

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



LEVIN CENTER



FOR OVERSIGHT
AND DEMOCRACY



WAYNE STATE
Law School

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*Good government
requires good
oversight.*

-- Senator Carl Levin



Jim Townsend

Reflecting on 2024

In the 2024 election, the voters expressed frustration with government programs that, to paraphrase Senator Levin's prescient words, appear to have nothing to do with the public's goals. Some leaders in Congress have suggested that the way to solve our republic's problems is to outsource the job of Congress to people whom no one elected, many of whose names are being withheld.

But rather than surrender the power of the purse, every member of Congress should come together across party lines to reclaim their constitutional power to find the facts, leverage rather than succumb to their differences, and continue the pursuit of a more perfect union on behalf of all Americans. The Levin Center's mission is to help and encourage lawmakers do just that by championing oversight that:

- Is more collaborative and less confrontational,
- Helps clear the underbrush of failed programs and outdated rules,
- Prioritizes program beneficiaries and front-line service providers, and
- Celebrates successes and the impact of public service.

In 2024 the Levin Center championed these values through our oversight training and technical assistance, research that helps to define and defend the norms of bipartisan inquiry, and civic education designed to engage and inspire the next generation of citizens. We look forward to expanding these efforts in the coming year as we work to restore public faith in the institutions of our republic.

Jim Townsend -- Director -- February 2025

Honoring Elise Bean



Elise J. Bean • 1956 - 2025

With the deepest sorrow, we announced the death of Elise J. Bean, Director of our Washington, D.C., Office on January 14, 2025.

Elise has been called a titan in the field of congressional oversight, and it's a title she well deserved. From 1985 to 2014, Elise Bean worked as an investigator for Sen. Carl Levin (D-MI), including 12 years as staff director and chief counsel for the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (PSI). In that capacity, Elise led numerous in-depth investigations into money laundering, offshore tax abuse, corruption, shell companies and corporate misconduct. She documented much of that work in her 2018 book, [Financial Exposure: Carl Levin's Senate Investigations into Finance and Tax Abuse](#).

After Sen. Levin retired in 2015, Elise helped to establish the Levin Center at Wayne State University Law School in Detroit in his honor. Since then, Elise has been the lifeblood of the Center. She was a mentor, inspiration, and friend who found the best in people and the light in even the darkest of times. She always had time to offer guidance and to hear another point of view. She was the hardest working person any of us has ever met. We will miss her brilliance, her energy, her positivity, and her kindness. The Levin Center and the country were blessed by her presence.

2024 Highlights



February

Congressional Oversight Boot Camp held in Washington, D.C., training 24 congressional staffers.



April

Co-sponsored session on the separation of powers at the Midwest Political Science Association.



June

State Oversight Academy testified before the North Dakota Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee.



August

Hosted Teacher Collaboration Days to develop civic education materials with high school educators.



October

State Oversight Academy trains D.C. Council members on techniques of fact-based, bipartisan oversight.



December

2024 Carl Levin Award for Effective Oversight presented to Senator Jon Ossoff.

January

Interviewed author Steve Drummond about his book on the Truman Committee.



March

Co-hosted ABA Listening Tour “Taking the Next Steps: Ensuring Trusted Elections and Civics for Michiganders.”



May

Hosted panel series with author Jennifer Pahlka: “How Can Oversight Make Government More User-Friendly?”



July

Launched the Congressional Oversight Records Database and academic roundtable.



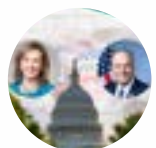
September

Our civic education program released lesson plans, classroom resources, PBS videos, and snapshots.



November

“Post-Election Analysis” panel with former Representatives Barbara Comstock (R) and Dan Kildee (D).



Media Highlights



The New York Times - 06/02/2024 - online and in print - Letter to the Editor by Jim Townsend : Oversight of legislative initiatives is crucial

“David Leonhardt’s account of “neopopulist bipartisanship” is important for Americans to hear, because it shows that some good things are happening in Washington. But to deliver meaningful legislative victories to the American public and avoid the pitfalls of polarization, Democrats and Republicans must come together to practice bipartisan, fact-based oversight of enacted policies.”



Law360 - 10/22/24 - by Elise Bean: Legal institutions must warn against phony election suits

“The U.S. electoral system, already strained by years of unsubstantiated attacks on its integrity, is facing a formidable threat as the 2024 presidential election nears. The presidential race is currently a toss-up, and allies of the major political parties have already filed well over 100 election-related lawsuits, primarily in key swing states, seeking to challenge voting regulations and protocols ahead of the election.”



Michigan Advance - 10/25/24 - by Ken Coleman: Wayne State’s Levin Center offers Michigan high schools free civics and US history resources

“Wayne State University has launched an effort to strengthen the way civics and U.S. history courses are taught in Michigan high schools. ‘Learning by Hearings,’ which was developed by teachers in the civic education team at the university’s Levin Center for Oversight and Democracy aims to provide classroom resources.”



