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THE KURUKSHETRA OF DIPLOMACY

STUDY GUIDE

UNITED STATES SENATE

SIMULATION OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE

AGENDA / FOCUS

Congressional review of government transparency, institutional accountability, and legal oversight in the release of high-profile criminal investigation records in the disclosure of the Epstein Files.

31 JUL — 02 AUG 2026

DELHI PUBLIC SCHOOL, SILIGURI

THE KURUKSHETRA OF DIPLOMACY

DELEGATE RESEARCH EDITION

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Study Guide: Legatio Model United Nations 2026
Simulation of the United States Senate

Agenda: Congressional Review of Government Transparency, Institutional Accountability, and Legal Oversight in the Release of High Profile Criminal Investigation Records in the Disclosure of the Epstein Files

Delegates are expected to read this guide in full before the first session and to use the reference material listed at the end for deeper research. Explanatory footnotes appear at the bottom of the page wherever a key term, law, or process is introduced for the first time.

General content advisory: this study guide discusses a criminal case involving the sexual abuse and trafficking of minors. The guide describes these matters in factual and non graphic terms only, yet the subject is distressing by its nature. Delegates who feel uncomfortable at any point during preparation or during committee are encouraged to speak with the Executive Board or a teacher. Section Three carries a further advisory.

Table of Content

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1. The United States Political and Legislative System

1.1. Constitutional Foundations

The United States is a federal constitutional republic governed under the Constitution of 1787, which entered into force in 1789 and remains the oldest written national constitution still in operation. The document is short, running to roughly seven thousand words in seven articles, and it has been amended only twenty seven times; the first ten amendments, ratified in 1791, are known collectively as the Bill of Rights and guarantee individual liberties such as freedom of speech, due process of law, and protection against unreasonable searches. Article Six contains the Supremacy Clause, which makes the Constitution and federal law supreme over conflicting state law.

The Constitution rests on five organising ideas that every delegate must internalise, because they explain why the Senate behaves the way it does in this simulation. The first is popular sovereignty: all governmental power flows from the people. The second is the rule of law: every officeholder, including the President, is bound by the law and answerable to it. The third is the separation of powers: lawmaking, law execution, and law interpretation are assigned to three distinct branches so that no single institution can dominate. The fourth is the system of checks and balances, which gives each branch specific tools to restrain the others; the presidential veto, the Senate power to confirm or reject nominees, judicial review[1], and the congressional power to investigate the executive branch, which sits at the heart of our agenda, are all examples of such tools. The fifth is federalism: power is divided between the national government and the fifty state governments, each of which has its own constitution, legislature, courts, and police. This last idea matters directly for our agenda, because the Epstein case began as a state investigation by the Palm Beach Police Department in Florida before becoming a federal matter, and because state and federal prosecutors may charge the same conduct under their separate bodies of law.

1.2. The Three Branches of Government

Article One of the Constitution creates the legislative branch, the Congress, which consists of two chambers: the House of Representatives and the Senate. Congress writes the laws, controls federal spending through the power of the purse[2], declares war, regulates commerce, and oversees the executive branch. Because Congress creates

[1] Judicial review is the power of courts to declare a law or an executive action void when it conflicts with the Constitution. It was established by the Supreme Court in Marbury v. Madison in 1803 and is exercised by all federal courts.

[2] The power of the purse rests on Article One, Section Nine of the Constitution, which provides that no money may be drawn from the treasury except through an appropriation made by law; it gives Congress control over all federal spending.

federal agencies, defines their powers by statute, and funds them each year, it retains the right to examine how they use those powers and that money; this is the constitutional root of congressional review, developed fully in Section Two.

Article Two creates the executive branch, headed by the President, who serves simultaneously as head of state, head of government, and commander in chief of the armed forces. The President is elected to a four year term through the Electoral College[3], is limited to two terms by the Twenty Second Amendment, is charged with taking care that the laws are faithfully executed, appoints senior officers with the advice and consent of the Senate, negotiates treaties, and may veto legislation. Beneath the President sits the Cabinet: the heads of the fifteen executive departments, including the Secretaries of State, Treasury, and Defense and the Attorney General, together with certain other officials of Cabinet rank[4]. Every Cabinet secretary must be confirmed by the Senate before taking office.

The department most relevant to this agenda is the Department of Justice, hereafter the DOJ, which is led by the Attorney General, the chief law enforcement officer of the United States, assisted by the Deputy Attorney General, who manages the department day to day. The DOJ contains the principal federal law enforcement agencies: the Federal Bureau of Investigation, hereafter the FBI, which investigates federal crimes; the Drug Enforcement Administration; the Bureau of Prisons, which operates federal detention facilities and was the custodian of Jeffrey Epstein at the time of his death[5]; and the United States Marshals Service. Federal prosecutions are conducted by United States Attorneys, the chief federal prosecutors appointed, one for each of the ninety four federal judicial districts, by the President with Senate confirmation. Two of these offices generated the Epstein files: the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, which covers Manhattan and is often regarded as the most prominent prosecutorial office in the country, and the United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, which covers Palm Beach and Miami. The DOJ also contains an Office of the Inspector General, an internal watchdog that investigates misconduct within the department itself and reports its findings to Congress[6].

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[3] The Electoral College is the body of five hundred and thirty eight electors, allocated among the states according to their representation in Congress, that formally elects the President; a candidate needs a majority of two hundred and seventy electoral votes to win.

[4] The fifteen executive departments are State, Treasury, Defense, Justice, Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, Energy, Education, Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security.

[5] Epstein was held at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Manhattan, a federal detention facility operated by the Bureau of Prisons; the facility was closed in 2021 following criticism of its conditions.

Article Three creates the judicial branch. At its apex sits the Supreme Court of the United States, composed of nine justices appointed for life by the President with Senate confirmation. Below it, Congress has established ninety four district courts, which are the federal trial courts, and thirteen courts of appeals, which hear appeals from the district courts in defined geographic circuits. The judiciary interprets the law and, since the decision in Marbury v. Madison in 1803, exercises judicial review, the power to strike down laws and executive actions that conflict with the Constitution. The judicial branch also supervises grand juries[7]: panels of citizens, required by the Fifth Amendment for serious federal charges, that decide in secret whether the evidence assembled by prosecutors justifies an indictment. Grand jury proceedings are secret by law, a rule that becomes centrally important in Sections Three and Four of this guide.

1.3. Key Personnel and Their Hierarchy

Delegates should be able to place the principal officers of the United States government in their correct order and understand what each one does. The President leads the executive branch and sets national policy. The Vice President is the second highest officer of the executive branch and also serves, under Article One of the Constitution, as the President of the Senate; the Vice President may vote in the Senate only to break a tie, a power that has decided major legislation in evenly divided Senates. The Speaker of the House leads the House of Representatives, controls its floor agenda, and stands second in the line of presidential succession after the Vice President[8]. The President pro tempore of the Senate, by tradition the longest serving member of the majority party, presides over the Senate when the Vice President is absent and stands third in the line of succession; in daily practice the chair is occupied by junior senators on a rotating basis.

