Agenda

• About the Levin Center
• Legislative oversight basics and examples
• Oversight of infrastructure investments
• State oversight best practices
• State Oversight Academy (2023)
About the Levin Center

Advance Oversight & Strengthen Democracy

• Build oversight capacity at federal, state, local levels and abroad
• Empower lawmakers to expose abuses, ensure effective governance, and bring critical facts to light for the benefit of all
About the Levin Center

Restore America's Fact-Based Public Square

• Promote civil discourse and a shared appreciation for and understanding of relevant facts
• Encourage exchange across the political divide that builds mutual respect and empathy
About the Levin Center

How we Go about our Work

• Workshops and Trainings
• Research and Scholarship
• Convenings
• Online Resources for Lawmakers (State Oversight Academy)
• Commentary in the Media and Courts
Legislative Oversight Basics and Examples

Six Dimensions

✓ Analytic Bureaucracies (Auditors, Fiscal, Ombudsman, etc.)
✓ Appropriations
✓ Advice & Consent
✓ Administrative Rule Review
✓ Committees
✓ Contracts

Examples

• Child welfare services (State Sen. Sarah Gelser Blouin (OR))
• Corrections (April 4, 2021 panel)
• Pandemic response (May 4, 2021 panel)
Advancing Oversight, Strengthening Democracy

Research, events, workshops to carry on the legacy of Senator Carl Levin

2022 Wayne Law Review Oversight Symposium

- Oversight, Infrastructure, and Federalism: Ensuring Transparency, Accountability, and Effectiveness of U.S. Infrastructure Investments
Legislative Oversight of Infrastructure Investments

Capacity Building, Design & Practice

Performance of infrastructure programs

• Include assessment of past performance and future projections
• Assign to a specific legislative committee at least a quarterly review of high dollar, high risk infrastructure investments
• Include repair and safety as part of oversight efforts

Institutional capacity to oversee implementation

• Entity with legislative representation tasked with reviewing projects and contracts
  ✓ E.g., add legislative representation to State Administrative Boards drafting and approving contracts
• Rigorous and timely investigations and reports from committees, using data shared by contractors and relevant agencies
Legislative Oversight of Infrastructure Investments

Contracting

In the contract

• Essential oversight elements: performance data, cooperation with agency and auditor, oversight costs
• Performance metrics: outcomes > organizational structure and process
• Incentivize cooperation, reciprocal relationship where reputation matters

Improving governmental contracting

• Public/private sector advisory committees
• Review contractor’s power over decisions impacting contract oversight and accountability
• Update cost estimates every three years
Legislative Oversight of Infrastructure Investments

Data and Measurement

Infrastructure condition, safety, and performance management results.
  • Movement of people, car and non-car transportation

Electric vehicle charging stations
  • Data on charger use, reliability, and performance

Public website to track spending and contract progress
  • Similar to state websites set up to monitor pandemic response contracts
State Oversight Best Practices

• Power of a phone call
• Plan, a vision for oversight in upcoming session
• Increase visibility and public discourse
• Working together to find facts
• Research, more best practices, tutorials on our website
  • [www.levin-center.org](http://www.levin-center.org)
State Oversight Academy (2023)

- Improve state legislative oversight
- Promote and elevate oversight scholarship
- Cultivate and exchange best practices
- Increase oversight visibility and stimulate public discourse
- Orientations and workshops for legislators and legislative staff
- Online tutorials and extensive materials:  https://levin-center.org
Advancing Oversight. Strengthening Democracy.

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Website for Wayne Law Review Oversight Symposium: