People-Centered Oversight

Montana · https://levin-center.org/slow/people-centered-oversight-26/



In 2025, the Levin Center conducted a study of all 50 states to examine how legislatures ensure government programs work effectively for citizens. Factors such as legislative oversight committees, routine engagement with executive agencies, collection of casework data, digital transparency tools, and user-centered policy evaluation were of particular importance. The full report can be found **here**.

State Summary

The state of Montana has one specific and active oversight committee, the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, and 13 specialized oversight committees. Each committee homepage has a link to

"Submit Public Comment" and there is ample evidence of public input (e.g., written and oral testimony) given in each meeting reviewed. Agendas appear to have a public comment section as a matter of course, and meeting minutes reveal that the committee does frequently receive public comments. The website also provides a link to view all public comments submitted. In addition, there are several reports and documents available for public viewing under each meeting listed.

While being highly active and engaging in oversight behaviors, the state of Montana also has a unique process by which they make some of their public oversight hearings more accessible to constituents who may face obstacles to attending legislative hearings due to how far they live from the state capitol. For example, the State-Tribal Relations Committee and the Water Policy Interim Committee hold several of their public hearings in various locations around the state, on reservations or in school buildings. The state of Montana also has two specialized oversight committees (the Criminal Justice Oversight Council and the Environmental Quality Council) in which members of the public hold an equal number of seats on the committee.