



CITIZENS FOR  
RESPONSIBILITY &  
ETHICS IN WASHINGTON

January 18, 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives  
2468 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives  
2433 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate  
SH-322, Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate  
SR-317, Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker McCarthy, Minority Leader Jeffries, Majority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McConnell,

As the 118th Congress convenes, the topic of congressional oversight has again risen to the forefront. My organization, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), recognizes that congressional oversight can lead to increased transparency and help Congress pursue the public good. However, it is no secret that partisanship can often drive oversight priorities. I am writing to you today to recommend an oversight agenda not dominated by partisanship, and instead focused on rooting out corruption and strengthening our democracy.

Congress has the authority to conduct oversight of the executive branch and its agencies, as implied in the U.S. Constitution and confirmed on several occasions by the Supreme Court.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, government oversight has been an essential congressional function since the first Congress when the House of Representatives established a special committee to investigate the conduct of the Superintendent of Finance under the Articles of

---

<sup>1</sup> Cong. Rsch. Serv., Congressional Oversight Manual (2021), <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/RL/RL30240>; *McGrain v. Daugherty*, 273 U.S. 135 (1927).

Confederation.<sup>2</sup> Since then, this authority has frequently served as a check on executive power and a tool to tackle corruption. Congressional committee investigations of the Watergate scandal and, more recently, the role of the Sackler family in the opioid crisis are both examples of successful bipartisan oversight.<sup>3</sup>

Congress's oversight authority, however, also has the potential to be misused as a mask for partisan attacks. Indeed, partisan oversight, led by both political parties, has become part of the congressional zeitgeist. Even before the 118th Congress began there were loud calls for this type of wasteful partisan attack. This misuse of congressional power can create needless investigations that waste government resources and put a strain on our democratic institutions, rather than strengthen them.

To this end, CREW proposes below the following reforms and investigations to enable Congress and the public to conduct meaningful oversight aimed at addressing corruption, increasing transparency, and reducing government waste. These actions can and should be taken on a bipartisan basis in the shared interests of bolstering our democracy and fulfilling Congress' oversight responsibilities.

### **1. Mandate the White House disclose information about official visits to the White House and other locations frequented by the president.**

Congress and the public have a right to know who is meeting with (and potentially influencing) the president. Currently, President Biden voluntarily discloses White House visitor logs to the public with several exceptions.<sup>4</sup> While we commend President Biden's voluntary step toward transparency, it is well within Congress's authority to establish an affirmative obligation to produce presidential visitor records.

To address this gap in oversight, Congress should pass legislation that sets the terms for presidential visitor log disclosure, including the timeline and the necessary security exceptions. The provision on access to Presidential visitor records in the Protect our Democracy Act as well as Senator Heinrich's White House Visitor Logs Transparency Act of 2017 are examples of such legislation.<sup>5</sup> Congress should build upon this bill by updating it to include disclosure of virtual meetings, which are of increasing prevalence.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Cong. Rsch. Serv., *Art I. S8. C18.7.3 Congress' Investigation and Oversight Powers (1787-1864)*, Constitution Annotated, [https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/essay/artI-S8-C18-7-3/ALDE\\_00013659/#ALDF\\_00027437](https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/essay/artI-S8-C18-7-3/ALDE_00013659/#ALDF_00027437)

<sup>3</sup> Final Report of the Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities (1973), <https://www.senate.gov/about/resources/pdf/watergate-final-report-1974.pdf>; *The Role of Purdue Pharma and the Sackler Family in the Opioid Epidemic: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Oversight and Reform*, 116th Congress (2020), <https://web.archive.org/web/20221217142758/https://oversight.house.gov/legislation/hearings/the-role-of-purdue-pharma-and-the-sackler-family-in-the-opioid-epidemic>.

<sup>4</sup> *Voluntary Disclosure Policy for White House Visitor Logs*, The White House, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/voluntary-disclosure>.

<sup>5</sup> H.R. 5314, 117th Congress (2021), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/5314>; S. 953, 115th Congress (2017), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/953>.

