



# Carl Levin Center *for Oversight and Democracy*

## About us

Founded in 2015 at Wayne State University Law School by the late Senator Carl Levin, the Levin Center works to advance bipartisan fact-based oversight and civil discourse as fundamental elements of democracy through training, scholarship, and public education.

## Advancing Oversight. Strengthening Democracy.

We work to build capacity in legislative bodies at all levels — federal, state, and abroad— to expose public and private sector abuses, ensure effective governance, and bring critical facts to light for the benefit of all.

## Restoring a Fact-Based Public Square

Our principal goal is to reestablish and strengthen America's public square to promote civil discourse, good governance, and a shared appreciation for and understanding of relevant facts. Through its research, convenings, and educational programs, the Levin Center enables the public to see whether and how their elected leaders are collaborating to build consensus on vital problems and solutions.



**Founded in 2015 by Senator Carl Levin**



**Housed at Wayne State University Law School in Detroit, Michigan**



**Working with Congress, State Legislatures, Educators, and Scholars**



**Promoting Government Effectiveness, Transparency, and Accountability**

# Our Programs



## Empowering High School Teachers and Students

Our civic education program *Learning by Hearings* provides high school lesson plans, classroom videos, and professional development opportunities to teachers free of charge.

- Supported by the Michigan Department of Education
- In partnership with Detroit PBS and the Michigan Learning Channel



## Strengthening Congressional Capacity

Our Washington office trains congressional staff on how to conduct effective, bipartisan oversight and helps congressional leaders deliver fact-based, accountable government.

- Trained over 500 congressional staffers to date
- Championed reforms that strengthen Congress' problem-solving capacity



## Improving Legislative Oversight Across All States

Our State Oversight Academy brings oversight expertise to all 50 states providing workshops and oversight resources to state legislators, state auditors, and staff.

- Over 500 state legislators and staffers trained across 13 states since 2022
- 2 million views on our one-of-a-kind State Legislature Oversight Wiki



## Supporting Knowledge Creation and Research

Through our oversight records database, fellowship program, research award, and scholarly events, we support a growing body of research to improve the theory and practice of oversight.

- Over 1,500 records available to scholars in our unique oversight database
- Oversight Fellowships awarded since 2021



## Listening to the American People

Our *People-Centered Oversight* program is focusing legislators' attention on who should be at the heart of their fact-finding and oversight work: the American people they serve.

- 50-state study that highlights ways lawmakers involve citizens in the fact-finding process and offers recommendations for enabling every lawmaker to put people first.



## Advocating for Fact-Based Debates in the Public Square

When done well, legislative oversight identifies facts, fosters debate, and builds public consensus. Through panel discussions, commentary, and expert advice to legislatures, we offer insights on how lawmakers can promote the fact-based public discourse and accountable government that underpins our democracy.

# Congressional Office

Our Washington, D.C. office is a hub for strengthening the practice of congressional oversight. Through hands-on, bipartisan boot camps, we train staff from both chambers on how to investigate effectively to uncover facts and pave the way for responsive and transparent government. We offer specialized training for committee clerks, monitor emerging case law that shapes Congress's investigative powers, and support the next generation of legal experts through our summer law internship program in congressional oversight committees. Beyond the Hill, we share a broad range of resources with educators, legal scholars, and oversight practitioners working to understand and improve the vital role oversight plays in our democracy.

“Excellent presentations and practicums. I also appreciated the bipartisan nature of the instruction.”

2024 Oversight Boot Camp Participant



## Oversight Workshops and Training

- 475 congressional staffers trained through our hands-on, two-day Oversight Boot Camps
- Yearly oversight workshops available for committee clerks

## Opportunities for Law Students

- 35 Wayne Law students placed as legal summer interns in congressional oversight committees
- Research assistantships and career panels offered to law students to raise interest in a public service legal career

## Public Education and Oversight Resources

- 21 short profiles of historic oversight investigations that have shaped American history available for online reading and download
- 30 legal cases affecting Congress' oversight powers available in our Caselaw Tracker



# State Oversight Academy

The Levin Center's State Oversight Academy (SOA) is the nation's first and only institution solely dedicated to strengthening bipartisan, fact-based oversight in state legislatures—an essential pillar of effective government and a healthy democracy. As a national hub for legislators, scholars, and civic leaders, SOA is advancing transparency, accountability, and effectiveness while countering disinformation that fuels division and undermines public trust. Through expert-led training, innovative resources, and a vibrant community of practice, SOA empowers state leaders to conduct meaningful oversight that renews democratic norms and fosters civil discourse. SOA is shaping the future of state government—one informed question at a time.