Within the Senate itself, real power rests with the party leadership rather than the presiding officer, because the presiding officer of the Senate, unlike the Speaker of the House, has almost no independent authority. The Senate Majority Leader is the chief strategist and scheduler of the chamber: he or she decides which bills reach the floor and when, negotiates the unanimous consent agreements that structure debate, and enjoys the right of first recognition, meaning the chair must recognise the Majority Leader before

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[6] Inspectors General were created across the federal government by the Inspector General Act of 1978, itself a product of the post Watergate reform era; each is an independent official who audits and investigates the agency in which he or she sits.

[7] A federal grand jury consists of sixteen to twenty three citizens who hear evidence presented by prosecutors and decide whether to issue an indictment, the formal written accusation that begins a serious federal criminal case. It sits in secret and the accused ordinarily has no right to appear.

[8] The order of presidential succession fixed by the Constitution and the Presidential Succession Act of 1947 runs from the Vice President to the Speaker of the House, then to the President pro tempore of the Senate, and then through the Cabinet secretaries in the order in which their departments were created.

any other senator seeking the floor. The Senate Minority Leader performs the equivalent role for the opposition party. Each leader is assisted by a Whip, whose job is to count votes in advance, ensure attendance at close votes, and maintain party discipline. Committee Chairs, always drawn from the majority party and ordinarily by seniority, control the agendas, hearings, and subpoenas of their committees, while the senior member of the minority party on each committee is called the Ranking Member and leads the questioning for the other side of the aisle.

In the executive branch hierarchy relevant to our agenda, the order of authority runs as follows: the President; the Attorney General, who leads the DOJ; the Deputy Attorney General, through whom the FBI Director and the heads of the other DOJ components report; and the United States Attorneys, who lead federal prosecutions in their districts and answer to the Deputy Attorney General. Delegates should note that the FBI Director serves a ten year term by statute, a design intended to insulate the office from political pressure, and that Inspectors General may be removed by the President only after notice to Congress.

1.4. The Congress and How a Bill Becomes a Law

The Congress is bicameral, meaning it has two chambers that must agree before any bill becomes law. The House of Representatives has four hundred and thirty five voting members apportioned among the states by population, each elected for a two year term from a single member district. The House holds three exclusive powers: revenue bills must originate there; it alone may impeach federal officers[9]; and it elects the President if no candidate wins a majority of the Electoral College. The Senate has one hundred members, two from each state regardless of population, each elected for a six year term, with roughly one third of the seats contested every two years. The Senate holds its own exclusive powers: it confirms presidential appointments; it ratifies treaties by a two thirds vote; it sits as the court of impeachment, where a two thirds vote is required to convict and remove an officer; and it elects the Vice President in a contingent election.

A bill ordinarily follows this path. A member introduces the bill, and the presiding officer refers it to the committee of jurisdiction: the standing committee whose subject area covers the bill, so that a bill about the DOJ goes to the Judiciary Committee and a bill about taxation goes to the Finance Committee. Committees are powerful gatekeepers; the great majority of bills introduced in any Congress die in committee without ever

[9] Impeachment is the process by which the House brings formal charges against the President, the Vice President, or another civil officer by a simple majority vote; the Senate then sits as a court of trial, and a two thirds vote of the senators present is required to convict and remove the officer.

receiving a vote[10]. If the committee chooses to act, it studies the bill, holds hearings at which witnesses testify under oath, and then conducts a markup session in which members amend the text line by line before voting on whether to report it to the floor. If the bill passes one chamber it moves to the other, where the entire process repeats. When the two chambers pass different versions, the differences are resolved either through amendments exchanged between the chambers or through a conference committee: a temporary panel of members from both chambers that negotiates a single compromise text[11]. An identical text must pass both chambers before it goes to the President, who may sign it into law or veto it; Congress may override a veto by a two thirds vote in each chamber, a threshold reached only rarely.

Two further devices matter for our agenda. The first is the companion bill: an identical or closely similar bill introduced simultaneously in both chambers so that committee work can proceed in parallel and a proposal is not delayed waiting for the other chamber; the Epstein Files Transparency Act travelled partly by this route. The second is the discharge petition[12]: a House procedure by which an absolute majority of the full membership, two hundred and eighteen members, may sign a petition that forces a bill out of committee and onto the floor against the wishes of the leadership. Discharge petitions rarely succeed, because members of the majority party are reluctant to defy their own leadership in public; the successful petition behind the Epstein Files Transparency Act in November 2025 is one of the very few in modern history, and its success is itself evidence of how much political force the demand for disclosure had accumulated.

1.5. The Senate in Detail

The Senate was designed as the deliberative counterweight to the popularly elected House; the framers expected it to cool and refine legislation the way a saucer cools hot tea. Senators must be at least thirty years old, citizens of the United States for at least nine years, and residents of the states they represent. Until the Seventeenth Amendment of 1913 senators were chosen by state legislatures; they are now elected directly by the voters[13]. The membership is divided into three classes whose terms expire in rotation, so

[10] In a typical two year Congress well over ten thousand bills are introduced and fewer than five hundred become law; the committee stage is where the overwhelming majority are filtered out.

[11] A conference committee is appointed only when the two chambers have passed differing versions of the same measure; its compromise text, called a conference report, must then be approved by both chambers without further amendment.

[12] A discharge petition lies against a bill that has been pending in committee for thirty legislative days; once two hundred and eighteen signatures are collected the petition ripens, and the House must vote on discharging the committee and taking up the bill.

[13] The Seventeenth Amendment, ratified in 1913, transferred the election of senators from the state legislatures to the voters of each state, a reform driven by repeated deadlocks and corruption scandals in legislative elections.

that only about one third of the chamber faces election in any cycle; because two thirds of its members always continue from one Congress to the next, the Senate is described as a continuing body and has earned the nickname of the house that never dies.

The committee system is the working engine of the Senate. Sixteen standing committees, each with its own staff, budget, and subcommittees, are organised around the major areas of national policy: among the most important are Appropriations, which writes the annual spending bills; Finance, which handles taxation; Foreign Relations; Armed Services; Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; Commerce, Science, and Transportation; and the Judiciary. Committee chairs come from the majority party, and committee seats are allocated between the parties in proportion to their strength in the chamber. The Committee on the Judiciary is the committee of jurisdiction over the DOJ, the FBI, the federal courts, and criminal law, which makes it the natural home of oversight concerning the Epstein files; the Epstein Files Transparency Act in fact directs its compliance report to the Judiciary Committees of both chambers. Beyond legislating, committees hold four recognisable kinds of hearings: legislative hearings on proposed bills; oversight hearings on how agencies are administering existing law; confirmation hearings on presidential nominees; and investigative hearings into alleged wrongdoing. The Senate may also create select or special committees for particular investigations, a device that produced several of the most celebrated inquiries in American history, as Section Two explains, and it maintains a permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, itself a product of one of those inquiries.

