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Seligson: People want legislatures to listen to them

by [Jim Patterson](http://news.vanderbilt.edu/author/patterjm/) | Posted on Tuesday, Jul. 29, 2014 — 5:03 PM



http://news.vanderbilt.edu/files/Mitchell_Seligson_Peru.jpg

Vanderbilt professor Mitchell Seligson gives the keynote address at the First Inter-American Meeting of the Presidents of the Legislatures of the Americas in Peru July 18. (courtesy of Mitchell Seligson/Vanderbilt)

The prestigious keynote address at the First Inter-American Meeting of the Presidents of the Legislatures of the Americas was delivered in Peru by [Mitchell A. Seligson](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/political-science/bio/mitchell-seligson) (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/political-science/bio/mitchell-seligson>), Centennial Professor of [Political Science](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/political-science/) (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/political-science/>) at Vanderbilt University and co-director of the [Latin American Public Opinion Project](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/) (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/>) (LAPOP).

Seligson noted that trust in legislatures in 26 countries in the Americas was quite low when compared to other regions of the world, citing LAPOP AmericasBarometer data. Other institutions, including the courts, municipal governments and the police, were all more trusted than legislatures. The only institution less trusted were political parties.

Seligson then presented statistical analyses that showed that reforms in the structure of the legislatures did not really relate to levels of popular trust. Rather, what mattered was people's perception that they were being listened

to and that they were satisfied with their performance.

Seligson's presentation was delivered July 18, following the opening welcome by the secretary general of the Organization of American States and the president of the Congress of Peru.

Representatives from 24 nations in the Americas met to discuss ways in which their combined efforts could further democratic governance in the hemisphere.

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