Detroit Free Press - 12/23/24 - by Todd Spangler: Levin Center in Detroit gives oversight award to Georgia Sen. Ossoff

“The Carl Levin Center for Oversight and Democracy at Wayne State University in Detroit has awarded U.S. Sen. Jon Ossoff, D-Georgia, its annual award for effective legislative oversight. The center, which announced the award named for Levin, who was Michigan's longest-serving U.S senator, in December, noted Ossoff's efforts in leading investigations into questions of poor management at federal prisons, and legislation that resulted in creating an independent ombudsman.”



MichMash - 11/29/24 - podcast episode with Jim Townsend: What should legislative bodies be doing to ensure government oversight?

“Michigan stands out among many states as having more resources than any other legislature... the legislature is for all intents and purposes a full-time legislature,” said Townsend. “Unfortunately, it does not take the opportunity to do in-depth oversight.”

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Click logos for more



Washington Office



Carl Levin Award 2024

Senator Jon Ossoff (D-GA) received the 2024 Carl Levin Award for Effective Oversight. The award is given to legislators who exhibit leadership in conducting bipartisan, fact-based oversight with “a high degree of integrity and a commitment to legislative comity and civility.” Sen. Ossoff received the award for his work in leading bipartisan investigations into management lapses at federal prisons, investigations that resulted in legislation to establish an independent ombudsman for the federal Bureau of Prisons.

In 2022, as Chairman of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Sen. Ossoff led, with the support of Ranking Member Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI), an investigation and four hearings into a host of problems at federal prisons, including misfeasance, understaffing, abuse, and misconduct. He continued this work in 2024 as Chair of the Human Rights Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee conducting investigations into the treatment of incarcerated pregnant women. As a result of these investigations, Sen. Ossoff sponsored, with the support of Sens. Mike Braun (R-IN) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) in the Senate and Reps. Lucy McBath (D-GA-07) and Kelly Armstrong (R-ND-AL) in the House, the Federal Prison Oversight Act that established an independent ombudsman for the federal Bureau of Prisons.



The measure passed by a vote of 392-2 in the House and unanimously in the Senate. It was signed into law by President Biden on July 25, 2024. The Act establishes an independent ombudsman to field and investigate complaints from inmates and staff and mandates that the Justice Department’s Inspector General conduct risk-based inspections of all 122 federal prison facilities on a periodic basis. It also requires the Inspector General to provide recommendations and assign risk scores to each facility.

“Senator Ossoff started looking at allegations of serious problems in the federal prison in his home state of Georgia. He then expanded the probe to include the operations of the Bureau of Prisons throughout the country,” said Jim Townsend, Director of the Levin Center. “In doing so, he actively sought the participation of his Republican counterparts with a commitment to uncovering the facts and to working collegially to address problems. We are proud to present the Carl Levin Award to Senator Ossoff and thank him for his good work.”

“I came to the U.S. Senate with a background in leading investigations of human rights abuses and war crimes, and I took office intent on exposing the abuse of Americans who have no power,” said Senator Ossoff. “These bipartisan investigations of the Federal prison system revealed corruption, abuse, and misconduct, and the urgent need to overhaul Federal prison oversight. Bringing Republicans and Democrats together, we passed into law my Federal Prison Oversight Act to strengthen oversight of Federal prisons, but urgent work remains to address the human rights crisis behind bars in America. I’m grateful to my colleagues for working alongside me in these efforts, and I appreciate this recognition from the Levin Center.” Sen. Mike Braun, a principal cosponsor of the reform legislation and founding member with Sen. Ossoff of the Prison Policy Working Group, congratulated Sen. Ossoff on the award, saying, “Congratulations to Sen. Ossoff for receiving the Carl Levin Award for Effective Oversight. We worked together to pass our bipartisan Federal Prison Oversight Act into law to improve the working conditions and safety of our federal prisons, and I am glad to see that he is being recognized for his overall efforts on the Judiciary Committee.”



[Click here for more](#)

Congressional Training

Oversight Boot Camps

February & August 2024

A collaboration among the Levin Center, POGO, and The Lugar Center, our twice-yearly Oversight Boot Camps offer two-day, intensive training sessions for congressional staff on how to conduct oversight investigations. Each of these Boot Camps combines staff from the U.S. House and Senate, committees and personal offices, and the Democratic and Republican parties to produce a bipartisan, bicameral experience.



Feb. 21-22, 2024; Instructors: Tim Stretton, Elise Bean, Jon Skladany, Arya Hariharan; 24 Participants



To date, over 450 congressional staff have undergone boot camp instruction!