<sup>6</sup> Steven Nelson, "Secret Service doesn't record visitors at Biden's 'weekend White House' where classified docs were found," *New York Post* (Jan. 16, 2023), <https://nypost.com/2023/01/16/secret-service-doubles-down-on-claim-it-has-no-logs-of-bidens-delaware-visitors/>.

## **2. Call on President Biden to remove J. Brett Blanton, the Architect of the Capitol.**

In October 2022, the Office of Inspector General for the Architect of the Capitol released a scathing report revealing J. Brett Blanton's repeated abuse of power.<sup>7</sup> According to the report, Blanton, who currently serves as the Architect of the Capitol, repeatedly misused the resources of his office including misusing government vehicles, misrepresenting himself as a law enforcement officer, and wasting government funds.<sup>8</sup>

Blanton's abuse of authority has recently grown even more concerning: since the IG's report was released, Congress voted to increase the Architect of the Capitol's budget to \$1.3 billion dollars, \$541 million more than the previous year.<sup>9</sup> By misusing government funds and resources, Blanton has demonstrated that he is unfit for managing this office and its budget.

Members of Congress should continue to call for Blanton's resignation and urge President Biden to remove Blanton due to his clear misuse of power.<sup>10</sup> Congress should be particularly concerned about Blanton's misconduct given that the Architect of the Capitol sits on the Capitol Police Board and oversees the Chief Security Officer. Members of Congress must ensure that Blanton is held accountable for the sake of both their own safety and the advancement of government ethics.

## **3. Investigate pandemic loan fraud and create guardrails to prevent future fraud.**

During the COVID pandemic, the federal government spent trillions of dollars on relief programs to aid struggling businesses, support the unemployed, and bolster the economy. But these programs had minimal oversight, and as a result, billions of dollars were stolen.<sup>11</sup> While progress has been made in investigating pandemic loan fraud, much remains to be addressed.

---

<sup>7</sup> Architect of the Capitol Office of Inspector General, J. Brett Blanton, Architect of the Capitol, Abused His Authority, Misused Government Property and Wasted Taxpayer Money, Among Other Substantiated Violations (2022), <https://www.oversight.gov/report/AOC/J-Brett-Blanton-Architect-Capitol-Abused-His-Authority-Misused-Government-Property-and>.

<sup>8</sup> Alex Goldstein, *The Architect of the Capitol abused his authority. Congress should call for his resignation*, CREW (Nov. 17, 2022), <https://www.citizensforethics.org/news/analysis/the-architect-of-the-capitol-abused-his-authority-congress-should-call-for-his-resignation/>.

<sup>9</sup> House Committee on Appropriations, *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023: Summary Of Appropriations Provisions By Subcommittee*, <https://appropriations.house.gov/sites/democrats.appropriations.house.gov/files/FY23%20Summary%20of%20Appropriations%20Provisions.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Joe Davidson, *Democrats Call For Architect Of Capitol To Resign Over Ethics Report*, Washington Post (Nov. 2, 2022), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/11/02/architect-capitol-ethics-violations-democrats-resign/>.

<sup>11</sup> David Fahrenthold, *Prosecutors Struggle to Catch Up to a Tidal Wave of Pandemic Fraud*, New York Times (Aug. 16, 2022), <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/16/business/economy/covid-pandemic-fraud.html>.

In the new session, Congress should ensure that the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee (PRAC) remains operational and investigates fraud in the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) and Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) programs. Congress should refer to suggestions in recent reports on loan fraud by PRAC and the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis and pass legislation that sets up guardrails to prevent similar fraud from occurring in future spending programs.<sup>12</sup> To that end, Congress should also create structures to oversee the billions of dollars given to climate subsidy programs as part of the Inflation Reduction Act.<sup>13</sup>

Loan programs and financial subsidies must be coupled with robust oversight. Reducing government waste and addressing fraud should be of importance to Members of Congress across parties. Rather than closing down PRAC in the new session, Congress should increase oversight of loan programs and address any gaps in oversight from the 117th Congress.

