People-Centered Oversight

California · https://levin-center.org/slow/people-centered-oversight-7/



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 California has a single bicameral oversight committee, the Joint Committee on Legislative Audit. Although this committee does not hold frequent hearings on oversight topics (only two in 2023

and one in 2024), the committee's homepage shows strong interest in gaining public input to inform its oversight activities. At the top of the committee homepage, it states, "We encourage the public to provide written testimony before the hearing" and then provides a link to do so. There is also a link, utilized by several of the legislative committees on their homepages, to a Position Letter Portal where users can register and submit their positions on any bill up for consideration. The chairs of the oversight committee both have highly personalized web pages and links presented top and center to contact them. These links take users to a direct contact form that is user-friendly and quick to fill out. The hearings that were surveyed demonstrated that their prominent calls for public input resulted in several cases of direct user testimony being received. For example, a hearing on the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act in August of 2023 had several Native Americans from various tribes testifying before the committee. It should also be noted that California has several oversight partners (seven in total) with easy-to-navigate websites and highly noticeable links for users to submit input on concerns of waste, fraud, or abuse of government resources.

Also of particular note is the work of the California State Auditor, which has in recent years paid special attention to publication of reports with material such as detailed infographics that make it easier for the public (and legislators) to access and understand their complex subject matter.