



U.S. House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

EMPLOYEE POST-TRAVEL DISCLOSURE FORM Original Amendment

This form is for disclosing the receipt of travel expenses from private sources for travel taken in connection with official duties. This form does not eliminate the need to report privately-funded travel on the annual *Financial Disclosure Statements* of those employees required to file them. In accordance with House Rule 25, clause 5, **you must complete this form and file it with the Clerk of the House, by email at giftravelreports@mail.house.gov, within 15 days after travel is completed.** Please **do not** file this form with the Committee on Ethics.

NOTE: Willful or knowing misrepresentations on this form may be subject to criminal prosecution pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001.

1. Name of Traveler: John Strom
2. a. Name of Accompanying Relative: _____ **OR** None
b. Relationship to Traveler: Spouse Child Other (specify): _____
3. a. Dates: Departure: August 2, 2023 Return: August 3, 2023
b. Dates at Personal Expense, if any: _____ **OR** None
4. Departure City: Washington DC Destination: Cambridge MD Return City: Washington DC
5. Sponsor(s), Who Paid for the Trip: American Accountability Foundation, The Heritage Foundation, and Conservative Partnership Inst.
6. Describe Meetings and Events Attended:
Conference consisted of two days of meetings and seminars on best practices for congressional oversight and investigations.
7. Attached to this form are **each** of the following, *signify that each item is attached by checking the corresponding box:*
 - a. a completed *Sponsor Post-Travel Disclosure Form*;
 - b. the *Primary Trip Sponsor Form* completed by the trip sponsor *prior* to the trip, *including all* attachments **and** the *Additional Sponsor Form(s)*;
 - c. page 2 of the completed *Traveler Form* submitted by the employee; **and**
 - d. the letter from the Committee on Ethics approving my participation on this trip.
8. a. I represent that I participated in each of the activities reflected in the attached sponsor's agenda.
Signify statement is true by checking the box.
b. If not, explain: I did not participate in the last two meetings on day 2 as I left early to return home

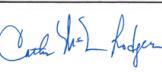
I certify that the information contained on this form is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Traveler: 

Date: 08/21/2023

I authorized this travel in advance. I have determined that all of the expenses listed on the attached *Sponsor Post-Travel Disclosure Form* were necessary and that the travel was in connection with the employee's official duties and would not create the appearance that the employee is using public office for private gain.

Name of Supervising Member: Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers Date: 8/21/23

Signature of Supervising Member: 

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS



SPONSOR POST-TRAVEL DISCLOSURE FORM

Original *Amendment*

This form must be completed by an officer of any organization that served as the primary trip sponsor in providing travel expenses or reimbursement for travel expenses to House Members, officers, or employees under House Rule 25, clause 5. **A completed copy of the form must be provided to each House Member, officer, or employee who participated in the trip within 10 days of their return.** You must answer all questions, and check all boxes, on this form for your submission to comply with House Rules and the Committee's Travel Regulations. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the denial of future requests to sponsor trips and/or subject the current traveler to disciplinary action or a requirement to repay the trip expenses.

NOTE: Willful or knowing misrepresentations on this form may be subject to criminal prosecution pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001.

1. Sponsor(s) who paid or provided in-kind support for the trip: _____
2. Travel Destination(s): _____
3. Date of Departure: _____ Date of Return: _____
4. Name(s) of Traveler(s): _____

Note: You may list more than one traveler on a form only if *all* information is *identical* for each person listed.

5. **Actual amount** of expenses paid on behalf of, or reimbursed to, each individual named in Question 4:

	Total Transportation Expenses	Total Lodging Expenses	Total Meal Expenses	Total Other Expenses (dollar amount per item and description)
Traveler				
Accompanying Family Member				

6. All expenses connected to the trip were for actual costs incurred and not a *per diem* or lump sum payment.
Signify statement is true by checking box.

I certify that the information contained in this form is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: Travis Lowe Date: _____

Name: _____ Title: _____

Organization: _____

I am an officer of the above-named organization. Signify statement is true by checking box.

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Committee staff may contact the above-named individual if additional information is required.

If you have questions regarding your completion of this form, please contact the Committee on Ethics at 202-225-7103.

