

How to Testify Effectively

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WHAT HAPPENS AT A LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING?

Legislative hearings are formal meetings where input is gathered on policies.

- Who's in the room: Legislators, testifiers, public observers
- Purpose: Gather input, debate issues, make informed decisions
- Key elements: Sign-up process, testimony, online testimony, Q&A

KNOW THE STEPS

The process may seem intimidating, but it's straightforward when broken into steps.

- Sign up to testify
- Wait your turn
- Listen and learn
- Speak clearly and concisely
- Answer committee questions



CONQUERING YOUR FEAR

Public speaking can be nerve-wracking, but preparation and calming techniques help.

- Practice to build confidence
- Deep breathing exercises
- Grounding techniques
- Always remember: Ready, Aim, Fire (Rod Beck) 😊
- Pretend like your talking to your neighbor

KEYS TO EFFECTIVE TESTIMONY

- Don't be redundant, only provide NEW info
- Be respectful, speak through the chair
- Add some humor when appropriate to ease tension
- Prepare for 1-2 minutes of testimony max
- Handouts should be kept to 1-2 pages at the most

KEYS TO EFFECTIVE TESTIMONY

An effective testimony is clear, concise, and impactful.

- Introduce yourself and your position
- State key points supported by evidence including data
- Provide real-life examples, share a personal story
- Conclude with a specific call to action

SPEAK WITH CONFIDENCE



Nonverbal communication is just as important as words.

- Make eye contact
- Use open gestures
- Maintain clear and calm tone
- Avoid filler words like 'um' or 'you know'
- If you don't know the answer, say you don't know, don't wing it

BE RESPECTFUL

- Go through the chair
 - No personal attacks
 - Do not interrupt
- Be a good audience
 - Don't sigh
 - Don't clap
 - Don't roll your eyes, etc.



NOW IT'S YOUR TURN: LET'S TESTIFY!



- Role of the Chair
- Volunteers?
- Deliver 1-2 minute testimonies on one of IAC's 5 priorities
- Observe and learn

WHAT DID WE LEARN

Constructive feedback

- Strengths
- Areas for improvement
- How to handle challenges in real settings

YOU'VE GOT THIS!

Key takeaways for confident testifying.

- Prepare thoroughly
- Practice
- Stay calm and focus on your message
- Engage with the committee respectfully



FINAL SUMMARY

Knowing the steps and key elements of a legislative committee meeting can ease anxiety.

- Effective testimony is clear, concise, impactful, and respectful
- Practice and preparation can help conquer fear of public speaking
- Nonverbal communication is just as important as what you say
- Practice testifying and receive constructive feedback