Floor procedure in the Senate is defined by its tradition of extended debate. A senator who has been recognised may in principle speak for as long as he or she wishes and on any subject, and a senator or group of senators may use this privilege to delay or block a vote; this tactic is called a filibuster[14]. Debate on most matters can be closed only by invoking cloture under Rule Twenty Two[15], which requires the votes of three fifths of the full Senate, ordinarily sixty senators, and even after cloture is invoked the Senate may consider the matter for up to thirty further hours. In modern practice the mere threat of a filibuster means that most significant legislation effectively requires sixty votes, and a single senator may also place a hold on a bill or nomination: a private notice to the leadership of an intention to object, which can stall a matter indefinitely. Because floor

[14] The word derives from a Dutch term for pirate. The longest individual filibuster on record was delivered by Senator Strom Thurmond in 1957 and lasted twenty four hours and eighteen minutes; in modern practice a filibuster rarely requires continuous speech, because the majority will not schedule a vote it cannot win.

[15] Rule Twenty Two, the cloture rule, was adopted in 1917 and originally required a two thirds vote; the threshold was lowered to three fifths of the full Senate in 1975. Cloture on most nominations now requires only a simple majority following rule changes made in 2013 and 2017.

time is precious, much of the daily business of the Senate proceeds by unanimous consent[16], meaning that any single senator can object and halt an arrangement. A quorum, the minimum attendance required to conduct business, is a majority of the chamber, fifty one senators, and any senator may suggest the absence of a quorum to pause proceedings while members are summoned. Votes on the floor are taken by voice, by division, or, on any significant question, by roll call, in which the clerk calls the name of every senator and records each answer of yea or nay. Delegates will find that our simulation borrows these features, including recognition through the chair, unanimous consent for routine matters, and a cloture style motion to end debate, and Section Five sets out exactly how they will operate.

[16] A unanimous consent agreement is a negotiated order, proposed by the leadership and accepted without objection, that fixes the terms of debate on a measure, including time limits and permissible amendments; it is the everyday substitute for the strict rules.

2. The Senate and the Power of Congressional Review

2.1. Where the Power Comes From

The Constitution nowhere states in so many words that Congress may investigate. The power is implied, resting on the Necessary and Proper Clause of Article One[17] and on the simple logic that a legislature cannot write good laws, appropriate money wisely, or check the executive without the ability to inform itself. The practice is as old as the republic: the House conducted its first investigation in 1792, into a military defeat on the frontier, and by 1827 the House had empowered a committee to send for persons and papers, language that has described congressional compulsory process ever since. In 1857 Congress passed a statute making it a criminal offence to refuse its demands for testimony, the ancestor of the modern contempt of Congress law.

The Supreme Court placed the power on firm constitutional ground in the 1927 case of McGrain v. Daugherty, which arose directly out of the Teapot Dome scandal described below. The facts are worth knowing: the Senate was investigating why the DOJ under Attorney General Harry Daugherty had failed to prosecute the officials responsible for the corrupt oil leases, and it issued a subpoena[18] to Mally Daugherty, the brother of the Attorney General and a bank president, who simply refused to appear. When the Senate had him arrested, he challenged its power in court. The Supreme Court upheld the Senate, holding that the power of inquiry, with process to enforce it, is an essential and appropriate auxiliary of the legislative function, and that Congress may presume a legislative purpose where the subject is one on which legislation could be had. Thirty years later, in Watkins v. United States in 1957, the Court marked the outer limit. John Watkins, a labour organiser summoned before a House committee investigating communism, answered every question about himself but refused to name former associates, and was convicted of contempt. The Court reversed the conviction, holding that congressional investigations must serve a valid legislative purpose, that questions must be pertinent to that purpose, and that there is no congressional power to expose for the sake of exposure into the private affairs of individuals. Together these two cases define the field on which our simulation is played: Congress may demand documents and testimony from the executive branch, but it must connect its demands to lawmaking, appropriations, or oversight of the administration of existing law, and it must respect the rights of the individuals it questions.

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[17] Article One, Section Eight, Clause Eighteen empowers Congress to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution its enumerated powers and all other powers vested by the Constitution in the government of the United States.

[18] A subpoena is a legally enforceable order compelling a person to appear and testify or to produce documents and other records; the term comes from the Latin for under penalty.

Delegates should also know the Congressional Review Act[19], because the word review in our agenda title echoes it. Enacted in 1996, the Act gives Congress a fast track procedure to examine and overturn new federal agency regulations. Agencies must submit every new rule to Congress before it takes effect; within a defined window of sixty legislative days, any member may introduce a joint resolution of disapproval[20]; and in the Senate such a resolution receives expedited treatment, with debate capped at ten hours and the filibuster unavailable, so that a simple majority of fifty one votes can strike the rule down, subject to the signature of the President or a veto override. A rule that is disapproved is void, and the agency may not reissue a rule in substantially the same form without new authorisation from Congress. The Act illustrates a broader principle that runs through this entire agenda: Congress does not merely pass laws and walk away; it continuously reviews how the executive branch carries those laws out.

2.2. The Tools of Congressional Oversight

Congress reviews the executive branch through a well developed toolkit, and delegates should be able to name each instrument and explain when it is used. Hearings allow committees to take sworn testimony in public or in closed session; testimony before Congress is given under penalty of perjury, exactly as in a court. Subpoenas compel unwilling witnesses to appear or to produce documents, and committee chairs in the modern Senate may generally issue them, in some committees with the agreement of the ranking member or a vote of the committee. A witness who defies Congress may be held in contempt of Congress[21], and the citation may travel down three paths: criminal contempt, in which the matter is referred to the DOJ for prosecution as a federal misdemeanour punishable by up to a year in prison; civil enforcement, in which the chamber asks a federal court to order compliance; and inherent contempt, the historic but long dormant power of each chamber to arrest and detain a contemnor through its own Sergeant at Arms. Each path has weaknesses that delegates should notice, because they matter for our agenda: criminal contempt depends on the DOJ agreeing to prosecute, which is doubtful when the contemnor is a DOJ official, and civil enforcement can take years.

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[19] The Congressional Review Act was enacted in 1996 as part of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act and is codified at Title Five of the United States Code, Sections 801 to 808.

[20] A joint resolution is a legislative measure that, like a bill, requires passage by both chambers and the signature of the President to take effect; it is the vehicle used for disapprovals under the Congressional Review Act and for proposing constitutional amendments.

[21] Criminal contempt of Congress is defined at Title Two of the United States Code, Section 192, which makes it a misdemeanour, punishable by a fine and imprisonment of up to one year, to refuse to appear, answer, or produce papers when summoned by either chamber or its committees.