Aug. 21-22, 2024; Levin Center staff joining the Boot Camp

Committee Clerk Workshop

March 2024

We offer a bipartisan, bicameral, two-hour workshop for committee and subcommittee clerks who provide administrative support for oversight investigations and hearings. The annual session, usually held in the first quarter of the year, is open to Democratic, Republican, and nonpartisan administrative personnel from U.S. House and Senate committees and subcommittees.

"I liked all of it even the parts that do not apply to me. Many many more of them please! These conversations are sometimes all we have in terms of guidance and support!"



Event Highlight

How Oversight Can Make Government More User-Friendly

May 10 & May 13, 2024

In May 2024, we hosted a panel discussion on how oversight can be a crucial tool to make government more user-friendly. The two-part panel series hosted a range of experts who discussed the challenges of facilitating access to government services while minimizing waste, fraud, and abuse.

In the first part, we explored the fundamental challenges of governance and legislative oversight in an increasingly digital world. Special guests included Jennifer Pahlka, author of *Recoding America*, Representative Jeff Johnson from the South Carolina legislature, and Michael Brennan from Detroit's own Civilla discussing their efforts to bring a user-centric approach to government programs and oversight.

Click the circle to watch the panel recording!



SC State Representative Jeff Johnson



Michael Brennan, Civilla



Jennifer Pahlka, Niskanen Senior Fellow



Michele Evermore, The Century Foundation Senior Fellow



Michael Horowitz, IG U.S. Dept of Justice



Alaska State Senator James Kaufman

In the 2nd part of our panel series, we focused on government program design and the tension between maximizing user accessibility and ensuring program integrity and security. Jennifer Pahlka returned to the panel joined by Michele Evermore, former deputy director of the Department of Labor Office of Unemployment Insurance Modernization; Michael E. Horowitz, Inspector General, U.S. Dept. of Justice, and Chair, Pandemic Response Accountability Committee; and James Kaufman, Alaska State Senator.



State Oversight Academy



State Oversight Academy

As the U.S. Supreme Court wrote seventy years ago, when lawmakers engage in oversight, they serve as the “eyes and voice” of their constituents. Never has it been more important for legislators in every state to use their unique fact-finding power to get to the heart of important issues and solve problems. The State Oversight Academy’s goal is to offer knowledge, tools, and networks to help lawmakers ensure that government keeps its promises to the people.

Meet the Team



Ben Eikey
*State Training
& Development*



Ian McKnight
*State Training
& Development*



Kyle Bule
*Research &
Communication*

What is the State Oversight Academy?

The State Oversight Academy is the first and only national institution dedicated to promoting effective bipartisan fact-finding and oversight by state legislatures as essential to good governance and democracy.

SOA Objectives:

1. **Improving the practice of oversight** in state legislatures across the country via trainings and events with lawmakers and staff.
2. **Fostering academic research** and scholarship on state legislative oversight.
3. **Translating scholarship** into actionable best practices to be shared among states.
4. **Increasing the visibility of legislative oversight** as an essential legislative function.

[Click here for more](#)



Symposium 2024



Click the circle to watch online!

Academics and Legislators in Partnership

June 21, 2024

The State Oversight Academy's inaugural symposium in 2023 connected scholars who study state legislatures with practitioners who serve as elected state lawmakers or as legislative staff. In 2024, we took the same concept a step further: equipped with this scholarly research, how can practitioners put these facts into practice to improve oversight in state legislatures?

The online event began with the popular practitioner and scholars in dialogue format followed by a roundtable, in which scholars and practitioners discussed how to put research into practice. Scholars and practitioners joined us to collaborate on these issues and work together to enhance legislative oversight practices and research in the field.

Roundtable



Speaker John Arch



Leader Ben Bowman



Prof. Parinandi



Prof. Sarbaugh-Thompson



Rhode Island State Rep.
Patricia Serpa

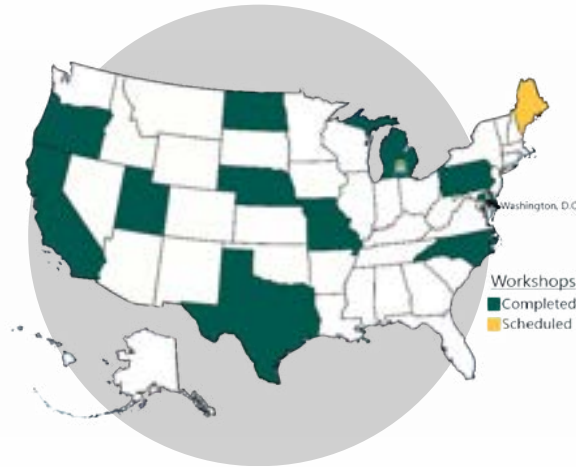
Inaugural Oversight Leader Designation

Great oversight work is happening all the time, all over the country. Our **Oversight Leaders** designation is intended to recognize individuals and committees whose work contributes to the practice of high-quality oversight and stands as an example for others to follow.

