



Tips for Writing Testimony and Testifying Before a Committee

Be Familiar with the Committee Process

- You can find out more about the committee you are testifying before [here](#). Select the committee and on their main page scroll to the bottom and select ***Witness Guidelines and Committee FAQs***. Each committee has a FAQ sheet to give you information about where to sign up, the times signups are available, number of copies of testimony, etc.
- Know the location of the building, the meeting room, and the meeting time. Meeting schedules can be found [here](#).
- Check to make sure the bill you are testifying for has not been removed from the agenda. The bills may not be heard in the order they appear online.
- If possible, consider attending a committee hearing before you testify to become familiar with the process and room layout. If you cannot attend a hearing in advance, consider watching a past bill hearing [here](#). Choose a hearing that occurred between mid-January to mid-April.
- When you arrive at the committee hearing room look for the monitors to complete the electronic witness sign in form. Indicate if you are testifying in support or opposition to the bill. Witnesses are not necessarily called in chronological order.
- If you have written testimony refer to ***Witness Guidelines and Committee FAQs***.

Preparing Written Testimony

- Keep it simple. Try to limit to 1 to 2 pages.
- Clearly state the bill number, position (oppose, support, support with amendment), and bill title at the top of the page.
- Enumerate 1 to 3 major reasons for position in bold headers.
- Support opinions with as many facts as possible.
- Keep your language accessible, and avoid using complicated jargon.
- Conclude and offer to be a resource.



Testifying Before a Committee

- When you are called to testify, take a seat at the witness table and make sure to speak clearly into the microphone.
- Begin your presentation by addressing the chairperson first, then members of the committee.
“Chair _____, members of the committee...”
- For the record, state your name and the organization you represent.
- State your position for the bill being heard and briefly explain.

“Good afternoon Chair _____, and members of the _____ Committee. I am __ (Your Name) __
testifying on behalf of __ (Organization) __. I’m here today in opposition/support/support with
amendment for House/Senate Bill _____.”

- Be knowledgeable of the other side of the story. You may be asked to discuss the differences.
- Typically committee Chairs only allow each person **3 minutes** to give verbal testimony. Do not read your written testimony. Prepare an outline. It is not uncommon for a Chair to cut you off once 3 minutes has ended.
- Thank the committee members and offer to answer any questions. “Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I would be happy to answer questions”.
- Be respectful
- Do not accuse committee members of causing a particular problem
- Resist the temptation to scold, put down, or insult the other witnesses or viewpoint. This tactic will likely alienate them from the cause.