

TESTIMONY FORMAT SHEET

When you come to the State Capitol in Salem, you should be prepared to speak briefly (2-3 minutes maximum) and also bring about 15 copies of the written version of your comments (see below). A 2-3 minute testimony fits on one page single-spaced or two pages double-spaced. Please remember that unless you have approval of your local League president or the LWVOR Action Chair, you are presenting your testimony as an individual, not as a representative of the League.

Heading

TO: (Full name of Committee, *e.g.*, Judiciary Committee-Civil Law)
FROM: (Your full name)
DATE: (Hearing date)
RE: Testimony in support (or opposition) to HB (or SB) XXXX

Testimony Content

First Paragraph: Introduction

1. Who you are
2. Why you're here and why you care
3. State your position on the bill

Second Paragraph: Body

4. Major Points/Concerns (limit to 3)
5. Examples of the potential impact of the bill
6. Data/Information supporting examples

Third Paragraph: Conclusion

7. Thank the committee for the opportunity to testify
8. Restate position on bill (*e.g.*, I urge you to oppose HB XXXX)

TESTIMONY ETIQUETTE

1. Email your testimony, preferably attached in a PDF or DOC to the committee administrator three hours in advance, if possible.
2. Include the following in the body of your email:
 - a) Bill number to which the files relates;
 - b) Name of committee hearing the bill
 - c) Topic;
 - d) Date of the hearing; and
 - e) Name of person who is testifying.

Make Your Voice Heard at the Legislature

3. Come 15 to 20 minutes prior to the start of the hearing.
4. Bring copies of your written testimony. (See the committee agenda or ask the committee administrator to find out how many copies to bring. Fifteen is a safe amount.)
5. Sign up to testify on sheet at back of the room. Be sure to double-check that you are signing up to testify on the correct bill. The bill number will be written at the top of the sheet.
6. When the chair calls you to testify:
 - a. Give your extra copies of testimony to committee staff sitting at the computer.
 - b. Be seated at the desk and adjust the microphone.
 - c. Wait for the chair to acknowledge you and then begin speaking.
7. Be considerate and aware of the overall timeline of the hearing. If it looks like it will run late and/or if there are many people waiting to testify after you, be prepared to condense your testimony to fit a tight schedule. For example, if others before you have already made one of your three points, just make the other two.

ORAL TESTIMONY GUIDELINES

- Begin by saying the following:

*“Mr./Madam Chair, Members of the Committee, my name is _____
and I represent _____
(or I am a volunteer with _____).…”*

- Begin presenting your written testimony, but try not to read it word for word.
- When members ask you questions, address your response to the Chair and then to the member asking the question. For example:

“Mr./Madam Chair, Representative Devlin, the answer to your question is _____”

- Relax and enjoy yourself. Remember, you have an absolute right to share your opinions in this setting. The purpose of a hearing is to HEAR people's analysis of a proposed piece of legislation - organizations, citizens, experts, etc. Keep in mind that you've elected these legislators to represent **your** views. They need your input and appreciate the time you've taken to testify.