

Health Group

You are an **Aide to a Senator Who Is Concerned with Environmental Toxins**

Your Background and Biography

You are a trusted aide to the senior senator from New Jersey. You hope that you're actually her *most* trusted aide, and you couldn't be more pleased that she has assigned you to an important mission. The senator has always been concerned with issues of environmental health, and she is eager for the opportunity to influence the provisions of the Environmental Protection Agency's regulation on plastic waste. She has designated you as her representative at the deliberations, and you know that this is an excellent opportunity for you to advance your career.

You have always been interested in pursuing a career in public service. When you were growing up, many people called you a "natural politician" after observing your polite, polished manner in speaking to adults and your ability to resolve disputes among your peers and siblings. You took those remarks to heart and decided to follow the path that seemed laid out for you. You led the student government in your high school, were captain of the basketball team, and applied yourself to your studies and extracurricular activities in order to earn acceptance to a university of suitable prestige for a future president of the United States. Your drive to serve your country and to establish your patriotic credentials led you to consider a career in the military, and you persevered through Officer Candidate School in the summer before your senior year of college. On the same day that you became a college graduate, you received your commission as a second lieutenant in the United States Army. You served two tours in Iraq as your battalion's intelligence officer before deciding to leave the military and continue your career in public service as a civilian. You received an honorable discharge and had been promoted to the rank of captain before beginning your first civilian job as a senatorial aide.

You quickly rose in the senator's esteem as you performed your duties expertly. You admire all of the senator's work on behalf of her constituents, but you are especially impressed with her commitment to the health of the American people. You know that one of her greatest professional disappointments was the defeat of the Non-Toxic Child Act, a law that would have required chemical manufacturers to prove that their products are safe. It would have been very beneficial to children, who are especially vulnerable to environmental toxins. You know that the senator regrets the failure of this bill, and you hope this new regulation can address her concerns. If you can ensure that protections against toxicity are included in the final version of this new regulation, you would provide the senator with redemption for the failure of the Non-Toxic Child Act and make a convincing display of your own political skill.

Your Mission

Your goal at this hearing is to convince the Regulators to include the Health Group's recommendations in their final regulation. To make this argument effectively, you must

- Complete the assigned readings listed at the bottom of this page;
- Work closely with the other members of your group to develop clear answers to the Regulators' questions;
- Make use of as much specific information as possible to develop strong arguments that plastics need to be proven safe rather than assumed safe and that the only way to protect against the effects of toxins is to prevent the production of potentially toxic plastics;
- Read as much as you can about your position and the positions of the other groups; and
- Complete written reflections on your character, interest group, and readings as assigned.

Your Victory Objectives

- **You will receive 10 points** if the Regulators select your group's proposal as the final regulation.
- The Regulators will rank the interest groups by how well their goals are represented in the final regulation. **You will receive between 1 and 5 points** based on how the Health Group is ranked and how well the regulation reflects your goals.

Sources

Health Group Sources

- Case Study: Plastics and the Human Body
- "Report on Bisphenol A," video, www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wXGrzDlcr8&feature=endscreen

Your Individual Sources

- "Chemical Safety Bill Has Diverse Support," by Maureen Swanson and Rebecca Roberts, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 5, 2012
- Select **one article** from the bibliography on *The Case of Plastics* website recommended for the Health Group. Read the article and write two paragraphs summarizing the article and how it will be useful to you in the upcoming debate.