



Crafting Your State Oversight Agenda for the Coming Legislative Term

Oversight Workshop

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Levin Center for Oversight and Democracy

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Levin Center for Oversight and Democracy



U.S. Sen. Carl Levin



Pennsylvania Oversight Committee



Wayne State Law School



NCOIL Summer Meeting

- Workshops for Congress, state, international legislatures
- Videos, testimony, webinars, social media
- Research & Reports (50-state analysis, contract oversight, more)
- Conferences, panels & events
- Oversight experts
- More: Benjamin.Eikey@wayne.edu



CSG West Annual Meeting

What is Legislative Oversight?

The “eyes and voice” of the people

“It is the proper duty of a representative body to look diligently into every affair of government and to talk much about what it sees. It is meant to be the eyes and the voice, and to embody the wisdom and will of its constituents.”

-- United States Supreme Court¹

¹ Trump v. Mazars USA, LLP, 140 S.Ct. 2019, 2031 (2020), citing United States v. Rumely, 345 U. S. 41, 43 (1953).

Agenda for this Session

- Identifying Oversight topics
- Six avenues of state legislative oversight
- Routine and investigative oversight
- Make your own two-year agenda
- Recommendations

Origin of Investigation Topics

- Committee jurisdiction
- Leadership concerns
- Scandals, events, news, problems
- Reports
- Constituents
- Whistleblowers, advocacy groups
- Legislator concerns
- Lawsuits
- Agencies
- Personal experience
- Oversight plan, long-term vision



Examples of Topics

- Pension funds
- Prisons
- Foster care
- Disaster response
- Lobbying disclosures
- Contract mismanagement
- Infrastructure



Avenues for State Legislative Oversight

- Analytic Bureaucracies
- Appropriations Process
- Committees
- Administrative Rule Review
- Advice and Consent
- Monitoring Contracts

Routine, or In-depth Oversight?

Routine: "cop on the beat"	In-depth: "firefighter"
Program Outcomes	Scandal
Budgetary	Disaster
Contracts	Chronic Problems
Compliance	Escalating Problems
Deter Malfeasance	Long-term Investigation

Phases of an Investigation

1. Fact-Finding
2. Written Product
3. Hearing
4. Follow up



Tutorials: <https://levin-center.org/congressional-lawmakers/online-tutorials/>

Your Superpowers



- Legislator phone calls and emails get returned.
- Legislators can request investigations and reports.
- Legislator questions trigger research, reconsideration, change.
- Oversight can have as much, or more, impact as legislation.

Oversight Plan for 2023-24 Legislature

Topic	Factual Question	Avenue(s)	Routine, or In-Depth?

Recommendations for Strengthening Oversight

- Joint oversight committee with balanced party membership
- Bipartisan approach to topics, inquiry, witnesses, questions, etc.
- More follow-up (e.g., hearings) on reports published by analytic bureaucracies
- Include contract oversight
- Create oversight plan
- Be transparent about oversight outcomes: post status and results of investigations

For additional resources: <https://www.levin-center.org/state-lawmakers/state-oversight-resources/>



Thank you!

For more information, contact:

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