We were pleased to recognize Rhode Island State Representative Patricia Serpa as our inaugural Oversight Leader during the 2024 symposium. Thanks to her dedicated work over the years, children in care of the state are safer, taxpayers get their refunds faster, more seniors and Medicaid recipients make it to their medical appointments on time, and all Rhode Islanders can have more faith in their government.

State Oversight Training

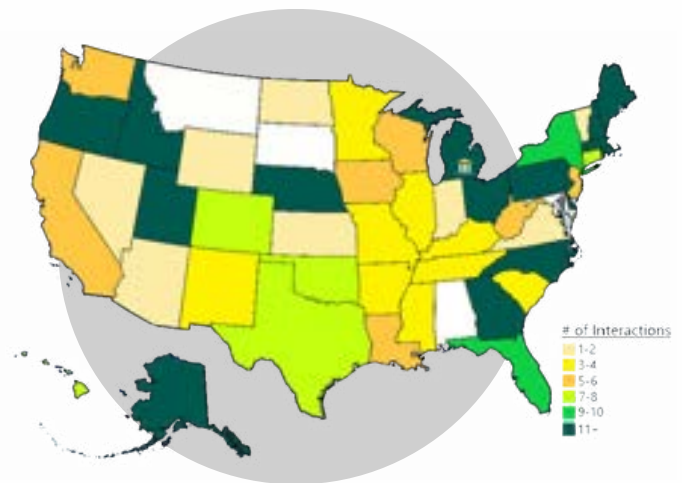
We offer custom-designed oversight workshops for members of state legislatures and their staff seeking to strengthen their ability to conduct fact-based, bipartisan, high-quality investigations. Throughout 2024, our SOA team has broadened its outreach across the country establishing new relationships and building tailor-made oversight workshops for a total of twelve states.



SOA has lead oversight training sessions in 12 states across the country providing a total of 38 workshop hours to a total of 183 lawmakers and 262 members of staff.



Throughout 2024, SOA has interacted and met with a broad range of actors across 45 states.



From top left to bottom right: Utah, West Virginia, D.C. Council, Oregon, Pennsylvania

[Click here for more](#)



State Legislature Oversight Wiki

State legislatures conduct oversight in countless ways often through committees and with help from partner agencies. Our State Legislature Oversight Wiki is the first interactive resource of its kind to systematically gather state oversight data for the 50 states and the U.S. territories.



The Wiki has received over **2 million** unique page views since its launch in 2023!

Visit Now



New Wiki Features

In 2024, we have added new features and content to the State Legislature Oversight Wiki including:

- Featured Resources
- Selected Oversight Agency Reports sorted by topic or by state
- Oversight Agencies by Functions
- State Auditing Offices and their Origin of Authority
- Oversight News sorted by state or by topic
- State's Budget Processes

"The State Legislature Oversight Wiki brings together a vast amount of information about oversight bodies and processes in each state. Great content and graphics!"

– Jason Juffras,
Office of the District of Columbia Auditor



For monthly state oversight updates,
sign up to SOA's newsletter!



Learning by Hearings



Civic Education Program



What is Learning by Hearings?

Congressional Inquiries that Engage the Next Generation!

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.

Through our *LbH* high school lesson materials and after-school program, we provide high school students an opportunity to experience what it’s like to conduct fact-based, bipartisan oversight hearings.

Meet the Team



Lauren Jasinski
Civic Education Specialist



Mark Morrow
Civic Education Specialist



Clara Modlin
Civic Education Outreach Coordinator

Inside the Classroom

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.

Outside the Classroom

Working with the YMCA’s Youth and Government Program, we enable high school students to role-play a legislator engaged in the investigation of an incident or issue that matters to the public. Using research, critical thinking, and public speaking skills, students examine a fictional scenario, question witnesses, and collaborate to determine and share the facts and recommended solutions. All scenarios are based on hypothetical contemporary issues facing residents across the country.



New Classroom Materials



We want to inspire students to value fact-finding, good governance, and bipartisan cooperation as well as to sharpen their investigative skills and their ability to engage in public policy debates with civility.

New Classroom Materials launched in September 2024



Lesson Plans

Our lesson plans provide rich, inquiry-based experiences for secondary Civics and U.S. History students, encouraging students to engage with primary sources from some of our nation’s most important congressional investigations.



Snapshots

Snapshots are brief and classroom-friendly versions of our “Portraits in Oversight” series. All Snapshots include a summary reading, comprehension and discussion questions. Spanish and audio versions are available, too.



Videos

In partnership with Detroit PBS and the Michigan Learning Channel, we developed our “Portraits in Oversight” video series as a companion to teachers’ classroom instruction.