“I found the training to be very helpful. It gave me great guidance on what my state should be doing more of...specifically, contract monitoring.”



Rhode Island State Representative Julie Casimiro



## Oversight Workshops and Training

- 160 participants from 32 states enrolled in our online, on-demand Oversight Training Course
- Oversight workshops provided to 347 state lawmakers and 114 members of staff in 13 states across the country

## Oversight Resources for Academics and Practitioners

- Over 2 million unique views on our unique State Legislature Oversight Wiki
- Blog posts, monthly newsletters, overview videos, testimonies, and many more resources available online

## Connecting Academia and Practice

- Yearly symposium bringing together oversight scholars and practitioners to discuss research developments and needs.

# Civic Education Program

## *Learning by Hearings*

*Learning by Hearings* is a free civic education program that brings real-world relevance into high school civics and U.S. history classrooms. With support from the Michigan Department of Education, we offer engaging lesson plans and classroom resources that use real congressional oversight investigations to spark curiosity about how democracy works. Students explore the constitutional checks and balances, and the structures that shape our government—empowering the next generation to understand, question, and participate in civic life.

“A behind the scenes peak on how government operates and highly relevant to students lives!”



**Padraic Mullin - Social Studies Teacher**  
**Renaissance High School**



### Lesson Materials

- 8 lesson plans and 4 snapshots available for free download
- 7 videos in partnership with Detroit PBS
- Over 100 downloads across 29 states

### Extracurricular Program - Youth in Government

- Over 40 participants in our oversight simulation over 3 years
- 3 scenarios available for teachers to use in their classrooms

### Professional Development and Partnerships

- Free professional development opportunities offered to teachers across Michigan
- Broad network of civic education partnerships including Wayne State University's College of Education, Oakland Schools, Wayne RESA, Kent ISD, and others.

# Research & Scholarship

Our research and scholarship program strengthens the growing field of legislative oversight studies. We offer an annual fellowship for early-career scholars, honor outstanding academic papers through our research award, and are developing first-of-their-kind datasets to support new studies and methodologies. Our expanding library of resources helps scholars explore oversight from every angle. By connecting academics nationwide through our listserv and regular roundtables, we are building a vibrant community of oversight researchers. Oversight research deepens our understanding of how government works and, by bridging academia and practice, helps ensure that new ideas strengthen real-world oversight.

“I am honored and grateful to be selected as the 2025/26 Oversight Fellow. The Levin Center's support will be extremely helpful in studying Congress' ability to monitor government spending and ensure compliance with enacted budgets.”



Kevin Angell - 2025/26 Elise J. Bean Oversight Fellow

## Advancing Oversight Research

- 10 early-career scholars supported through our yearly Elise J. Bean Oversight Fellowship
- 5 academic papers recognized with our yearly Levin Center Award for Excellence in Oversight Research

## Building the Emerging Field of Oversight Scholarship

- 240 scholars subscribed to our oversight scholars distribution list sharing new research and discussing current developments
- Extensive research resources available in our oversight library

## Creating Datasets for Innovative Research Designs

- Over 1,350 congressional oversight reports available in our CORD database for new research avenues using LLMs and AI tools.



# Congressional Oversight Records Database (CORD)

The Congressional Oversight Records Database (CORD) is a unique resource that brings clarity, context, and accessibility to one of Congress's most important functions: oversight. As the first comprehensive collection of congressional oversight reports beginning with the 106<sup>th</sup> Congress (1999-2000), CORD organizes decades of investigative work into a searchable, standardized, and publicly available tool.

While it is an invaluable asset for scholars studying accountability and governance, its reach extends far beyond academia—empowering journalists, informing congressional staff, and engaging the public. With CORD, we unlock the potential to understand how Congress has held power to account over the last 25 years and how it can do so more effectively in the future.



## Highlights

- 8 congressional committees available for search and download with more releases every month
- 1,367 congressional oversight reports
- Comprehensive platform to host related congressional oversight datasets
- Legislative Studies Quarterly journal dedicating special edition to research papers based on CORD data

[www.cord-levin-center.org](http://www.cord-levin-center.org)