Michael Guest, Mississippi
Chairman
Susan Wild, Pennsylvania
Ranking Member

David P. Joyce, Ohio
John H. Rutherford, Florida
Andrew R. Garbarino, New York
Michelle Fischbach, Minnesota

Veronica Escobar, Texas
Mark DeSaulnier, California
Deborah K. Ross, North Carolina
Glenn F. Ivey, Maryland



ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
U.S. House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

Thomas A. Rust
Staff Director and Chief Counsel

Keelie Broom
Counsel to the Chairman

David Arrojo
Counsel to the Ranking Member
1015 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6328
Telephone: (202) 225-7103
Facsimile: (202) 225-7392

July 19, 2023

Mr. John Strom
Committee on Energy & Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Strom:

Pursuant to House Rule 25, clause 5(d)(2), the Committee on Ethics hereby approves your proposed trip to Cambridge, Maryland, scheduled for August 2 to 4, 2023, sponsored by American Accountability Foundation, Heritage Foundation, and Conservative Partnership Institute, Inc.

You must complete an Employee Post-Travel Disclosure Form (which your employing Member must also sign) and file it, together with a Sponsor Post-Travel Disclosure Form completed by the trip sponsor, with the Clerk of the House within 15 days after your return from travel. As part of that filing, you are also required to attach a copy of this letter and both the Traveler and Primary Trip Sponsor Forms (including attachments) you previously submitted to the Committee in seeking pre-approval for this trip. If you are required to file an annual Financial Disclosure Statement, you must also report all travel expenses totaling more than \$480 from a single source on the "Travel" schedule of your annual Financial Disclosure Statement covering this calendar year. Finally, Travel Regulation § 404(d) also requires you to keep a copy of all request forms and supporting information provided to the Committee for three subsequent Congresses from the date of travel.

If you have any further questions, please contact the Committee's Office of Advice and Education at extension 5-7103.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Guest".

Michael Guest
Chairman

MG/SW:mc

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan Wild".

Susan Wild
Ranking Member



U.S. House of Representatives
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TRAVELER FORM

1. Name of Traveler: John Strom
2. Sponsor(s) who will be paying or providing in-kind support for the trip:
Heritage Foundation, American Accountability Foundation, Conservative Partnership Institute
3. City and State **OR** Foreign Country of Travel : Cambridge, MD
4. a. Date of Departure: 08/02/2023 Date of Return: 08/04/2023
b. Yes No Will you be extending the trip at your personal expense?
If yes, list dates at personal expense: _____
5. a. Yes No Will you be accompanied by a family member at the sponsor's expense? **If yes:**
(1) Name of Accompanying Family Member: _____
(2) Relationship to Traveler: Spouse Child Other (specify): _____
(3) Yes No Accompanying Family Member is at least 18 years of age: _____
6. a. Yes No Did the trip sponsor answer "Yes" to Question 8(c) on the *Primary Trip Sponsor Form* (i.e., travel is sponsored by an entity that employs a registered federal lobbyist or a foreign agent)?
b. **If yes**, and you are requesting lodging for two nights, explain why the second night is warranted:

7. Yes No *Primary Trip Sponsor Form* is attached, including agenda, invitee list, and any other attachments and Additional Sponsor Forms.

NOTE: The agenda should show the traveler's individual schedule, including departure and arrival times and identify the specific events in which the traveler will be participating.

8. Explain why participation in the trip is connected to the traveler's individual official or representational duties.
Staff should include their job title and how the activities on the itinerary relate to their duties.
I am senior counsel on the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee of the Committee on Energy and Commerce. This event is a training session for congressional staff on how to conduct effective oversight and investigations to better inform members of Congress as they consider legislation and other business. I will be both presenting at and attending the training session.
9. **Yes No** **Is the traveler aware of any registered federal lobbyists or foreign agents involved planning, organizing, requesting, or arranging the trip?**
10. For staff travelers, to be completed by your employing Member:

ADVANCED AUTHORIZATION OF EMPLOYEE TRAVEL

I hereby authorize the individual named above, an employee of the U.S. House of Representatives who works under my direct supervision, to accept expenses for the trip described in this request. I have determined that the above-described travel is in connection with my employee's official duties and that acceptance of these expenses will not create the appearance that the employee is using public office for private gain.