Ready-to-explore topics include but are not limited to:

- Defining Congressional Oversight
- General St. Clair’s Defeat
- Congress Investigates the KKK
- The Teapot Dome Scandal
- Pecora Investigates the Stock Market Crash
- Joe McCarthy’s Abuses of Oversight

Click here for more



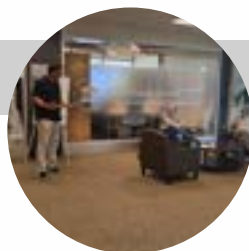
go.levin-center.org/education

Engagement with Educators

Our civic education team strives to engage with a broad range of U.S. History and Civics educators for the development of our lesson plans and classroom materials and to gather feedback and continuously improve our offerings to teachers and students.

Teacher Collaboration Days

On July 30, *LbH* welcomed high school U.S. History and Social Studies teachers to the Levin Center offices for a three-day teacher collaboration workshop. The group brainstormed new lesson plans and reviewed existing materials for the program in preparation for the 2024/2025 school year. We were thrilled to welcome the team and can't wait for the new resources to be tested out in their classrooms.



C3 Inquiry Design Workshop

Together with our partners – the Michigan Department of Education, Oakland Schools, Wayne RESA, and Macomb ISD – we held an in-person all-day workshop with John Lee and Kathy Swan, two authors of the C3 Framework and Inquiry Design Model, on October 24, 2024. A video of the 1-hour introductory webinar by John and Kathy is available to help all teachers learn more about the C3 model!



Professional Development Opportunities

Our civic education team is always available to offer professional development opportunities to educators and school districts. Sign up for our newsletter to find out about upcoming dates or get in touch with us!



Get in touch!



Subscribe to the
LbH newsletter!

SUBSCRIBE



Scholars & Academics

Oversight Report Database

The **Congressional Oversight Records Database (CORD)** is an effort by the Levin Center to make available for scholars, oversight practitioners, and the public oversight documents that are not easily accessible online. CORD houses congressional oversight reports and records from 1999 to 2020 and beyond, complete with standardized meta data, and regularly releases new congressional committee datasets to the collection.



As of January 2025, CORD houses over 1,350 oversight records.

Visit Now



In July 2024, the Levin Center held its first CORD academic workshop in Detroit co-sponsored by the Brookings Institution and the American Enterprise Institute. The Center and its cosponsors accepted proposals for using CORD data to study congressional oversight and discussed draft papers based on the research at the all-day workshop with leading congressional scholars and practitioners of legislative oversight. After the paper presentations, workshop participants heard from the Levin Center's Research & Data Specialist, Grace Moore, on upcoming new database features and changes to the data methodology and metadata. The workshop concluded with a roundtable discussion moderated by CORD Academic Advisor, Professor Sean Theriault, on how to improve CORD's features and priorities for expanding the collection. We can't wait to release more datasets on CORD and see the valuable research inspired by this new resource.



Oversight Research Award



Jonathan Shaub

Our 2024 Award for Excellence in Oversight Research was given to “Common Law Executive Privilege(s),” by Jonathan Shaub, the Norman & Carole Harned Associate Professor of Law & Public Policy at the University of Kentucky’s Rosenberg College of Law. Chosen by a selection committee composed of law and political science oversight scholars and veteran practitioners, the award-winning paper emerged from a competitive field of excellent candidate papers.

The selection committee found that Professor Shaub’s paper offered a well-sourced, careful analysis of common law evidentiary privileges and two key 1974 cases, *United States v. Nixon* and *Senate Select Committee v. Nixon*, in which the Supreme Court ordered the Nixon Administration to turn over recorded Oval Office conversations to a special criminal prosecutor but denied them to the Senate Watergate Committee, in part because tapes had already been provided to a House committee conducting impeachment proceedings against President Richard Nixon. The selection committee noted how the paper tracked the executive branch’s broadening interpretation of the cases over the ensuing five decades to justify refusing to produce information to Congress, and Congress’ escalating responses.

About Professor Shaub

Professor Shaub’s research focuses on the Constitution’s separation of powers, executive privilege, presidential power, government accountability, transparency, and congressional oversight, and he teaches courses in constitutional law and federal courts, and offers a seminar on presidential and executive power. Shaub joined UK Rosenberg Law after serving in both federal and state government positions.

Paper Presentation and Discussion

In October 2024, Professor Shaub presented and discussed his award-winning paper. Click below to watch the recording!



Oversight Fellowship

A core objective of the Levin Center for Oversight and Democracy is to promote research on legislative oversight to deepen understanding of its role in democratic governance. We launched our Oversight Fellowship Program in 2021 and this year awarded fellowships to three scholars whose work takes diverse approaches to important oversight issues.

Meet our 2024/25 Oversight Fellows



Jason Juffras is a senior analyst at the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor, where he has designed and led evaluations of education, human services, and public safety programs. He serves on the executive committee of the National Legislative Program Evaluation Society. Jason holds a Ph.D. in public policy administration from George Washington University and has served as adjunct professor at GWU and Virginia Tech.

