



While Coloradans can advocate for or against policies outside of official proceedings in many ways, committee hearings are the public's opportunity to participate on the record in the legislative process. In almost every state, public hearings are an integral part of the legislative process. In Colorado, one of the first steps for a bill to become a law is a public committee hearing.

Each committee focuses on different issue areas, such as Education, Finance, or Health and Insurance, and consists of a small group of legislators from both parties who are appointed by their party leadership. At a committee hearing, the legislator(s) sponsoring the bill will present the legislation, followed by public testimony, amendments, and a vote on whether or not to pass the bill forward to the next step in the legislative process.

Through public testimony, LGBTQ+ Coloradans and allies have the unique opportunity to speak on the official legislative record, urge our electeds to take a position, and hold them accountable for their vote.

THE BASICS

Contact One Colorado's Policy and Comms teams to let us know you'd like to testify. This helps us stay organized, provide resources, and share updates about last minute changes.

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You can share testimony:

- In-person at the Capitol
- Remotely via Zoom
- Electronically as written testimony

You must sign up to testify. To sign up:

- Visit www2.leg.state.co.us/CLICS/CLICS2023A/commsumm.nsf/signIn.xsp
- Select how you would like to testify (in-person, remotely, written)
- Filter by Committee and Hearing Item to select the bill you're interested in
- Provide your information to sign up!

WHAT TO EXPECT

About Testimony

1. Typically, each person will have **3 minutes** to share their testimony.
 - This time may be shortened (often to 2 minutes), and typically happens when many people are signed up to testify.
2. After testimony, legislators may or may not ask follow-up questions.
3. The legislature's timing is often unpredictable and may change with little notice. This is particularly true for high profile or controversial bills, as well as hearings when a committee considers multiple bills in succession.
 - It is difficult to approximate what time a hearing will begin, what time you can expect to testify, and the total time commitment of giving testimony.
 - We recognize the limitations and accessibility issues that unpredictable timing poses for those hoping to testify. Please reach out if you have questions about what to expect for a specific bill or hearing, and we will keep you updated to the best of our ability.

About the Capitol

- You must pass through security (operated by Colorado State Patrol) before entering the Capitol.
- Gender inclusive single stall bathrooms are located on the 3rd floor of the Capitol; a cafe with snacks and beverages are located in the basement level of the Capitol.
- The Capitol's accessible entrance is located on the North side of the building. Use of the elevator allows access to all levels of the building inside.

HOW TO TESTIFY AND SHARE YOUR MESSAGE

Introduce yourself

- Identify as a constituent with your first name and where you live.
- You can also choose to include identities like: LGBTQ+, Black, parent, student, voter, educator, etc.

State the issue

From your point of view, make a 1-2 sentence statement, considering:

- Why are you giving testimony today?
- What is the issue you are here to address?



- What do you (or don't you) want the legislation to change?

Share the stakes

- Explain why you care or how you are impacted by this issue.
- Share a personal story and/or any facts.
- Why does this matter to those around you?
- How will this affect you, your family, neighborhood, and community?

Make the ask

Use a close-ended question to ask your representatives to make the change. Remember:

- What would you like to recommend?
- How would you like your representatives in the legislature to handle this decision?
- Examples: Will you vote no and oppose this bill to (xyz)... (or) Will you vote yes and support this bill so that (xyz)...

TESTIMONY TIPS

Write out your testimony.

- Express yourself in complete sentences.
- Bring a printed copy of your testimony to read from or refer to.

Practice prior to sharing your testimony.

Read your testimony aloud in front of a mirror, or to a trusted family member or friend.

Ask One Colorado for support with your testimony.

- We can help you brainstorm, strategize, write, and practice sharing your story.

Assess your capacity and boundaries.

- Testimony is public and therefore is available and open to the public. It is up to you to know your comfort level for participation.

Keep your body language open and relaxed.

- Remember to breathe. Legislators are people too.
- Giving testimony can be an emotional experience for some folks. If you feel intense emotions coming on, take a moment to pause. Count to 3, then keep going if you can.

Avoid saying "No comment."

- It is important to stick to what you know. Do not answer questions or speak to ideas you don't know about.
- If you are asked about something you feel unsure about, you can say: "I don't know the answer to that question, however, I do know..." and redirect to your original idea.

Avoid going past your time.

- If you go over time, the Chair of the committee will interrupt to ask you to wrap up your comments.

GET INVOLVED

- Find your legislators: leg.colorado.gov/find-my-legislator
- Call or email your legislators to share your perspective or ask to set up a meeting: leg.colorado.gov/legislators
- Track bills we're monitoring: one-colorado.org/state-advocacy
- Watch and listen to legislative audio: leg.colorado.gov/watch-listen
- Schedule a tour of the Capitol: leg.colorado.gov/visit-learn