



Tips for Testifying

Check The Schedule

Check the legislative website to know when a bill is scheduled to be heard. Be advised, schedules can change quickly, especially in the final days of a legislative session. You can also contact the legislative staff of the bill's prime sponsor to get an idea of when the bill might be heard in committee for public comment.

Know the Process and Players

Before testifying, know who is sponsoring the bill, who supports or opposes the bill and why. Be familiar with the committee chairs, committee members, and legislative staff. You may also let the sponsor of the bill or key legislators know beforehand you are testifying on the bill, especially if you are representing a group or organization. They may have specific points they want you to focus on.

Know the Purpose of Your Testimony

Understand why you are testifying. Are you there to persuade, dissuade, provide expertise, or delay action on a bill? Know how to separate out the important points of your testimony to ensure they are heard. Personal stories are a good way to illustrate your testimony and can make the biggest impact on committee members.

Essential Components of Your Testimony

- Thank the committee for the opportunity to speak.
- Identify yourself and where you live, as well as your organization (if applicable).
- Clearly state your position and what you support or oppose in the proposed bill.
- Refer to the bill by the bill number and be sure you are using the most recent version of the bill.
- Summarize your recommendations first, then add explanations.
- Wrap it up with a closing statement. Ask lawmakers to vote for or against the measure.
- Stay within the time allotted by the committee. People are usually given around 2-3 minutes for testimony.