#### **4. Reform the Freedom of Information Act.**

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is the primary mechanism by which the public accesses information about government activities, and it is in desperate need of reform. Increases in FOIA requests coupled with decreases in agency resources and outdated processing methods have created bottlenecks.<sup>14</sup> Today, agencies are far from meeting the 20-day response time mandated by Congress in the 1996 amendment to the FOIA.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the executive branch continues to abuse exemptions to the FOIA in order to avoid disclosing information that could be politically harmful.<sup>16</sup>

Although FOIA reform is often thought of as a transparency issue, it is also a necessary tool to advance oversight. In order for Congress to provide a check on executive power, its members and the public need to have access to agency documents covered by FOIA in a timely manner.

---

<sup>12</sup> Pandemic Responsibility Accountability Committee, *Lessons Learned in Oversight of Pandemic Relief Funds* (2022), <https://www.pandemicoversight.gov/sites/default/files/2022-06/PRAC%20Lessons%20Learned%20Update%20UNE%202022.pdf>; Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, *Preparing For And Preventing The Next Public Health Emergency: Lessons Learned From The Coronavirus Crisis* (2022), <https://coronavirus.house.gov/sites/democrats.coronavirus.house.gov/files/2022.12.09%20Preparing%20for%20a%20Preventing%20the%20Next%20Public%20Health%20Emergency.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> H.R. 5376, 117th Congress (2022), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/5376>; Lisa Friedman, *How to Hand Out Billions in Climate Subsidies? Very Carefully*, *New York Times* (Dec. 15, 2022), <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/15/climate/podesta-climate-law-fraud.html>.

<sup>14</sup> Anne Weissman, *The FOIA is broken, but is it beyond repair?*, *CREW* (June 30, 2020), <https://www.citizensforethics.org/reports-investigations/crew-investigations/the-foia-is-broken-but-is-it-beyond-repair/>.

<sup>15</sup> H.R. 3802, 105th Congress (1996), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/104th-congress/house-bill/3802>; Office of Information Policy, *Summary of Annual FOIA Reports for Fiscal Year 2021*, U.S. Department of Justice, <https://www.justice.gov/oip/page/file/1521211/download>.

<sup>16</sup> Nick Schwellenbach & Sean Moulton, *The "Most Abused" Freedom of Information Act Exemption Still Needs to Be Reined In*, *POGO* (Feb. 6, 2020), <https://www.pogo.org/analysis/2020/02/the-most-abused-foia-exemption-still-needs-to-be-reined-in>.

Several bills from both sides of the aisle lay the groundwork for this reform, including Senator Grassley's Open and Responsive Government Act of 2021 and Representative Quigley's Transparency in Government Act of 2021.<sup>17</sup> Congress should also pass Senator Cardin's Private Prison Information Act, which would subject non-federal prisons which hold federal prisoners to the FOIA.<sup>18</sup>

## **5. Mandate Proactive Disclosure of Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) Opinions**

The Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) provides key legal advice to the executive branch and its agencies, but often keeps their legal opinions secret. It is essential that Congress have access to OLC opinions in order to provide effective oversight and serve as a check on the potential overreach of the executive branch. Gaining access to OLC opinions through FOIA requests and litigation can take years to produce results and is often unsuccessful. Since 2016, CREW has filed 9 FOIA requests for OLC opinions, but to date has only received a third of the records requested.<sup>19</sup> These impediments mean that the vast majority of OLC opinions remain hidden from view.

Congress should pass legislation like Senator Duckworth's DOJ OLC Transparency Act, which mandates that OLC opinions be published no later than 48 hours after the date of issuance, with appropriate exceptions for maintaining national security.<sup>20</sup> A transition to mandating the proactive disclosure of OLC opinions will improve Congress's ability to conduct oversight of the executive branch as well as reduce the unnecessary resource drain placed on good-government organizations, the DOJ, and the courts filing, responding to, and litigating FOIA requests.