Beyond compulsion, committees publish reports that establish official findings and recommend legislation; a Senate committee report is a formal document, often with minority views appended, and our simulation will produce one. The power of the purse allows Congress to condition or withhold funding from agencies that resist oversight, including through riders: provisions attached to appropriations bills forbidding an agency to spend money on a specified activity. The Senate confirmation power gives senators leverage over the officials who will run the agencies, and senators have historically placed holds on nominations to extract documents from reluctant departments. Congress is supported in this work by expert institutions: the Government Accountability Office, hereafter the GAO, founded in 1921, which audits and evaluates federal programmes on request; the Congressional Research Service, hereafter the CRS, which provides confidential nonpartisan analysis to members; and the Congressional Budget Office, which supplies independent budget estimates. Inside each major agency an Inspector General conducts independent investigations and reports findings simultaneously to the agency head and to Congress; the report of the DOJ Inspector General on the death of Epstein in federal custody, discussed in Section Three, is an example of this machinery at work. Finally, Congress can write reporting mandates directly into statutes, requiring agencies to account for their compliance by a fixed date; the Epstein Files Transparency Act contains exactly such a mandate, as Section Three explains.

2.3. Why Congressional Review Matters

Oversight serves four purposes that delegates should keep before them throughout the simulation. First, it informs legislation: Congress cannot fix a problem it does not understand, and nearly every landmark reform statute of the twentieth century, from securities regulation to intelligence law, followed a congressional investigation that documented the abuse. Second, it deters maladministration: officials who know they may be called to account, placed under oath, and confronted with their own documents behave differently from officials who know they will not. Third, it performs an informing function for the public: the political scientist and later President Woodrow Wilson argued that the informing function of Congress is even more important than its lawmaking function, because a public that does not know what its government is doing cannot govern itself. Fourth, it maintains the constitutional balance: the framers designed the system, as James Madison explained in the Federalist Papers, so that ambition would be made to counteract ambition, and every successful investigation reasserts the principle that the executive branch answers to the law and to the representatives of the people.

2.4. Landmark Case Studies of Congressional Review

Teapot Dome, 1922 to 1924. The case: the scandal concerned naval petroleum reserves, oil fields set aside for the future use of the navy, at Teapot Dome in Wyoming[22] and Elk Hills in California. Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall persuaded the President to transfer control of the reserves to his department and then secretly leased them, without competitive bidding, to the oil businessmen Harry Sinclair and Edward Doheny, from whom he had received large sums of money in cash and loans. The people: the inquiry was conducted by the Senate Committee on Public Lands and Surveys and led by Senator Thomas Walsh of Montana, a former trial lawyer who examined witnesses himself across nearly two years of hearings, tracing the money through banks and front companies. The verdict and outcome: the Supreme Court invalidated the leases in 1927 on the ground that they had been obtained by fraud; Fall was convicted of bribery in 1929, fined one hundred thousand United States dollars, and sentenced to a year in prison, becoming the first Cabinet officer imprisoned for a felony committed in office; Sinclair was jailed for contempt and for tampering with his jury; and the parallel dispute over the Senate subpoena to Mally Daugherty produced McGrain v. Daugherty, the decision that placed the congressional power of compulsory process on firm constitutional ground. Teapot Dome remains the foundational example of the Senate exposing corruption that the executive branch had concealed, and delegates will notice its direct echo in our agenda: then as now, the central question was whether the DOJ itself had protected the powerful.

Watergate, 1973 to 1974. The case: in June 1972 operatives connected to the re election campaign of President Richard Nixon were caught breaking into the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee at the Watergate complex in Washington, and the White House then orchestrated a cover up, paying the burglars for silence and directing intelligence agencies to obstruct the investigation by the FBI. The people: the Senate voted seventy seven to zero in February 1973 to create the Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities, chaired by Senator Sam Ervin of North Carolina, a constitutional scholar chosen partly because he had no presidential ambitions, with Senator Howard Baker of Tennessee as vice chair; the committee was deliberately constructed to be bipartisan, and the question posed by Baker, asking what the President knew and when he knew it, became the emblem of the inquiry. The investigation: in televised hearings watched by tens of millions, the former White House counsel John Dean testified that the President himself had discussed the cover up, and in July 1973 the aide Alexander Butterfield revealed the existence of a secret White House taping system. The struggle for the tapes ran through the courts for a year, surviving the

[22] The reserve took its name from Teapot Rock, a sandstone formation resembling a teapot that stands above the Wyoming oil field.

dismissal of the special prosecutor by the President in October 1973, an event known as the Saturday Night Massacre, and ended in July 1974 when the Supreme Court ruled unanimously in United States v. Nixon that the President must surrender the recordings. The verdict and outcome: facing certain impeachment, President Nixon resigned on the ninth of August 1974, the only President ever to do so; dozens of officials, including the former Attorney General John Mitchell, were convicted of crimes arising from the affair. The legislative aftermath is as important as the resignation itself: Congress amended the Federal Election Campaign Act in 1974 to regulate campaign money; strengthened the Freedom of Information Act, hereafter FOIA, in the same year by overriding a presidential veto; and passed the Ethics in Government Act in 1978, which required financial disclosure by senior officials and created machinery for independent investigation of executive wrongdoing. Watergate demonstrates the complete cycle of congressional review: investigation, exposure, judicial confrontation, and structural reform.

The Church Committee, 1975 to 1976. The case: in December 1974 the New York Times reported that the Central Intelligence Agency, hereafter the CIA, had conducted a massive and illegal programme of domestic surveillance against American citizens, in violation of its own charter. The people: in January 1975 the Senate voted eighty two to four to establish the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, chaired by Senator Frank Church of Idaho with Senator John Tower of Texas as vice chair. The investigation: over sixteen months the committee interviewed roughly eight hundred witnesses, reviewed more than one hundred and ten thousand pages of classified documents, and held both closed and public hearings, aided by internal agency records, including a compilation by the CIA of its own misdeeds known informally as the Family Jewels. It revealed programmes never before known to the public: the FBI counterintelligence programme known as COINTELPRO[23], which harassed and attempted to discredit civil rights leaders including Martin Luther King; CIA plots to assassinate foreign leaders; the opening of private mail by the CIA and the FBI; and projects of the National Security Agency, hereafter the NSA, that intercepted the telegrams and communications of Americans without warrants. The verdict and outcome: the committee concluded that no President and no agency holds inherent constitutional authority to violate the law, and it issued ninety six recommendations. The results reshaped American government: the Senate created its permanent Select Committee on Intelligence in 1976; the executive branch issued new orders restraining the agencies; and Congress passed the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978, hereafter FISA,

[23] COINTELPRO, short for Counterintelligence Program, was a series of covert FBI operations conducted between 1956 and 1971 to surveil, infiltrate, and discredit domestic political organisations, including the civil rights movement and anti war groups.

which placed secret national security surveillance under the supervision of a special federal court. The Church Committee is the leading example of Congress reviewing the secret parts of the state and forcing them back within the law.

Iran Contra, 1986 to 1987, deserves a briefer study because it shows oversight working against an executive that had defied a statute. The case: officials of the National Security Council secretly sold arms to Iran, then subject to an embargo, and diverted the proceeds to the Contra rebels in Nicaragua, in direct violation of the Boland Amendment[24], an appropriations rider by which Congress had forbidden such assistance. The people and the investigation: joint select committees of the House and Senate held televised hearings in 1987 at which Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North and National Security Adviser John Poindexter admitted shredding documents and misleading Congress. The outcome: senior officials were convicted of offences including obstruction and false statements, although several convictions were later overturned because the trials had been tainted by testimony the officials gave to Congress under grants of immunity; the affair led to tighter statutory rules requiring the President to notify Congress of covert actions. The episode teaches two lessons that bear directly on our agenda: first, that the power of the purse is only as strong as the willingness to police it; and second, that congressional compulsion and criminal prosecution can interfere with one another, so the two must be coordinated with care.

