

Providing Testimony for the Indiana General Assembly



Why do legislators hear testimony?



- Public testimony gives you direct access to decision makers and a chance to influence votes.
- It's an opportunity to share your organization's perspective, back it up with data and stories, and show legislators how the legislation affects their constituents.



Who do Legislators want to hear from?

- People with lived experience
- Experts with data
- Businesses who work with/on behalf of an affected population.
- Organizations that will be impacted by legislation
- People like YOU who care about an issue!

What do they want to hear?

- Your stories or the stories of people you know.
- Important data regarding the bill.
- Your expertise
- Your experiences
- The impact this legislation has on you or the people you serve.

Sign up to testify

1

Check the committee calendar

- Visit www.iga.in.gov for the Indiana General Assembly website.
- Find your bill and see when and if it is scheduled for a committee hearing



2

Sign up online

- Testimony sign up opens at 12:01AM on the day of the committee hearing.
- Visit the committee page on the Indiana General Assembly website

3

Complete the form

- Enter your name and organization (if applicable)
- Identify which bill you want to speak on
- Identify your position on the bill: Support - Oppose - Neutral

4

Attend the hearing

- Arrive early and wait for your name to be called.

Didn't sign up online?

You can still sign up in person to testify

- Arrive early to the committee hearing
- Pick up a testimony slip at the front of the room or look for tablets to check in.
- Fill out and return testimony slip to be added to the speaker list.

When it is your turn to testify...

Address the committee chair, members, and introduce yourself

"Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is ____ and I am ____ (job title) at ____ (your organization). I am asking you to (support/oppose) _____."

Share why this is an important issue for you.

- Include a personal story either about yourself or someone you know.
- Add data or other information that helps make your case.

Discuss the impact of the bill

Tell legislators why you feel this bill would help or hurt the issue and why you feel legislators should vote in support or opposition.

Close with a thank you and a reminder of your stance.

"Thank you for considering my opinion on this important issue and I hope that you will vote in support (or opposition) of this bill."

Questions

The committee chair will ask committee members if they have any questions. Wait for questions -- if none, you can go back to your seat.



Tips for successful testimony

Keep it short!

To keep hearings from running too long, testimony is often limited to five minutes per person or less!

Be on time!

Committee members will move onto other bills without hearing your testimony if you aren't there and ready.

Be patient!

In some cases when many people show up to testify, you may be waiting a while before it is your turn.

Follow up!

Follow up with lawmakers via email with your contact information so that they are reminded of your position.

Stay in touch!

Keep dialogue open with legislators and continue serving as a resource, even if they don't vote in agreement with you today.