## **6. Fill vacancies in Inspector General positions.**

Inspectors general are the backbone of ethical, democratic institutions. They ensure that agencies are effective and acting in compliance with ethics rules. By conducting investigations and producing reports, inspectors general provide critical information to Congress and the public. Without competent inspectors general in place, government agencies remain vulnerable to corruption, waste, and fraud.

To date, 11 inspector general positions remain vacant.<sup>21</sup> Five of these positions have been vacant for over a year. The new Congress should urge the President and relevant agencies to nominate inspectors generals and confirm nominees as soon as possible. To prevent extended inspector general vacancies, Congress should also pass Representative Lieu's Inspector General Protection Act. That bill states that if the President fails to nominate an inspector general within 210 days of the vacancy, they

---

<sup>17</sup> S. 742, 117th Congress (2021), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/742>; H.R. 2055, 117th Congress (2021), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/2055>.

<sup>18</sup> S. 3164, 117th Congress (2021), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/3164/text>.

<sup>19</sup> CREW Urges Transparency for OLC Opinions, CREW (Oct. 20, 2022), <http://www.citizensforethics.org/legal-action/legal-complaints/crew-urges-transparency-for-olc-opinions/>.

<sup>20</sup> S. 3858, 117th Congress (2022), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/3858>.

<sup>21</sup> Inspector General Vacancies, Oversight.gov, <https://www.oversight.gov/ig-vacancies>.

must communicate with Congress within 30 days about the reason for delay and a target date for nomination.<sup>22</sup>

## **7. Pass legislation to mandate timely subpoena compliance.**

Congress's oversight power rests on its ability to investigate the executive by holding hearings, issuing subpoenas, and requesting documents. In recent years, we have seen repeated refusals by executive branch officials, Members of Congress, and private citizens to comply with congressional subpoenas and document requests.<sup>23</sup> As a 2019 CRS report states, "the subpoena is only as effective as the means by which it may be enforced."<sup>24</sup>

Congress should pass legislation to effectuate its subpoena power. Legislation should authorize expedited litigation to compel subpoena compliance and establish penalties for officials who refuse to comply with congressional subpoenas and document requests, such as those described in Rep. Lieu's Congressional Inherent Contempt Resolution and Rep. Dean's Congressional Subpoena Compliance and Enforcement Act of 2021.<sup>25</sup>

## **8. Investigate the Department of Defense's potential violation of the Emoluments Clause.**

The Emoluments Clause of the Constitution sets up guardrails to prevent corruption and "limit foreign influence on federal officers."<sup>26</sup> The clause requires retired military officers to obtain approval from Congress to receive any "present, Emolument, Office, or Title" from a foreign state.<sup>27</sup> Since 1977, Congress has delegated this approval function to the relevant military service secretaries and Secretary of State.<sup>28</sup> However, when executive officials fail to enforce this clause, it remains Congress' responsibility to conduct oversight.

In October, investigative reporting by the *Washington Post* revealed that hundreds of former military officers have taken jobs with foreign governments since 2015, largely in countries known for human rights abuses and political oppression.<sup>29</sup> In a letter to

---

<sup>22</sup> H.R. 23, 117th Congress (2021), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/23>.

<sup>23</sup> Jennifer Ahearn, et al., *What Democracy Looks Like* 40 (2020), <https://www.citizensforethics.org/reports-investigations/crew-reports/democracy-reform-blueprint-accountable-inclusive-ethical-government/>.

<sup>24</sup> Cong. Rsch. Serv., *Congressional Subpoenas: Enforcing Executive Branch Compliance* (2019), <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/R45653.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup> H.Res. 406, 117th Congress (2021), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-resolution/406>; H.R. 6079, 117th Congress (2021), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/6079>.

<sup>26</sup> Cong. Rsch. Serv., *Art I.S9.C8.2 Historical Background on Foreign Emoluments Clause*, Constitution Annotated, [https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/essay/artI-S9-C8-2/ALDE\\_00013205](https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/essay/artI-S9-C8-2/ALDE_00013205).