The common thread across a century of practice is constant: when the executive branch holds information the public needs, Congress is the institution constitutionally equipped to demand it, weigh it, and legislate upon it. That is precisely the situation delegates confront in the present agenda.

[24] The Boland Amendment was a series of riders attached to appropriations acts between 1982 and 1986 prohibiting United States agencies from spending funds to support the overthrow of the government of Nicaragua.

3. The Agenda: the Jeffrey Epstein Case and the Epstein Files Transparency Act

Content advisory and trigger warning: this section discusses the sexual abuse, exploitation, and trafficking of minors, as well as a death in custody. The material is presented factually and without graphic detail, but delegates should approach it with care. Anyone who finds the content distressing should feel free to step away, to speak with the Executive Board or a trusted adult, and to return when ready. Nothing in this guide requires delegates to read, view, or discuss explicit material, and committee debate will remain focused on questions of law, procedure, and institutional accountability rather than on the details of the underlying crimes. Delegates conducting further research online are strongly advised to rely on the official sources listed in Sections Seven and Eight and to avoid the primary evidence files themselves, portions of which are disturbing and are gated behind an age verification page on the DOJ portal.

3.1. Who Jeffrey Epstein Was

Jeffrey Epstein was an American financier born in 1953. He began his career as a mathematics teacher at a private school in New York, moved into finance at the investment bank Bear Stearns, and later established his own money management firm which he claimed served only clients of exceptional wealth. Over three decades he accumulated a fortune whose true sources remain only partially explained, along with an extraordinary portfolio of properties, including a mansion in Manhattan, an estate in Palm Beach in Florida, a ranch in New Mexico, an apartment in Paris, and a private island called Little Saint James in the United States Virgin Islands, which he purchased in 1998 for approximately eight million United States dollars. The island could be reached only by boat or helicopter, offered extreme seclusion, and later investigations identified it as a central location of his criminal operation.

Epstein cultivated relationships across the highest levels of American and international life. His social circle at various times included former and future presidents, senior politicians of both major parties, business leaders, technology entrepreneurs, academics, scientists, and members of foreign royal families. He donated to universities and scientific causes and positioned himself as a patron of research. This network is the reason his case became a matter of national governance rather than an ordinary criminal prosecution. One point of discipline is essential for every delegate and will be enforced by the Executive Board throughout the simulation; the appearance of a name in the Epstein files, whether in a flight log, a contact book, an email, or an interview summary, does not by itself establish that the person committed any wrongdoing. The DOJ itself has stated that many individuals named in the released records are not accused of any offence. Delegates must therefore debate institutions and processes, and must not treat the files as proof of guilt against any named individual.

3.2. The Crimes, the Investigations, and the Prosecutions

The criminal case began at the state level. In 2005 the Palm Beach Police Department in Florida opened an investigation after the parents of a fourteen year old girl reported that Epstein had sexually abused their daughter. The local inquiry uncovered a pattern in which underage girls were recruited, brought to his residence, and abused, with some victims paid to recruit others. In 2006 the FBI opened a federal investigation, which ultimately identified roughly three dozen girls who were minors at the time of their abuse. By 2007 federal prosecutors had prepared a draft indictment containing approximately sixty counts.

What happened next is the origin of two decades of public anger and is essential background for this committee. In 2007 and 2008 the United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Alexander Acosta, approved a non prosecution agreement under which the federal government agreed not to prosecute Epstein, and extended immunity to four named co conspirators and to any potential co conspirators. In exchange Epstein pleaded guilty in Florida state court to charges of soliciting prostitution, including from a minor, registered as a sex offender, and served approximately thirteen months in a county facility with generous work release privileges that allowed him to leave custody for much of each day. The agreement was negotiated without meaningful consultation with the victims, and a federal court later found that the government had violated the Crime Victims Rights Act[25] in the way it handled them. For years afterwards, the deal stood as a symbol of the suspicion that wealth and connections had purchased a form of justice unavailable to ordinary defendants.

In November 2018 the Miami Herald published an investigative series titled Perversion of Justice, which reconstructed the 2008 agreement and located dozens of victims. The reporting revived public and prosecutorial interest. In July 2019 Epstein was arrested and charged by the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York with sex trafficking of minors and conspiracy to commit sex trafficking, prosecutors having concluded that the New York office was not bound by the earlier Florida agreement. On the tenth of August 2019, while awaiting trial at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Manhattan, Epstein was found dead in his cell. The medical examiner ruled the death a suicide by hanging. An investigation by the DOJ Office of the Inspector General later

[25] The Crime Victims Rights Act of 2004, codified at Title Eighteen of the United States Code, Section 3771, guarantees victims of federal crimes specified rights, including the rights to be treated with fairness, to confer with prosecutors, and to be heard at public proceedings.

documented serious failures of supervision at the facility on the night of his death, including guards who falsified records[26], and these failures fuelled enduring public doubt about the official account and enduring demands for the underlying documents.

The prosecution of the network continued after his death. In December 2021 a federal jury in New York convicted Ghislaine Maxwell, the long time associate of Epstein, on five counts including sex trafficking of a minor, and in June 2022 she was sentenced to twenty years in prison. Extensive civil litigation followed as well; victims brought dozens of suits against the Epstein estate, the Government of the United States Virgin Islands sued a major bank over its financial relationship with Epstein, and settlements have continued into 2026, including a reported settlement of thirty five million United States dollars between the estate and a group of victims in June 2026. As of July 2026 no additional high level associate of Epstein has been criminally convicted.

3.3. Why the Case Became a Question of Government Transparency

Three features turned a criminal case into a crisis of institutional trust. First, the 2008 non prosecution agreement suggested that federal prosecutorial power had been exercised in a manner that favoured a wealthy and connected defendant, and the public wanted to see the internal records that would explain how the decision was made. Second, the death of Epstein in federal custody, before he could stand trial and before his network could be examined in open court, removed the ordinary trial process through which evidence becomes public, leaving the investigative files as the only remaining window into the case. Third, the sheer breadth of his social network, reaching into politics, finance, academia, and royalty, generated a widespread belief that powerful individuals might be shielded from scrutiny. Successive governments released material only partially and slowly, which deepened rather than relieved the suspicion. By 2025 the demand for full disclosure of the Epstein files had become one of the rare causes commanding overwhelming support in both parties, and Congress responded with the statute at the centre of our agenda.