Signature of Employing Member

Date 5/15/23



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PRIMARY TRIP SPONSOR FORM

This form should be completed by private entities offering to provide travel or reimbursement for travel to House Members, officers, or employees under House Rule 25, clause 5. A completed copy of the form (and any attachments) should be provided to each invited House Member, officer, or employee, who will then forward it to the Committee together with a **Traveler Form at least 30 days before the start date of the trip**. The trip sponsor should NOT submit the form directly to the Committee. The Committee website (ethics.house.gov) provides detailed instructions for filling out the form.

NOTE: Willful or knowing misrepresentations on this form may be subject to criminal prosecution pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001. Failure to comply with the Committee's Travel Regulations may also lead to the denial of permission to sponsor future trips.

1. Sponsor who will be paying for the trip:

2. I represent that the trip will not be financed, in whole or in part, by a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent. *Signify that the statement is true by checking box.*

3. **Check only one.** I represent that:
 - a. The primary trip sponsor has not accepted from any other source, funds intended directly or indirectly to finance any aspect of the trip: **OR**
 - b. The trip is arranged without regard to congressional participation and the primary trip sponsor has accepted funds only from entities that will receive a tangible benefit in exchange for those funds: **OR**
 - c. The primary trip sponsor has accepted funds from other source(s) intended directly or indirectly to finance all or part of this trip and has enclosed disclosure forms from each of those entities.
If "c" is checked, list the names of the additional sponsors:

4. Provide names and titles of **ALL** House Members *and* employees you are inviting. **For each House invitee, provide an explanation of why the individual was invited** (include additional pages if necessary):

5. Yes No Is travel being offered to an accompanying family member of the House invitee(s)?

6. Date of departure: _____ Date of return: _____

7. a. City of departure: _____
b. Destination(s): _____
c. City of return: _____

8. **Check only one.** I represent that:
 - a. The sponsor of the trip is an institution of higher education within the meaning of section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965: **OR**
 - b. The sponsor of the trip does not retain or employ a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent: **OR**
 - c. The sponsor employs or retains a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent, but the trip is for attendance at a one-day event *and* lobbyist / foreign agent involvement in planning, organizing, requesting, or arranging the trip was *de minimis* under the Committee's travel regulations.

9. **Check only one of the following:**
 - a. I checked 8(a) or (b) above; **OR**
 - b. I checked 8(c) above but am not offering any lodging; **OR**
 - c. I checked 8(c) above and am offering lodging and meals for one night; **OR**
 - d. I checked 8(c) above and am offering lodging and meals for two nights. If you checked this box, explain why the second night of lodging is warranted:



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10. Attached is a detailed agenda of the activities House invitees will be participating in during the travel (i.e., an hourly description of planned activities for trip invitees). *Indicate agenda is attached by checking box.*
11. **Check only one of the following:**
 - a. I represent that a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent will not accompany House Members or employees on any segment of the trip. *Signify that the statement is true by checking box; OR*
 - b. *Not Applicable.* Trip sponsor is a U.S. institution of higher education.
12. For **each** sponsor required to submit a sponsor form, describe the sponsor's interest in the subject matter of the trip *and* its role in organizing and/or conducting the trip:

13. **Answer parts a and b. Answer part c if necessary:**
 - a. Mode of travel: Air Rail Bus Car Other (specify: _____)
 - b. Class of travel: Coach Business First Charter Other (specify: _____)
 - c. If travel will be first class, or by chartered or private aircraft, explain why such travel is warranted:

14. I represent that the expenditures related to local area travel during the trip will be unrelated to personal or recreational activities of the invitee(s). *Signify that the statement is true by checking the box.*
15. **Check only one.** I represent that either:
 - a. The trip involves an event that is arranged or organized *without regard* to congressional participation and that meals provided to congressional participants are similar to those provided to or purchased by other event attendees; **OR**
 - b. The trip involves events that are arranged specifically *with regard* to congressional participation.
If "b" is checked:
 - 1) Detail the cost *per day* of meals (approximate cost may be provided):
 - 2) Provide the reason for selecting the location of the event or trip:

16. Name, nightly cost, and reasons for selecting each hotel or other lodging facility:

Hotel Name: _____	City: _____	Cost Per Night: _____
Reason(s) for Selecting: _____		

Hotel Name: _____	City: _____	Cost Per Night: _____
Reason(s) for Selecting: _____		

Hotel Name: _____	City: _____	Cost Per Night: _____
Reason(s) for Selecting: _____		
17. I represent that all expenses connected to the trip will be for actual costs incurred and not a per diem or lump sum payment. *Signify that the statement is true by checking the box.*



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18. Total Expenses for each Participant:

<input type="checkbox"/> Actual Amounts <input type="checkbox"/> Good Faith Estimates	Total Transportation Expenses per Participant	Total Lodging Expenses per Participant	Total Meal Expenses per Participant
For each Member, Officer, or Employee			
For each Accompanying Family Member			

	Other Expenses (dollar amount per item)	Identify Specific Nature of "Other" Expenses (e.g., taxi, parking, registration fee, etc.)
For each Member, Officer, or Employee		
For each Accompanying Family Member		

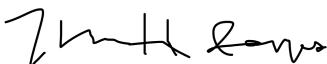
NOTE: Willful or knowing misrepresentations on this form may be subject to criminal prosecution pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001.

19. **Check only one:**

- I certify that I am an officer of the organization listed below; **OR**
- Not Applicable*. Trip sponsor is an individual or a U.S. institution of higher education.

20. I certify by my signature that

- I read and understand the Committee's Travel Regulations;
- I am not a registered federal lobbyist or registered foreign agent; and
- The information on this form is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature:  Date: _____

Name: _____ Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Telephone: _____

INSTRUCTIONS

Complete the *Primary Trip Sponsor Form* and submit the agenda, invitation list, any attachments, and any *Additional Trip Sponsor Forms* directly to the Travelers.

Written approval from the Committee on Ethics is required before traveling on this trip. The Committee on Ethics will notify the House invitees directly and will not notify the trip sponsors.

Willful or knowing misrepresentation on this form may be subject to criminal prosecution under 18 U.S.C. § 1001. Signatures must comply with section 104(bb) of the Travel Regulations.

For questions, please contact the Committee on Ethics at:

1015 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

ethicscommittee@mail.house.gov | 202-225-7103
More information and forms available at ethics.house.gov

Question 4.

The offices believed that the training would allow them to more effectively serve their Members. AAF and the Heritage Foundation approached staff and their supervisors to solicit attendance. These staff members were invited because their official duties include assisting with oversight matters.

Gavin	Proffitt	House Energy and Commerce
Jake Gilluly	Professional Staff Member - Oversight & Investigations	House Select Committee on China
Blake Randolph	Counsel	House Judiciary, Chairman Jordan
Ansley Schoen	Professional Staff Member & Member Services	House Budget Committee Majority Staff
Melissa Beaumont	Senior Professional Staff Member	H. Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
Joanne Thomas	Counsel	House Energy & Commerce
Evan Van Orman	Oversight Research and Staff Assistant	Committee on House Administration
Kim	Waskowsky	Oversight and Accountability

Question 12. For each sponsor required to submit a sponsor form, describe the sponsor's interest in the subject matter of the trip and its role in organizing and/or conducting the trip:

The American Accountability Foundation is a non-profit organization that produces original research relating to policymakers and policies to better inform leaders and the American people. AAF conducts extensive public records research, original investigations, and policy research for publication on its websites and through broadcast and print publications. The retreat offers an opportunity to share its expertise and experience with congressional oversight staff.

The Heritage Foundation's mission is to formulate and promote public policies based on the principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense. The Heritage Foundation recognizes that effective oversight of the Executive Branch is a necessary tool to inform public policy based on these principles.

The Conservative Partnership Institute's mission includes creating an infrastructure to work with conservative Members of Congress, congressional staff, and conservative leaders to enhance their ability to articulate and advance conservative principles in the national's capital.

