

MR. SIEGELMAN GOES TO WASHINGTON

From the NYT:

The House Judiciary Committee asked the Justice Department Thursday to temporarily release former Alabama Gov. Don Siegelman from prison in early May to testify before Congress about possible political influence over his prosecution.

A spokeswoman for the committee said Siegelman, a Democrat serving more than seven years in a Louisiana prison, would travel to Washington under guard of the U.S. Marshals Service. She said Committee Chairman John Conyers, a Michigan Democrat, believes Siegelman could provide important information about Justice Department practices under President Bush.

This is good news. Not necessarily because I think it will lend a lot of new facts that will do the trick to spring Siegelman from what appears to be a very bum rap, but because it will really build on the wave of national publicity started by the 60 Minutes segment.

I have not yet seen anything additional as to details, such as who other witnesses would be, exactly what Conyers hopes to accomplish, etc. Perhaps we should help the Judiciary Committee out and come up with a game plan for them. Any suggestions?

UPDATE: Well. Wow. That was fast. I figured the request by Congress would turn up the heat on the 11th Circuit in relation to Siegelman's release pending appeal, but I didn't really want to jinx the concept by saying so in the post.
BREAKING NEWS from The Birmingham News via TPM:

Former Gov. Don Siegelman will be

released from prison, after the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals granted him an appeal bond, the lead prosecutor in the case said.

Acting U.S. Attorney Louis Franklin said he received a courtesy call from the court today. "He's going to be released," Franklin said.

He said he was disappointed but added, "The 11th Circuit has the discretion to do that, and I respect that."