Jason's fellowship work will examine case studies in three policy fields across six states on the combined efforts of state legislature oversight units – committees, audit offices, and other analytic bureaucracies – to develop a robust body of evidence about legislative oversight as a system.

COL Heidi Demarest is Deputy Head and Associate Professor of American Politics at the U.S. Military Academy. A 2001 graduate of West Point, she completed her Ph.D. at Harvard University in 2011. Heidi served as the Director of the American Politics Program from 2015-2019 and as the U.S. Military Academy's Liaison Officer to the Department of the Army in the Pentagon in 2018-2019. Her research interests include defense budgeting, defense acquisition practices, bureaucratic politics, and the interaction between the Army and Congress.



Heidi's fellowship work will focus on an historical analysis of legislative action to curb the executive branch in implementing appropriations to explore whether congressional oversight is sufficient to set clear boundaries and retain the power of the purse.



Connor Dye is a post-doctoral research fellow with research interests in congressional oversight, bureaucratic politics, regulatory policy, and agenda setting. He earned his Ph.D. in political science from the University of Texas at Austin.

Connor's fellowship proposal develops the idea that committees use oversight to proactively manage how the bureaucracy responds to emerging and evolving problems in the political system. His analysis will focus on: (1) why committees perform proactive oversight; (2) how committees interact with the bureaucracy during proactive oversight; and (3) how proactive oversight influences public policy.



New Portraits in Oversight

To better explain legislative oversight and to highlight pivotal historic oversight investigations that have shaped the American story, we launched our “Portraits in Oversight” series in 2022. One of our website’s most visited sections, the Portraits provide a historical tour of congressional oversight and its key figures.

New Portraits Released in 2024

[Click here for more](#)



Congress Investigates the Torture and Mistreatment of War Detainees

Both oversight investigations – the first by the Senate Armed Services Committee from 2004 to 2009, and the second by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence from 2007 to 2014 -- collected evidence exposing the role of senior U.S. defense and intelligence officials in devising, approving, and directing the use of brutal interrogation methods on Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay detainees. Both Senate investigations also led to enactment of new laws to prohibit the future abuse of individuals in U.S. custody.



Fast & Furious Investigation into Failed Gun Trafficking Tactic

Our Fast & Furious Portrait in Oversight summarizes a lengthy congressional investigation into a failed federal law enforcement strategy that allowed guns bought in Arizona to be trafficked into Mexico without first seizing the illegally purchased guns. Launched in 2011, the investigation led by House and Senate Republicans raised law enforcement, whistleblower, and obstruction of Congress concerns; sparked a years-long court battle over congressional access to executive branch documents; and initiated the first House vote to hold a sitting Cabinet member in contempt of Congress.



Congress Investigates the Vietnam War

Our Fulbright Portrait in Oversight describes a series of oversight hearings led by Senator J. William Fulbright and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee from 1966 to 1971, addressing issues related to the Vietnam War. By engaging in factfinding, collecting evidence and publicizing what the committee learned, the Fulbright hearings forced greater scrutiny of U.S. military actions, exposed misrepresentations by the Johnson and Nixon administrations about the war, legitimized dissent, and helped bring an end to American military involvement in Vietnam.





Advancing Wayne Law Students

Legal Summer Internships

We have now sponsored nine cohorts of summer legal interns working on oversight committees in the U.S. Congress. With our three interns in 2024, the Levin Center has now given 35 Wayne Law students the opportunity to work in Washington, D.C.

The legal interns work with congressional staff under the supervision of an experienced attorney engaged in conducting oversight on behalf of a congressional committee. While we use the term “interns,” these budding attorneys take on significant responsibilities, like those of a young committee counsel. They also develop connections and relationships in Washington, which can support them throughout their careers, and a hands-on understanding of our federal system.



Johanna Vorrath-Lopatin

HSGAC Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Spending Oversight



Raphi Sadaka

U.S. Senate Finance Committee

Ibrahim Ghazal

U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (HSGAC)



Other Student Opportunities

Research Assistantships

In 2024, we offered research and student assistant positions to eight Wayne State law students working on our Congressional Oversight Records Database for data collection, providing background research to our State Oversight Academy, or developing role descriptions for our mock legislative oversight hearing in the civic education program.

Meet some of our current student assistants:



Johanna Vorrath-Lopatin



Kaleigh Belz



Louis Osowski



Teodor Dhespollari

Civic Education Volunteers

We regularly engage with Wayne Law students to volunteer during our mock legislative oversight hearings in the civic education program *Learning by Hearings*. Students get to play legal counsel or witness roles during the mock hearing with high school students in the YMCA's Youth & Government Program. A great experience for us, the law students, and the high schoolers!