3.4. The Epstein Files Transparency Act, Public Law 119-38

The Epstein Files Transparency Act, hereafter the Act, was introduced in the House of Representatives on the fifteenth of July 2025 as House Resolution 4405 by Representative Ro Khanna, a Democrat of California, together with Representative Thomas Massie, a Republican of Kentucky. When the House leadership declined to schedule the bill, Massie filed a discharge petition, a procedural device that forces a bill

[26] The Office of the Inspector General of the DOJ published its report on the custodial death in June 2023, finding negligence, misconduct, and failures of judgment by Bureau of Prisons personnel, while affirming the finding of suicide.

to the floor once a majority of the full House, two hundred and eighteen members, signs it. The petition reached the required signatures on the twelfth of November 2025. The House passed the bill on the eighteenth of November 2025 by a vote of four hundred and twenty seven to one, the Senate approved it without amendment by unanimous consent on the nineteenth of November 2025, and the President signed it into law the same day. It is now Public Law 119-38. The near unanimity of the vote is itself remarkable and delegates should reflect on why transparency in this case united a Congress that agrees on very little.

The core command of the Act is contained in Section Two. Not later than thirty days after enactment, the Attorney General was required to make publicly available, in a searchable and downloadable format, all unclassified records, documents, communications, and investigative materials in the possession of the DOJ, including the FBI and the United States Attorneys Offices, relating to Jeffrey Epstein. The covered categories are sweeping: they include all materials relating to the investigations, prosecutions, and custody of Epstein; all materials relating to Ghislaine Maxwell; flight logs and travel records for aircraft, vessels, and vehicles connected to Epstein; the identities of individuals, including government officials, named or referenced in connection with his criminal activities, civil settlements, immunity agreements, or plea bargains; entities with known or alleged ties to his trafficking or financial networks; all immunity deals, non prosecution agreements, plea bargains, and sealed settlements involving Epstein or his associates; internal DOJ communications concerning decisions to charge, not to charge, or to decline to investigate Epstein or his associates; all records concerning the destruction, alteration, or concealment of Epstein related documents; and full documentation of his detention and death, including incident reports, medical examiner files, and autopsy records.

The Act permits withholding only within narrow categories. The DOJ may redact the personal identifying information of victims and materials depicting their abuse, may withhold material that would jeopardise an active federal investigation or prosecution provided the withholding is narrowly tailored, and may withhold images of death, physical abuse, or injury, and material whose release is otherwise prohibited by law. Critically, the Act forbids withholding or redacting records on the ground that they would cause embarrassment, reputational harm, or political sensitivity to any government official or public figure. The Act also imposes accountability mechanisms of exactly the kind this committee exists to examine. Within fifteen days of completing the release the Attorney General must submit to the House and Senate Judiciary Committees a report listing all categories of records released and withheld, a summary of all redactions together with their legal basis, and a list of all government officials and politically exposed persons[27] named in the materials, with no redactions permitted in that list. Any decision to classify covered information after the first of July 2025 must be published in the Federal Register together with the identity of the classifying authority and a justification.

Delegates should weigh the strengths and the limits of this design. Among its benefits, the Act converted discretionary transparency into a binding legal duty, protected victims by building their privacy into the statute itself, prohibited the most tempting form of abuse, namely redaction to spare the powerful, and created a reporting mechanism that gives Congress a hook for precisely the review we are simulating. Among its limitations, the Act reaches only records in the possession of the DOJ, leaving records held by the White House, other agencies, and the intelligence community outside its command; it exempts classified material, which creates an incentive to classify; the active investigation exception is elastic and difficult for outsiders to verify; the Act contains no independent enforcement mechanism beyond ordinary litigation and congressional pressure, so compliance depends on oversight; and it operates against the background of Rule 6, subsection e, of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure[28], which makes grand jury materials secret unless a court authorises disclosure, meaning that a significant category of records cannot be released by the Attorney General alone. Each of these limits is a live question for the committee.

3.5. Implementation and the Disputes Before This Committee

The statutory deadline for release fell on the nineteenth of December 2025. On that day the DOJ published only an initial batch of heavily redacted files, drawing criticism from members of both parties who argued that the department was violating the law; hundreds of pages were entirely blacked out, and faulty redaction techniques allowed members of the public to recover some concealed text. The department attributed the delay to the enormous volume of material and to the need to protect victim identifying information, and it released further instalments in waves. On the thirtieth of January 2026 the DOJ published over three million additional pages, together with more than one hundred and eighty thousand images and more than two thousand videos, bringing the total production to approximately three and a half million pages organised into twelve data sets, and declared its obligations under the Act complete. The department reported that more than

[27] The term politically exposed person originates in international anti money laundering standards and denotes an individual entrusted with a prominent public function, together with family members and close associates, whose financial affairs attract heightened scrutiny.

[28] Rule 6, subsection e, of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure binds grand jurors, prosecutors, and court personnel to secrecy and permits disclosure only within listed exceptions, most of which require the authorisation of a federal judge; a witness who testifies is not bound and may speak freely.

five hundred attorneys and reviewers had processed the files, that the Southern District of New York had applied an additional review protocol under a court order requiring certification that no victim identifying information would be published, and that notable individuals and politicians had not been redacted. Beginning on the ninth of February 2026, members of Congress were permitted to review unredacted materials in person on a secure government system.

Four disputes now frame the work of this committee. The first is completeness: lawmakers, including the sponsors of the Act, contend that categories of responsive material remain unreleased, pointing among other things to internal communications between the DOJ and other parts of the government, to reporting that the total universe of documents may substantially exceed what has been published, and to files that disappeared from the public portal without explanation shortly after the first release. The second is redactions: survivors and journalists identified instances in which victim names appeared unredacted, the very harm the statute was written to prevent, while at the same time the names of certain individuals who did not appear to fall within any permitted withholding category were redacted and only unredacted after congressional pressure; the businessman Les Wexner is the most prominent example, and a separate episode in February 2026, in which a member of Congress publicly named six men whose names he believed had been improperly redacted and the department replied that several of them were unconnected private individuals, illustrates how inconsistent redaction practice damages both privacy and accuracy at once. The third is the treatment of congressional reviewers: during an oversight hearing in February 2026 the Attorney General was photographed holding a document listing the search history of a named member of Congress on the unredacted review system; the department acknowledged that it logs all searches on its systems, members of both parties described the episode as intimidation of the legislature, and an investigation into the practice was opened. The fourth is grand jury secrecy: substantial materials remain under seal pursuant to Rule 6 subsection e, litigation over their disclosure has proceeded in the federal courts in Florida, and the committee must consider whether and how the law should balance grand jury confidentiality against exceptional public interest.

The oversight consequences have already been historic. On the twenty first of January 2026 the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform voted to hold former President Bill Clinton and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in contempt of Congress after they declined to testify; both subsequently testified in closed session in late February 2026, each denying any knowledge of or involvement in the crimes of Epstein, and Bill Clinton thereby became the first former President compelled to testify before Congress. Further testimony by prominent figures named in the files continued through the first half of 2026, and the House committee subsequently subpoenaed the Attorney General over the handling of the release. Delegates should treat these events as context; our simulation asks what the Senate, exercising its own review powers, should now find, recommend, and legislate.

