

# Writing Legislative Testimony



## Testimony Introduction

### Say Who You Are

Begin by introducing yourself, including your full name and any relevant affiliations (e.g., organization or community group).

Clearly state your purpose for testifying and your connection to the issue at hand.

### Give an Overview of Your Main Points

Provide a brief summary of the main points you will cover in your testimony.



## Testimony Body

### Organize Key Points

Start by clearly defining the issue or problem the bill addresses.

Present data, research and statistics that support your stance.

Offer clear, actionable recommendations related to the bill.



### Support with Data and Anecdotes

Include specific figures and findings from reputable studies or reports that reinforce your argument.

Share personal stories or experiences that illustrate the impact of the issue.

### Address Counterarguments

Identify common counterarguments or concerns related to your position.

Offer well-reasoned responses to these counterarguments, explaining why your perspective remains valid.

## Testimony Conclusion

### Summarize Key Points

Recap the main arguments and evidence presented in your testimony.

### Call to Action

Clearly state what you want the committee to do as a result of your testimony. This might be to vote in favor of the bill, reject it or consider specific amendments.



## Tips to Remember

The testimony is public so avoid confidential information.

Make sure your testimony is clear and to the point.



Write in straightforward language to ensure your message is easily understood.

While maintaining a factual basis, don't shy away from appealing to the committee's emotions. Stories of personal impact or hardship can be powerful.

Time your testimony to ensure it fits within the time limit.

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# Register to Testify at the Texas State Capitol

## 1 Find the Bill



- Open your web browser and go to "Texas Legislature Online."
- Use the "Bill Lookup" feature on the site. Enter keywords like "STEM education" or the specific bill number if you have it.
- Review the bill's status and scheduled hearing dates.

## 2 Check Committee Schedule



- Click on the "Calendars" or "Hearing Schedules" to see upcoming committee meetings.
- Bookmark this page and set a weekly reminder to check for updates.
- Click on the committee's name to see a list of members.

## 3 Sign Up to Testify



- **Kiosk:** Look for electronic kiosks outside the hearing room. They are often near the entrance. Use the touchscreen to complete your witness affirmation form.
- **Laptop, iPad or Mobile:** When in the capitol's public wireless network range, connect to the "Public-Capitol" Wi-Fi. Go to the registration webpage: <http://hwrs.house.texas.gov>.

## 4 Decide How to Register



- **On the Bill:** If you want to speak about the bill generally without a clear support or opposition.
- **For the Bill:** If you support the bill and want to explain why.
- **Against the Bill:** If you oppose the bill and want to express your concerns, select this option and suggest improvements.

## 5 Wait for Your Turn



- After registering, wait until the committee chairperson calls your name. They usually call a few people at a time.
- When your name is called, go to the table where you will give your testimony.

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# Tips for Delivering a Testimony at a Public Hearing

Keep your statements focused and to the point. Aim to present your main arguments within the allotted time of two to three minutes.

01



Speak clearly and at a moderate pace. Ensure your voice is loud enough to be heard by all committee members.



02

Make eye contact with committee members as you speak.

03



Practice out loud to make sure your sentences flow smoothly when spoken.



04

Provide clear and concise answers to questions. Long-winded responses can lose the attention of the audience and muddle your key points.

05



If you are asked a difficult question, take a moment to collect your thoughts before responding. Avoid raising your voice.



06

Connect your responses to questions to the main messages or themes of your testimony. This helps reinforce your overall argument.

07



Maintain respect and avoid personal attacks or dismissive comments.



08

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