



"Learning by Hearings"

What is the Levin Center?

The Levin Center for Oversight and Democracy carries on the legacy of U.S. Senator Carl Levin who championed governmental transparency and accountability and fact-based civil discourse throughout his 36-year career in the Senate. The Levin Center, which is headquartered at Wayne State University Law School in Detroit, trains legislators in Congress and across the country in how to conduct bipartisan, fact-based investigations. We also work to raise awareness about the special responsibility that lawmakers have to find important facts and share them with the public.

What is Learning by Hearings?

The Levin Center's civic education program, Learning by Hearings (LbH), provides robust, experiential education opportunities where participants learn about history, government, and current events while developing their capacity for critical thinking and working with people from diverse backgrounds and viewpoints. The program has two parts:

Extra-Curricular Program: This mock legislative oversight hearing experience allows students to role-play a legislator in their state faced with a difficult investigation. Students are given the resources to prepare for and conduct a hearing. Using research, critical thinking, and public speaking skills, students will examine the scenario, question witnesses, and then collaborate to determine and share the facts. All scenarios are based on hypothetical, contemporary issues facing Americans today.

Classroom Modules: Our in-class modules include plans and materials for inquiry lessons and in-class simulations, using noteworthy congressional investigations to bring to life principles of accountable governance and historic figures central to the development of our democracy. These classroom modules are suitable for use in US Civics and US History classrooms and are aligned to the MI High School Content Expectations and the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards.



How can I get involved?

If you would like to stay engaged with our expanding resources or play a role in their development, sign up for the Center's Education Newsletter at bit.ly/LevinCenterEd. Follow us on Twitter or Facebook to join our growing network of US History and US Civics educators. Questions? Contact the Levin Center's Civic Education Specialists Lauren Jasinski (ljasinski@wayne.edu) or Mark Morrow (mark.morrow@wayne.edu).



Sign-up to the Levin Center
Civic Education Newsletter



Student Quotes

“When we think of real issues in our own community, it’s difficult to point to one specific solution or one specific piece of legislation to change. It’s often several different components that come together to create such an issue, so, it takes a lot of intricate parts to solve. I really appreciated how we were able to utilize all the different resources and witnesses because even during the hearings, I found that I didn’t exactly get answers I expected.”

– 2021 YIG Student Participant

“Being able to hear from Levin Center volunteers about their work and why they find oversight important was really helpful and an opportunity. It was really enlightening to learn about what communities that are different from mine are like and the challenges they face.”

- 2024 YIG Student Participant

“There may always be more to a story than what it seems. This role showed me that I can find out.”

– 2021 YIG Student Participant