The retreat offers an opportunity to train congressional staff to promote these conservative principles.

Both AAF, CPI, & THF jointly share responsibilities for booking travel, selecting speakers, organizing the panels, and inviting the various staff who should participate.

CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT BOOTCAMPS

Presented by the American Accountability Foundation, The Heritage Foundation, and the Conservative Partnership Institute

Aug 2 & 3, 2023

DAY ONE

9:00 – 11:00 am	Travel from Heritage Foundation 214 Mass Ave. to Cambridge, MD
11:00 – 12:00 pm	Arrival at Property, Check-in, and Pledge of Allegiance
12:00 – 2:00 pm	SESSION 1 & Lunch – Oversight Process, Organization, and Staffing <i>Best practices for understanding committee structure, staff assignments, hierarchy, and parliamentary authority. How to make most out of time as a staffer with oversight duties. An explanation of the elements and sequencing of a congressional investigation from idea, to hearing, to report, to legislation.</i> Speaker: Art Arthur, Center for Immigration Studies, Former Immigration Judge, Counsel for House Judiciary, and Subcommittee Staff Director for House Oversight
2:00 – 3:30 pm	SESSION 2 – SESSION 2 – Effective Oversight - Research Best Practices Open-source research into agencies, individuals, and organizations. Use of Congressional Resources LOC & GAO. Speaker: Michael Kaplan, Cannon Research Group
2:30 – 3:00 pm	Break
3:00 – 4:30 pm	SESSION 3 – Research to Legislation <i>A walk-through of taking research and oversight findings and transitioning them to legislative action. (appropriations language, committee amendments, bills, etc.)</i> Speakers: James Braid, Legislative Director to Senator Vance, Former House Chief of Staff, Former Office of Management and Budget Deputy Associate Director
4:30 – 6:30 pm	SESSION 4 - Working with outside organizations and leaders to advance oversight. <i>How Congress can collaborate with groups and individuals off Capitol Hill to amplify oversight efforts. How expectations of successful oversight are for structural reforms, not just exposure.</i> Speakers: Ryan Neuhas, Policy Advisor, Senate Steering Committee and Paul Teller Advancing American Freedom, Former liaison to conservatives for President Trump and Vice President Pence, Former RSC Executive Director
6:30 – 8:00 pm	SESSION 5 & Dinner: Lessons Learned from Executive Branch Experience <i>A dinner discussion about how congressional oversight is dealt with from an Executive Branch perspective.</i> Speaker: Steve Bradbury, Heritage Foundation, former Acting Secretary of Transportation and Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Legal Counsel

DAY TWO

9:00 – 10:00 am

Breakfast

10:30 – 11:30 am

SESSION 6 – Outside Groups Investigations

How outside groups are able to use information laws and litigation to drive investigations and deliver results.

Speakers: Michael Ding America First Legal, Former Administration Oversight Attorney and House Oversight Committee Counsel and Andrew Block, America First Legal, Former Administration Oversight Attorney

11:30 – 12:30 pm

SESSION 7 – Working with Outside Investigative Organizations

Understanding how to liaise with and utilize the expertise and records produced by outside investigators such as Inspectors General, Government Accountability Office investigators, and State Attorneys General.

Speakers: Edward Puccerella former Professional Staff for Committee on House Administration.

12:30 – 2:00 pm

SESSION 8 & Lunch – Communications, the News Cycle & the Press

A discussion on how to maximize oversight and investigations for lasting impact in media. How to break through the echo-chamber.

Speakers: John Strom Senior Counsel, Energy and Commerce Committee, Mark Tapscott Epoch Times

2:00 – 3:00 pm

Break

3:00 – 4:30 pm

SESSION 9 – Preparing for and Conducting Depositions and Hill Testimony.

Best practices for deposing or interviewing witness, including a mock interview with a recalcitrant witness.

Speakers: Cordell Hull, Former Under Secretary for Industry & Security, Deputy General Counsel, Department of Commerce; General Counsel, HPSCI vs. Mike Walsh Former Chief of Staff, Department of Commerce

4:30 – 6:30 pm

Oversight Shark Tank

Participants will be paired off into groups and expected to pitch an investigation, outline a research plan, and detail a prospective hearing. The presentation will be evaluated and critiqued by lecturers from the bootcamp.

