

# Giving Effective Legislative Testimony

- Show up on time. Bills are not always taken up in the order they are listed on the agenda.
- Register to testify as soon as you arrive at the hearing (all House, and most Senate Committees have electronic registration).
- Be aware of time limits (most committees limit testimony to 2 or 3 minutes).
- Prepare your remarks in writing, but don't read your testimony.
- Always start your testimony with “Mr. Chairman/Madame Chair and members, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm here to support/oppose S.B/H.B. ####.”
- Use a real life story.
- Keep it simple and avoid jargon.
- Attend or view online prior hearings to see how the hearing process works for that particular committee.
- Remember your mission and don't get sidetracked.
- Tell the committee members specifically what you want (e.g. vote “yes” or “no” or amend the bill to do “x” . . .)
- Use visual aids if possible. Bring at least 20 copies of any written materials.
- It is not personal unless you make it so.
- It's their game and their rules. Witnesses do not pose questions to members of the committee.
- Be polite.
- Practice saying, “I don't know, but I will get back to you.”