4. The Focus of This Simulation

The agenda directs the committee to review three interlocking values, government transparency, institutional accountability, and legal oversight, as they apply to the Epstein Files Transparency Act and its implementation. This section defines each value with reference to established law and scholarship and pairs each with a historical example of congressional review, so that delegates can argue from precedent rather than from assertion.

4.1. Government Transparency

Government transparency is the principle that the public is entitled to access information about the conduct of government, subject only to narrow and justified exceptions. Its theoretical foundation is the argument, running from James Madison to modern administrative law scholarship, that popular government without popular information is impossible, because citizens cannot consent to, evaluate, or correct what they cannot see. Justice Louis Brandeis captured the accountability dimension of the idea with his famous observation that sunlight is the best disinfectant[29], meaning that publicity itself deters misconduct. In United States law the principle is institutionalised above all in FOIA, enacted in 1966 and codified at Title Five of the United States Code, Section 552, which grants any person a right to request federal agency records and places the burden on the government to justify withholding under nine defined exemptions[30] covering matters such as national security, personal privacy, and law enforcement.

The classic example of congressional review advancing transparency is the 1974 amendment of FOIA. The Watergate investigations had demonstrated how executive secrecy could conceal serious wrongdoing, and Congress responded by strengthening FOIA, narrowing exemptions, imposing deadlines on agencies, and providing for judicial review of withholding decisions. President Ford vetoed the amendments and Congress overrode the veto, a direct assertion that the legislature, informed by its own investigations, would set the terms of public access to government information. The Epstein Files Transparency Act belongs to this tradition but goes further, converting a general right to request into a specific statutory command to publish, and delegates should debate whether that model, sometimes described as mandated disclosure, is a sound template for future cases of overwhelming public interest.

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[29] Louis Brandeis, later a justice of the Supreme Court, wrote in 1913 that publicity is justly commended as a remedy for social and industrial diseases, and that sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants.

[30] The nine FOIA exemptions cover classified national security information, internal personnel rules, matters exempted by other statutes, trade secrets, privileged inter agency memoranda, personal privacy, law enforcement records whose release would cause specified harms, bank supervision records, and geological data on wells.

4.2. Institutional Accountability

Institutional accountability is the obligation of public institutions to answer for the exercise of their powers, and it has two recognised components in the academic literature on governance; answerability, meaning the duty to explain and justify conduct, and consequence, meaning the possibility of sanction or correction where the explanation fails[31]. Accountability differs from transparency; an institution can publish millions of pages and still escape accountability if no body examines whether its conduct was lawful and proper, and conversely an accountable institution may sometimes legitimately act in secret provided it answers to overseers. In the present agenda the accountability questions attach to the DOJ at three moments, its decision making in 2007 and 2008 when the non prosecution agreement was concluded, its custody of Epstein in 2019, and its execution of the Transparency Act from December 2025 onwards.

The leading example of congressional review producing institutional accountability is the Church Committee of 1975 and 1976, described in Section Two. The intelligence agencies had for decades operated with minimal answerability; the committee compelled explanation, documented abuses, and then attached consequences in the form of permanent structural reform, including standing intelligence oversight committees and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. The lesson delegates should carry into debate is that durable accountability is institutional rather than episodic; a single dramatic hearing changes headlines, whereas reporting requirements, inspectors general, and standing oversight change behaviour.

4.3. Legal Oversight

Legal oversight, as used in this agenda, is the supervision that ensures executive action conforms to statute and to the Constitution, exercised by Congress through its review powers and by the courts through litigation. Its constitutional foundation in the legislative branch is the implied power of inquiry confirmed in McGrain against Daugherty and bounded in Watkins against United States, and its characteristic instruments are the hearing, the subpoena, the statutory reporting mandate, and the contempt power. Legal oversight also involves respecting the limits the law places on disclosure itself. The most important such limit here is Rule 6, subsection e, of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, which imposes secrecy on grand jury proceedings in order to protect the innocent, encourage candid testimony, and preserve the integrity of investigations; disclosure of grand jury materials generally requires authorisation from a court under defined exceptions. Any recommendation the committee makes about releasing further

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[31] The two component definition of accountability, answerability and consequence or enforcement, is standard in the governance literature and is used by bodies such as the World Bank in assessing public institutions.

Epstein materials must therefore grapple with the fact that some records are not the Attorney General to give, and that Congress would need either to legislate a new exception or to support judicial applications for disclosure.

The founding example of congressional legal oversight is the Teapot Dome inquiry, which established through McGrain that the Senate may compel evidence from the executive branch, and which demonstrated that congressional process and judicial process can operate in tandem, with the Senate exposing the scheme and the courts convicting the wrongdoer and cancelling the unlawful leases. A modern example is embedded in the Transparency Act itself; the requirement of a compliance report to the Judiciary Committees within fifteen days of release is a statutory oversight hook, and the question whether the DOJ has satisfied it honestly is squarely before this committee.

4.4. Key Questions the Three Days Must Endeavour to Answer

The Executive Board expects the debate to organise itself around the following inquiries. First, whether the DOJ has fully complied with the release mandate of Public Law 119-38, and by what standard and evidence compliance should be measured. Second, whether the scope, consistency, and legal basis of the redactions conform to the permitted withholding categories, and what remedy is appropriate where they do not. Third, whether the protections for victim identifying information functioned as the statute intended, and how failures should be corrected and prevented. Fourth, whether the logging and monitoring of congressional review activity on the unredacted system was lawful and consistent with the separation of powers, and what rules should govern executive treatment of legislative reviewers in future. Fifth, whether Rule 6, subsection e, should be amended, or judicial disclosure supported, for matters of exceptional and demonstrated public interest, and what safeguards any such change would require. Sixth, how Congress and the public should treat uncharged individuals named in released records, and whether the law should provide any process for persons who contend they were wrongly implicated by disclosure. Seventh, whether statutory disclosure mandates need independent enforcement mechanisms, such as certification requirements, inspector general verification, or expedited judicial review, to prevent partial compliance. Eighth, whether the Transparency Act should become a general template for the release of high profile criminal investigation records, or whether it should remain an exceptional response to an exceptional case.

4.5. Desirable Outcomes of the Simulation

By the close of the third day the committee should adopt a written product in the form of a Senate committee report or resolution, and the strongest outcomes will contain the following elements: a finding on compliance, stating with reasons whether the DOJ has satisfied the Act; a remedial directive, specifying what further records, categories, or explanations the department must produce and by when; proposed amendments to the Act, addressing enforcement, redaction standards, victim protection audits, and the treatment of congressional reviewers; a considered position on grand jury materials, which may range from supporting court applications to proposing a narrow statutory exception with judicial safeguards; and a framework of principles for future high profile disclosures, balancing transparency against victim privacy, due process for uncharged individuals, and the integrity of active investigations. The report may include minority views, exactly as real Senate reports do, and a resolution that acknowledges the genuine tension between full disclosure and lawful secrecy will be judged more favourably than one that simply demands everything or defends everything.