<sup>27</sup> U.S. Const. Art. I, § 9, cl. 8.

<sup>28</sup> 37 U.S.C § 908

<sup>29</sup> Craig Whitlock and Nate Jones, *Retired U.S. Generals, Admirals Take Top Jobs With Saudi Crown Prince*, *Washington Post* (Oct. 18, 2022),

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/interactive/2022/veterans-us-foreign-jobs-saudi-arabia/?itid=k\\_inline\\_manual\\_2](https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/interactive/2022/veterans-us-foreign-jobs-saudi-arabia/?itid=k_inline_manual_2).

the Department of Defense (DoD), Senators Warren and Grassley called attention to this issue and asked the DoD to answer questions regarding the approval of retired officers' employment with foreign government agencies, including questions as to whether applicable filing and reporting requirements were followed and if retirement pay and other benefits were withheld, as permitted under law, from service members who flout reporting requirements.<sup>30</sup> It is not known if or how DoD responded.

If DoD's answers fail to clear up the serious questions raised by the senators, Congress should conduct a hearing and investigation to ensure the Emoluments Clause is upheld. The findings from such an investigation could be used to produce legislation which institutes proactive measures to prevent violations of the Emoluments Clauses from occurring and to increase the likelihood of sanctions if they do.<sup>31</sup> For example, Senator Warren's Department of Defense Ethics and Anti-Corruption Act of 2021 would improve Congress's oversight of the DoD by requiring military service secretaries to submit annual reports to Congress containing the emoluments clause waivers issued to retired military officers.<sup>32</sup>

## **9. Require the Supreme Court to establish a public and binding code of ethics.**

Congressional oversight should also include oversight of the judiciary. Federal judges are the only government actors under our Constitution given the unique privilege of lifetime tenure. Entrusted with issuing final decisions on issues regarding life and death and fundamental rights, they should be subject to heightened ethical scrutiny. Yet, the exact opposite is true. Unlike Members of Congress and executive branch officials, Supreme Court Justices are not subject to a code of ethics. As CREW's Senior Vice President and Chief Counsel Donald Sherman noted in testimony to Congress last month, the highest court in the land has the lowest bar for ethical compliance and accountability.<sup>33</sup>

Justices across the ideological spectrum have failed to recuse themselves in cases where they may have conflicts of interest and have accepted expensive gifts such as fully funded trips, raising concerns about their impartiality.<sup>34</sup> Meanwhile, Americans'

---

<sup>30</sup> Chuck Grassley and Elizabeth Warren, *Grassley, Warren Press Pentagon On Retired Service Members Working For Foreign Governments* (Nov. 30, 2022), [https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/grassley-warren-press-pentagon-on-retired-service-members-working-for-foreign-governments#\\_ftn1](https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/grassley-warren-press-pentagon-on-retired-service-members-working-for-foreign-governments#_ftn1).

<sup>31</sup> Ahearn, et al., *What Democracy Looks Like* 15 (2020), <https://www.citizensforethics.org/reports-investigations/crew-reports/democracy-reform-blueprint-accountable-inclusive-ethical-government/>.

<sup>32</sup> S. 2396, 117th Congress (2021), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/2396>.

<sup>33</sup> *Undue Influence: Operation Higher Court and Politicking at SCOTUS: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on the Judiciary*, 117th Congress (2022), Testimony of Donald Sherman, [https://www.citizensforethics.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Donald-Written-HIC-Testimony-12\\_8.pdf](https://www.citizensforethics.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Donald-Written-HIC-Testimony-12_8.pdf).

