CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT:
WHAT IT MEANS AND HOW TO MAKE IT WORK

Elise Bean, Former Staff Director, U.S. Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations
POGO Congressional Training Program
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Oversight as a Useful Tool in a Difficult Congress
Use to develop and present information on a pressing problem or issue
Use to develop bipartisan trust
Instrument to effect change

Legal Basis
Necessary and Proper Clause
House and Senate jurisdictional rules

Three Types of Oversight Hearings

(1) Experts Hearing
Present expert testimony on a problem or issue
Identify credible witnesses with useful information and interesting presentations
Possibilities: academics, agencies, trade associations, NGOs, victims
Variety is the spice of life

(2) Report Hearing
Release or publicize a new or recent report on a problem or issue
Possibilities: GAO, CRS, JCT, IG, agency, think tank, NGO, academic
Possible witnesses: report author, agencies, validators, opponents, victims

(3) Original Research Hearing
Present original information from an investigation into a problem or issue
Investigate using research, documents, interviews, experts
Present written materials, such as a report, case histories, hearing exhibits, charts
Possible witnesses: staff, victims, fact witnesses, policy makers, agencies, experts

Hearing Work
Design the hearing, prepare witness letters and a hearing memo
Draft opening statement and questions for Member of Congress
Prepare hearing materials – report, exhibits, charts
Prepare recommendations to remedy the problem or address the issue
Draft press release and work with the media

Post-Hearing Work
Spend 1-2 years on follow-up
Legislation, regulations, changes on the ground, progress meetings