5. Flow of Debate Across the Three Days

The simulation blends the procedure of the United States Senate with familiar Model United Nations devices so that debate remains authentic yet fluid. At all times delegates speak only when recognised by the Chair, address one another through the Chair as Senator followed by the surname, and may rise to a point of order for procedural violations, a point of parliamentary inquiry for procedural questions, or a point of personal privilege for matters of comfort. Routine matters proceed by unanimous consent, meaning the Chair will state a proposed arrangement and adopt it unless a single senator objects. A quorum of a simple majority of registered delegates is required to conduct business and any senator may suggest the absence of a quorum.

Day One is devoted to establishing the record. The Chair calls the committee to order and conducts a roll call to establish quorum, the rules of procedure are adopted by unanimous consent, and each senator delivers an opening statement of ninety seconds, the equivalent of a general speakers list, setting out their position on compliance with the Act. The committee then moves by motion into general debate, followed by moderated caucuses of ten to fifteen minutes on framing subtopics: recommended subjects are the completeness of the DOJ production, the standard for measuring statutory compliance, and the December 2025 delay. The day closes with a brief summation from the Chair identifying points of convergence and dispute.

Day Two follows the format of a Senate oversight hearing. With the consent of the committee, selected delegates or members of the Executive Board will appear as witnesses representing the DOJ, the FBI, a victims advocacy organisation, and an independent legal expert. Questioning proceeds in alternating five minute rounds between the two sides of the aisle, with senators permitted to yield unused time to colleagues; witnesses answer in role and may take questions on notice. Unmoderated caucuses of fifteen to twenty minutes follow the hearing so that working groups can form, and by the end of the day each group must introduce a working paper containing findings and preliminary recommendations. Moderated caucuses on redactions, victim privacy, the monitoring of congressional reviewers, and grand jury secrecy fill the remaining time.

Day Three is the markup and voting session. Working papers are merged into one or more draft committee reports or resolutions, which sponsors introduce with a five minute explanation. The committee then conducts a markup, considering amendments clause by clause; each amendment receives one speaker in favour and one against before a vote by show of placards. When debate appears exhausted, any senator may move to invoke cloture, which requires a three fifths majority and, once invoked, limits each senator to one final intervention of one minute. The committee then proceeds to a final roll call vote on the report or resolution, with senators answering yea, nay, or present, and a simple majority secures adoption. Minority views may be appended in writing. The session concludes with closing remarks from the Executive Board.

6. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Advice and consent:** The constitutional power of the Senate to approve or reject presidential nominations and treaties.
- **Attorney General:** The head of the Department of Justice and the chief law enforcement officer of the United States.
- **Cloture:** The procedure under Senate Rule Twenty Two by which three fifths of the Senate may bring debate to a close, overcoming a filibuster.
- **Committee of jurisdiction:** The standing committee whose subject area covers a given bill or agency; for the DOJ this is the Committee on the Judiciary.
- **Companion bill:** A bill introduced in one chamber that is identical or closely similar to a bill introduced in the other, used to advance a proposal in both chambers at once.
- **Congressional review:** The continuing examination by Congress of how the executive branch implements the law, exercised through hearings, reports, subpoenas, and statutes such as the Congressional Review Act of 1996.
- **Contempt of Congress:** The offence of obstructing the work of Congress, most commonly by defying a subpoena; citations may be referred for criminal prosecution or enforced through civil litigation.
- **Discharge petition:** A House procedure by which a majority of the full membership, two hundred and eighteen members, may force a bill out of committee and onto the floor without the consent of the leadership; the device that brought the Epstein Files Transparency Act to a vote.
- **Filibuster:** The use of extended debate in the Senate to delay or block a vote on a measure or nomination.
- **Freedom of Information Act:** The 1966 statute, codified at Title Five of the United States Code Section 552, granting the public a right to request federal agency records subject to nine exemptions.
- **Grand jury:** A panel of citizens that determines whether sufficient evidence exists to indict a person for a serious federal crime; its proceedings are secret by law.
- **Markup:** The committee session at which the final language of a bill or report is considered and amended before a vote.

- **Non prosecution agreement:** An agreement in which prosecutors undertake not to bring charges against a person, usually in exchange for specified conditions; the 2008 Epstein agreement is a controversial example.
- **Oversight:** The supervision by Congress of the executive branch to ensure lawful, efficient, and faithful administration.
- **Politically exposed person:** An individual entrusted with a prominent public function, or a close associate of such a person, whose affairs attract heightened scrutiny; the Transparency Act requires an unredacted list of such persons named in the files.
- **President pro tempore:** The senator, by tradition the longest serving member of the majority party, who presides over the Senate in the absence of the Vice President.
- **Quorum:** The minimum number of members required to conduct business, a simple majority in the Senate.
- **Redaction:** The removal or obscuring of information from a document before release, lawful only when grounded in a permitted withholding category.
- **Rule 6, subsection e:** The provision of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure that imposes secrecy on grand jury proceedings and defines the narrow exceptions under which a court may authorise disclosure.
- **Subpoena:** A legally enforceable order compelling a person to testify or to produce documents.
- **Unanimous consent:** The practice by which the Senate conducts routine business through agreements that stand unless a single senator objects.
- **Whip:** The party officer responsible for counting votes and maintaining attendance and discipline among party members.

7. Essential Readings and Explainers

Reading advisory: Delegates should note that the DOJ Epstein Library links onward to primary evidence files, portions of which are explicit or distressing and sit behind an age verification page; delegates are advised to read the explanatory pages and press releases and not to open the evidence files themselves.

7.1. the full text of the Epstein Files Transparency Act, Public Law 119-38, as published by the United States Government Publishing Office. This four page statute is the single most important document for the committee and every delegate must read it in full. https://www.congress.gov/119/plaws/publ38/PLAW-119publ38.pdf

7.2. the legislative history and official summary of House Resolution 4405 on the website of the United States Congress, which records the sponsors, the votes, and the path of the bill. https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/4405

7.3. the DOJ press release of the thirtieth of January 2026 announcing the completion of the release, which sets out the official account of what was published, what was withheld, and why; delegates should read it critically alongside the disputes described in Section Three. https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/department-justice-publishes-35-million-responsive-pages-compliance-epstein-files

7.4. the historical overview of Senate investigations published by the United States Senate, which surveys two centuries of congressional inquiry and links onward to detailed accounts of the Teapot Dome, Watergate, and Church Committee investigations discussed in Section Two. https://www.senate.gov/about/powers-procedures/investigations/overview.htm

7.5. the Constitution Annotated essay on the Watergate, Church, and Pike investigations, published by the Library of Congress, which explains the constitutional basis of congressional oversight with full legal citations. https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/essay/artI-S8-C18-7-8/ALDE_00013664/

7.6. Congressional Committees, Crash Course Government and Politics episode seven, produced with PBS Digital Studios, an accessible eight minute introduction to how committees, hearings, and markups work. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evLR90Dx79M

7.7. the same episode as streamed on the website of the Public Broadcasting Service, for delegates who prefer to avoid the YouTube platform. https://www.pbs.org/video/crash-course-government-7/

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