

Member of Parliament Seminar

July 2012



David Dreier, Chairman • David Price, Ranking Democratic Member

Strengthening Committee Operations in the Legislature

From July 23 to 27, the House Democracy Partnership (HDP) organized a weeklong seminar for 16 Members of Parliament from three HDP partner countries (Kosovo, Liberia, and Macedonia). This program, which focused on strengthening committee operations in the legislature, was organized in cooperation with the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The Members of Parliament met with a dozen of their counterparts in the U.S. House of Representatives to discuss the organization and operation of public committee hearings, the importance of committee oversight, legislative ethics, and working with the press, the importance of a budget analysis capability, and the role of a committee chairperson.

The program began with an overview of the U.S. committee structure by CRS. Senior staff members of House committees and support agencies discussed how committees set their agendas in consultation with House leadership, how committee press operations are managed, how legislative drafting takes place, and how budget analysis is provided by the Congressional Budget Office for the Congress. In addition, participants also met with the Chief Operating Officer of the Government Accountability Office and the Director of the Congressional Research Service. Participants observed a hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs; and compared and contrasted their own committee systems with one another's.

This was the 15th seminar for Members of Parliament organized by HDP since the commission was established in 2005. HDP has also organized eight parliamentary staff institutes in Washington, D.C. for staff of HDP partner countries in areas such as committee operations, budget analysis, and legislative research. Additionally, the Commission has undertaken regional staff seminars in Kenya, Macedonia, and Poland; three joint MP/staff training seminars; and thirty outbound Congressional delegations to HDP partner countries.