Speakers: All Instructors

6:30 – 7:00 pm

Break

7:00 – 8:30 pm

Dinner – When Congress Calls

Perspectives and insights from the target of an investigation on what works and what does not work.

Speakers: Roger Severino, The Heritage Foundation, Former Director of the Office for Civil Rights at the Department of Health and Human Services

DAY THREE

8:30 am

Breakfast & Checkout

9:30 – 11:30 am

Travel from Cambridge, MD to 300 Independence Ave., SE

Greene, Sydney

From: Strom, John
Sent: Friday, May 5, 2023 12:49 PM
To: Greene, Sydney
Subject: FW: Teach at Oversight Staff Bootcamp June 7-9?

Invite to teach email.

From: Howell, Mike <Mike.Howell@heritage.org>
Sent: Monday, April 24, 2023 4:24 PM
To: Howell, Mike <Mike.Howell@heritage.org>
Cc: Thomas Jones <tom@americanaccountabilityfoundation.com>; Samuel Dewey <samueledewey@sedchambers.com>; hfike@cpi.org; Bradbury, Steve <Steve.Bradbury@heritage.org>; mark.tapscott@epochtimes.nyc; Severino, Roger <Roger.Severino@heritage.org>; ara <ara@cis.org>; Ed Puccerella <puccerella@gmail.com>; Mike Walsh <walshjrmichaelj@gmail.com>; Armstrong, Christopher J (WAS - X75490) <Christopher.Armstrong@hklaw.com>; Cordell Hull <cordell.a.hull@gmail.com>; Neuhaus, Ryan (Lee) <Ryan_Neuhaus@lee.senate.gov>; Block, Andrew <andrew.block@aflegal.org>; Michael Ding <michael.ding@aflegal.org>; Paul Teller <paul@advancingamericanfreedom.com>; Strom, John <John.Strom@mail.house.gov>; james_braid@vance.senate.gov
Subject: RE: Teach at Oversight Staff Bootcamp June 7-9?

All-

Thanks for volunteering to teach at the Bootcamp. When you have a moment, please fill out [this short survey](#) on what you want to teach and logistics.

We'd like to get the schedule finalized so we can get the Ethics process moving for House staff.

Thanks!

-Mike

Mike Howell

Director, Oversight Project
The Heritage Foundation
214 Massachusetts Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20002
202-608-1545

heritage.org

From: Howell, Mike
Sent: Sunday, April 16, 2023 10:00 PM
Cc: Thomas Jones <tom@americanaccountabilityfoundation.com>; samueledewey@sedchambers.com; hfike@cpi.org; jholland@cpi.org
Subject: Teach at Oversight Staff Bootcamp June 7-9?

Good Evening!

We'd like to invite you to teach at our fourth Oversight Bootcamp for junior Hill staff.

WHAT: Oversight Bootcamp

WHEN: June 7-9. We will have a bus leave from Heritage June 7 AM and return June 9 early PM. You are more than welcome to drive as well. Free to stay the entire time (encouraged since instructors participate in other sessions) or for a shorter period.

WHERE: Camp Rydin in Cambridge, Maryland

WHO: Hosted by CPI, American Accountability Foundation, and The Heritage Foundation. Audience is 15-20 junior Hill staff, with a focus on House committee staff. Instructors can teach on a variety of topics to include legal, investigative, hearing structure, media, Hill staffing, etc.

WHY: There are loads of junior Hill staff that could greatly benefit from this and no one else is doing it. And it is a great time to reconnect with old colleagues.

Please respond by **Friday April 21** if you can make it. We usually have to shut off RSVPs due to interest so please respond sooner rather than later if you want to come.

-Mike

P.S. Fair warning that Politico [picked up](#) the last retreat and wrote a story about it. Same thing happened [last summer with Axios](#). They dig through the Ethics filing that these trips require for Hill staff as a matter of course. Know that we comply with all legal and ethics requirements and that the media has nothing better to do. All conversations at the retreat are treated as strictly off-the-record.