

## NEWS RELEASE OF SENATOR JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN

## LIEBERMAN CALLS FOR PARENTAL WARNINGS ON VIDEO GAMES SENATOR SAYS SOME GAMES PROMOTE VIOLENCE, SEX

Washington, DC—Calling violent video games, “the nightmare before Christmas,” Senator Joe Lieberman (D-CT) said today he will introduce legislation to force the industry to label video games so parents will be warned about any violence or sex they contain.

“Violent video games may become the cabbage patch dolls of the 1993 holiday season. But cabbage patch dolls never oozed blood and kids weren’t taught to rip off their heads, and tear out their hearts and spinal cords, as they are in these video games” said Senator Lieberman.

In a news conference with Bob Keeshan (“Captain Kangaroo”) and representatives from leading parents and teachers organizations, Senator Lieberman said his bill, which will be co-sponsored by Senator Herbert Kohl (D-WI), will give the video game industry a one-year ultimatum: come up with a ratings or warning label system, or an independent council will do it for them.

“Few parents would buy these games for their kids if they really knew what was in them,” Senator Lieberman said. “But that’s the heart of the problem—there is no effective way for them to know what every video game contains.” Senator Lieberman aired excerpts from two popular video games, “Mortal Kombat” and “Night Trap,” which display scenes involving characters that spill blood, rip out hearts, tear off heads and spinal cords, and stalk scantily-clad women, drain their blood and hang them on meathooks.

Senator Lieberman also announced that he and Senator Kohl will co-chair a hearing next Thursday, December 9, on the issue of violent video games. Senator Lieberman is chairman of the Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on Regulation and Government Information, and Senator Kohl is chairman of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice.

Senator Lieberman said new technologies, involving CD-ROMs and virtual reality, threaten to make even more realistic scenes of violence and sex available to young people.

“After watching these violent video games, I personally believe it is irresponsible for some in the video game industry to produce them. I wish we could ban them constitutionally, or that the industry would stop making them,” Senator Lieberman said, citing the example of the comic book business, which uses the Comics Code Authority to prohibit images of graphic and bloody violence and explicit sex in their publications.

Senator Lieberman said kids may get access to violent video games either from parents who are unaware of what they’re buying, or from video rental stores, many of which make violent video games available to children. “Video games with scenes of graphic violence or sex may be even more damaging to children than movies or magazines, because the child is doing a lot more than viewing. He or she is participating in the action, directing it, and being rewarded for their behavior,” Senator Lieberman said.

One study found that ninety percent of 7th grade boys and two-thirds of 7th grade girls spend time playing video games. Two-thirds of children as young as six years old play video games. And nearly one in three American homes has a video game system.

“We now require warning labels on toys that can potentially damage children’s bodies. Why not do so on a toy that can damage their minds?” Senator Lieberman said.

Senator Lieberman is a longtime advocate for children. As Attorney General of Connecticut, he introduced and enforced laws protecting children from abuse and neglect, and damage from products, pollution and other hazards. As Senator, he has advocated measures to protect children from environmental hazards and unsafe products. He is the author of “Child Support In America.”

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