



Advocacy Toolkit

Tips for Drafting Effective Testimony

The committee process is one of the most important steps in the legislative process, and the General Assembly welcomes feedback from the public during committee hearings. If you are interested in formally weighing in on a piece of legislation, you would do so during the committee process.

Committee Notices

Committees send out public notices of their meetings, which will list the time, place, and agenda of the committee meeting. Notices are sent via email (you can request that the chair's office add you to the committee distribution list) and posted on the committee's webpage. Notices are typically sent on Friday of the week preceding the committee hearing, but notice *can* occur on a shorter timeframe.

Submitting Testimony

There are two ways to submit testimony to a committee: in person and written only. So first, you'll want to decide how you're testifying.

Regardless of whether you intend to speak, the committee asks that you provide a written record of your testimony. You will also be asked to fill out a witness slip before testifying, which lists contact information and notes on the bill you're interested in. This serves both record keeping and organizational purposes for the committee.

Testimony and a completed witness slip must be submitted to the chair's office at least 24 hours in advance of the committee hearing. While this deadline is not typically enforced, it is a courtesy to submit your testimony in a timely manner, particularly for a bill that may draw many witnesses. Committee staff need time to prepare submitted testimony for hearings, and you may be asked to submit your testimony as "written only" or participate in another hearing if the deadline has passed. All submitted testimony is placed on the committee website for public viewing. There are no virtual testimony options, but committees are streamed via [The Ohio Channel](#) and video recorded.

Writing Testimony

Testimony should be a short summary of your position on a bill. Here are few tips to help in drafting:

1. **Format your testimony:** Testimony should be written in formal language and addressed to committee leadership. Committee membership is posted on the House and Senate websites, so you can find the committee you're testifying before and fill in the appropriate information for your testimony.
2. **Keep it short:** Committee members often hear hours of testimony – take time to explain your point but get straight to it. Generally, one or two pages of written testimony is a good benchmark. Committee members will also have the opportunity to ask you questions, and you may elaborate on your points further.
3. **Use examples or data, if applicable:** Concrete examples or data are great ways to illustrate your points. If you can incorporate this information, it makes your testimony more impactful.
4. **Know your audience:** Be sure to familiarize yourself with the issues and causes that are important to the committee you are testifying before. You can preempt some questions from committee members by getting to know their stances on the issues that you're presenting.

Now that your testimony is drafted, you can submit it to the chair's office at the email listed in the committee notice.