Career Panels

We regularly offer career panels highlighting the many options law students will have in public service roles. Our 2024 career panel focused on the path to elected office with former U.S. Representative Dennis Hertel. All career panels are recorded and made available to current and former law students on our website to inspire the next generation of public service leaders.



Student Programming

Civil Discourse and Public Debate

In addition to promoting bipartisan, legislative oversight, the Levin Center also supports civil discourse and fact-based public debate that values differing viewpoints. On November 14, 2024, we included Wayne Law students in an online conversation with U.S. Representative Dan Kildee (D) and former U.S. Representative Barbara Comstock (R) to discuss the 2024 presidential election results. Our Wayne Law students joined the lunchtime webinar from a law school classroom and had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the results with our panelists.



Post-Election Analysis 2024

November 14, 2024 -- Zoom Webinar

U.S. Representative Dan Kildee (D)

Former U.S. Representative Barbara Comstock (R)

Click the circle to watch the recording online.



Student Open House

Every fall semester, we offer a student open house, inviting all Wayne Law students to join us for lunch and coffee at the Levin Center offices to find out more about our programs and the many opportunities we have for students. Our 2024 student open house was the busiest one yet and we love engaging with the Wayne Law student body.





Team News



New Additions



Mark Morrow

Mark Morrow joined our team in January 2024 as **Civic Education Specialist** for our *Learning by Hearings* program. Mark is a certified Social Studies Teacher and has seven years of classroom experience teaching U.S. History and World History at the secondary level. He has participated in several trainings through the Michigan Center for Civic Education, and coached a Michigan Youth in Government delegation at the secondary level.

Since his start with the Levin Center in January 2024, Mark has co-created our *Learning by Hearings* lesson plans and classroom resources on topics including Congress' investigation of the KKK and Ferdinand Pecora's investigations into the 1929 stock market crash.



Betsy Hawkings

Elisabeth (Betsy) Wright Hawkings joined our Washington, D.C., Office as **Congressional Outreach Manager**. Betsy served as chief of staff to four Republican House members over 25 years, including her hometown Congressman Christopher Shays of Connecticut.

Betsy later served as the founding Managing Director of Democracy Fund's Principled Leadership and Effective Governance program, where she built a team of eight and a \$12 million grant portfolio focused on fostering dialogue across the ideological spectrum and reducing incentives for hyper-partisanship and gridlock in government.





Outlook 2025





Civic Education Team Growth

Our *Learning by Hearings* civic education team will be growing in 2025! With the addition of two Civic Education Outreach Coordinators, the team will bring new lesson plans and classroom resources to high school educators across the state of Michigan. We are excited to introduce you to our new members of staff and to see you at upcoming conferences and teacher professional development opportunities.



State Oversight Training Program

In early 2025, our State Oversight Academy will launch its on-demand Oversight Training Program. State legislators and their staff can enroll for a deep-dive into state oversight with lessons that include assignments that will help them use these techniques in their own states. Once completed, participants will receive a certificate and micro credentials to use in their signature or professional profiles. We are excited to bring this unique learning opportunity to state legislators across the country!



Portraits in Oversight Book

Our Portraits in Oversight collection of historic oversight investigations and key leaders will soon appear in print! In spring 2025, our Portraits in Oversight will be published in book format available for purchase online. Stay tuned and secure your copy when the book becomes available!

10-year Anniversary

The Levin Center was founded ten years ago upon Senator Carl Levin’s retirement from the U.S. Senate. The charter establishing us as a Wayne State University Law School center was signed in March 2015. Throughout the upcoming year, we will celebrate our ten-year anniversary with events, panel discussions, and our “10 million by year 10” fundraising campaign. Join us in celebrating this milestone and come along with us as we continue to grow the Center in 2025 and beyond!

Events

January 14, 2025: How Courts Are Shaping Congress’ Power to Investigate - panel discussion

