ Rights

Librarian's Role

Assist in finding appropriate articles

Help narrow or broaden research on specific Social Issues

Discuss possible policy statements

Instruct on how to locate and search newspapers and magazines.

Answer questions on determining biased and non biased sources

Develop handouts, tutorials, and guides on how to look for Town Hall articles.



Town Hall meeting in auditorium for opening session.



Town Hall break out session.

The New York Times

Justices Rebuff States on Utilities' Gas Emissions: [National Desk]

Liptak, Adam . New York Times [New York, N.Y] 21 June 2011: .18.

Describes what happened without stating opinion.

Full Text Translate | Turn on search term navigation

WASHINGTON -- The Supreme Court on Monday unanimously rejected a lawsuit that had sought to force major electric utilities to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions without waiting for federal regulators to act.

The suit was brought by six states, New York City and several land trusts. Its central contention was that carbon dioxide emissions from power plants belonging to four private color anies and the Tennessee Valley Authority i amounted to a public nuisance under federal common law. The soit asked a federal court in New York to order the defendants to reduce their emissions.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, writing for the court, said the plaintiffs were making their case in the wrong forum Under the Clean Air Act, she wrote, the matter must be addressed by the Environmental Protection Agency

rather than by the courts.

The court's ruling on the one hand reaffirmed that the rederal environmental agency has the tools to address emissions of carbon dioxide. On the other hand, it limited the options of environmental advocates who have been pressing the agency to move factor in the face of considerable resistance in Congress.

The lawsuit was filed in 2004 against a different regulatory backgrop. In those days, the Bush administration argued that the Clean Air Act did not permit the agency to is the regulations addressing climate change, and that it would be unwise to do so in any event. But in 2007, the Supreme Court ruled that the law did authorize federal regulations on greenhouse gas emissions, and that the agency was required to issue them unless it had a scientific basis for its refusal.

After that decision and the change in administrations, the agency has begun to issue greenhouse gas regulations, starting with rules covering automobiles. It is working on more, including one that would set limits that by

Non Biased Articles

State both sides of the issue
Has a named author
Supports statements with verifiable statements
ments
Does not use first person

Editorial
Op-Ed
Letter to the editor
Personal Interest Story
Blog
Movie Review
Facebook or Twitter post

Approved Periodicals

New York Times
Sacramento Bee
Washington Post
Los Angeles Times
Christian Science Monitor
Chico News and Review
Atlantic Monthly
CQ Weekly
Economist
National Journal
Newsweek
Time

Student Outcomes

Knowledge of newspaper sources

Awareness of social issues

Experience discussing research outside the classroom

Ability to locate, interpret, and analyze news articles

Understanding of bias in reporting

Becoming a more informed citizen

Increased awareness of policy and political decisions

Participation in a democratic activity