<sup>34</sup> *Recent Times in Which a Justice Failed to Recuse Despite a Conflict of Interests*, *Fix the Court* (Dec. 5, 2022), <https://fixthecourt.com/2022/12/recent-times-justice-failed-recuse-despite-clear-conflict-interest>; Eric Lipton, *Scalia Took Dozens of Trips Funded by Private Sponsors*, *New York Times* (Feb. 26, 2016), <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/27/us/politics/scalia-led-court-in-taking-trips-funded-by-private-sponsors.html>.

confidence in the Supreme Court is at its lowest level since Gallup began polling the question nearly 50 years ago.<sup>35</sup>

If the Supreme Court will not establish a public and binding code of ethics on its own, Congress must take action to increase oversight. Congress should pass legislation mandating a code of ethics that sets limits on the gifts justices can accept as well as prohibits justices, their spouses, and their dependent children from owning and trading individual stocks.

These ethics concerns are of bipartisan interest. Indeed, during last month's House Judiciary Committee hearing on the subject, Representative Gaetz reiterated his support for "bipartisan efforts to have some sort of an ethics construct on the court," recommending that Members of Congress should "work together on opportunities to have strong ethics requirements that enhance the public perception of the court."<sup>36</sup>

In May 2022, President Biden signed into law the Courthouse Ethics and Transparency Act, which requires the online publication of financial disclosure reports for federal judges and mandates that federal judges submit periodic transaction reports for certain securities transactions.<sup>37</sup> This bipartisan legislation was in direct response to extensive investigative reporting by the *Wall Street Journal* that found that more than 130 federal judges heard cases in which they or their families held stock in a company involved in the matter.<sup>38</sup> While this new law strengthens judicial transparency, it is just a first step toward restoring trust in the third branch and furthering ethics reform in the judiciary.

## **10. Establish and employ committee rules that make investigatory hearings more effective.**

Congress's ability to conduct effective oversight has deteriorated. Congress spends more time hearing one-sided opinions on issues, and less time learning about potential solutions to legislative problems and potential executive branch abuses.

The structure of oversight hearings is part of the problem: Large portions of hearings are spent on member statements and off-topic or leading questioning of witnesses. Rules that give many members short stretches of time to ask questions are not conducive to establishing basic facts or following up with a witness whose testimony is incomplete, evasive, or contradictory. As a result, oversight hearings often fail to establish basic facts needed to highlight abuses of power or other misconduct.

---

<sup>35</sup> Jeffrey Jones, *Confidence in U.S. Supreme Court Sinks to Historic Low*, Gallup (June 23, 2022), <https://news.gallup.com/poll/394103/confidence-supreme-court-sinks-historic-low.aspx>.

<sup>36</sup> *Undue Influence: Operation Higher Court and Politicking at SCOTUS: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on the Judiciary*, 117th Congress (2022) <https://judiciary.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=5075>.

<sup>37</sup> S. 3059, 117th Congress (2022), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/3059>

<sup>38</sup> James V. Grimaldi, et al., *131 Federal Judges Broke the Law by Hearing Cases Where They Had a Financial Interest*, *Wall Street Journal* (Sept. 28, 2021), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/131-federal-judges-broke-the-law-by-hearing-cases-where-they-had-a-financial-interest-11632834421>



January 18, 2023

9

Committee rules for running investigative hearings should be reformed. During the 116th Congress, the House Intelligence Committee and House Judiciary Committee established rules permitting the chair and ranking member to designate a member or staffer to conduct longer rounds of questioning.<sup>39</sup> Congressional committees should make this reform available when a committee is using a hearing to gather evidence or information from a witness.

The reforms which I have outlined above are not the only steps Congress can take in the new session to increase oversight. However, they represent opportunities for bipartisan action that will bolster Congress's ability to serve as a meaningful check on executive and judicial power and help root out corruption. We urge you to avoid the pitfalls of wasteful partisan oversight and instead pursue an oversight agenda intended to strengthen our democratic institutions.

Sincerely,



Noah Bookbinder  
President and Chief Executive Officer

---

<sup>39</sup>Ahearn, et al., What Democracy Looks Like 45 (2020), <https://www.citizensforethics.org/reports-investigations/crew-reports/democracy-reform-blueprint-accountable-inclusive-ethical-government>.