March 5, 2025: Wayne State Charter Signing Celebration

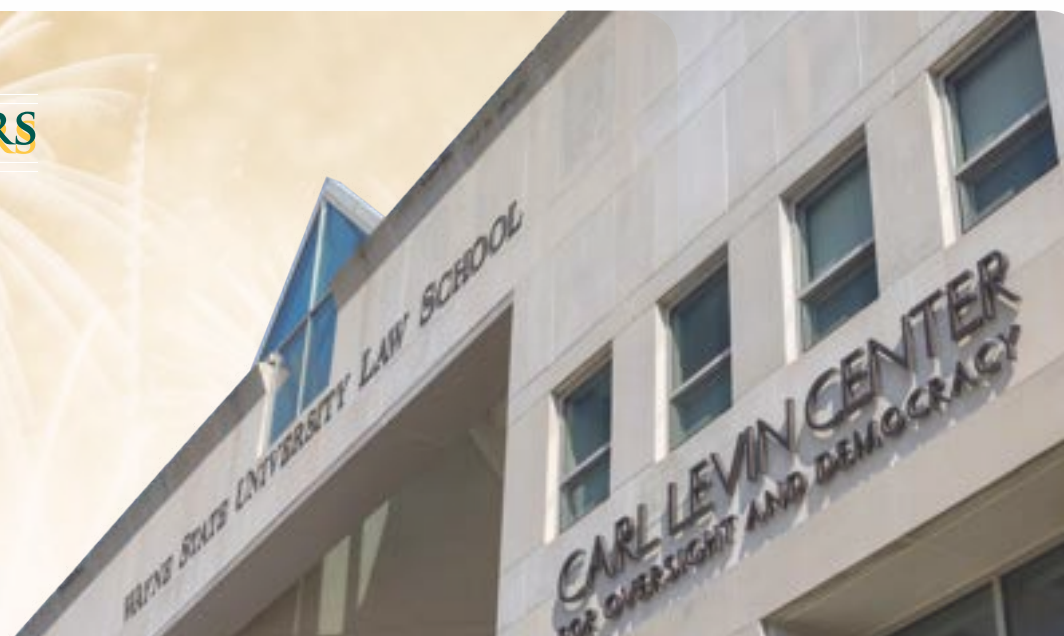
June 12, 2025: Community Engagement

Fundraising Campaign

To continue our work and secure our next ten years and beyond, please consider joining our “10 million by year 10” fundraising campaign. With this campaign, we aim to grow our endowment to \$10 million by the end of 2025 giving us a sustainable foundation for carrying on the work of championing accountable fact-based governance and civil discourse for years to come! Find out how to support our campaign on the following page.

Stay up to Date on our 10-year Anniversary

To find out more about our upcoming dates, please visit <https://levin-center.org/10-year-anniversary-event-rsvp/> or click the image below!



Invest in Our Work

Your contribution will help the Levin Center reach its goal of building a \$10 million endowment, enabling us to continue advancing oversight and strengthening democracy.

Scan this code for a digital donation form:



Wire transfers may be made out to:

Huntington Bank
41 S. High Street,
Columbus, OH 43215
Routing Number: 044000024
Beneficiary Name: Levin Center,
Wayne State University
Account Number: 01383216675

Stock gifts may be made to:

Corey Sanborn
Raymond James and
Associates 15 Kercheval
Avenue,
Grosse Pointe Farms, MI
48236 313-885-9470
Account number 35946105
DTC 0725

Or complete and mail the form below in the enclosed envelope to:

Carl Levin Center for Oversight and Democracy, Attention: Lynne Geller
Wayne State University Law School, 471 W. Palmer St., Detroit, MI 48202



We are deeply grateful for your philanthropic support.

Donation Amount:

Donor Contact Information

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone (preferred – home, cell, office): _____

Email: _____

Checks may be made payable to: Levin Center at Wayne Law

Credit card: Visa American Express Master Card

Card No. _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature _____



Our Supporters



Our Supporters

Our Funders

We thank our funders who make the Levin Center's work possible:

Democracy Fund -- William and Flora Hewlett Foundation -- MI Department of Education -- U.S. Department of Education -- and many generous individuals.

Wayne Law Leadership

The Law School's leadership, including **Dean Richard Bierschbach**, **Associate Dean Rachel Settlage**, and **Associate Dean Michael Oswald**, enthusiastically support our mission and programs.

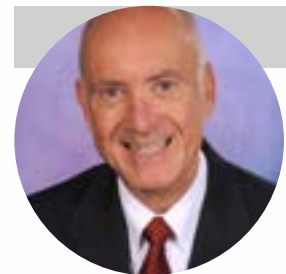


Dean Bierschbach

Faculty Advisory Committee

Our Faculty Advisory Committee Chair and all committee members provide advice and counsel that are vital to our success:

Professor Linda Beale, Professor Hillel Nadler, Professor Brad Roth, Professor Jennifer Taub



Professor Jack Mogk
Chair

Advisory Board

Our Advisory Board supports our mission providing advice and guidance on the strategic direction of the Center and supporting our philanthropic efforts.

N. Peter Antone -- Portia Bamiduro -- U.S. Rep. Barbara Comstock (ret.) -- U.S. Senator Thomas Daschle (ret.) -- Cynthia Ford -- Elizabeth Hardy -- Eleanor J. Hill -- Jason Hill -- Kate Levin Markel -- Arthur Liebler -- Cyril Moscow -- James B. Nicholson -- U.S. Senator Jay Rockefeller (ret.) -- U.S. Senator Olympia Snowe (ret.) -- Gary Torgow -- U.S. Rep. David Trott (ret.) -- Reginald M. Turner -- Peter Walters




Paul Hillegonds
Chair



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