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Crafting Your State Oversight Agenda for the Coming Legislative Term

Levin Center for Oversight and Democracy

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Topics

- Topics can come from news, constituents, legislative leadership, personal experience, reports, etc.
- Frame the topic as an overall, factual question to be answered.

Tools (Six Avenues)

- **Analytic Bureaucracies:** auditors, fiscal, ombudsman, etc.
- **Appropriations:** reporting requirements, legislative veto, power of the purse
- **Committees:** hearings, interviews, interim charges/studies, power of the phone call
- **Administrative Rule Review:** consider the costs, sometimes audit units participate, recommend changes, delay adoption
- **Advice and Consent:** gubernatorial appointments, executive orders, reorganization powers
- **Monitoring Contracts:** reporting, audits, hearings with agencies/contractors

Routine or In-depth Oversight?

- Routine: outcomes, budgetary, contracts, compliance, deterrence
- In-depth: scandal, disaster, chronic problems, escalating problems, long-term escalation

Recommendations

- Joint, bipartisan oversight committee with balanced party membership.
- Bipartisan approach to topics, inquiry, witnesses, questions, etc.
- Enhance contract oversight: contract tracking updates from a department or agency to the relevant legislative leadership, hearings, assign to an appropriate committee, focus on high-risk, pricey contracts.
- Create a bipartisan, priority-setting oversight plan which is shared with the public.
- Be transparent about outcomes: post information on the status and results of investigations.

Link to State Oversight Resources, including example bill language: <https://www.levin-center.org/state-lawmakers/state-oversight-resources/>