

How to Testify

- Legislators like to hear from their constituents. Citizens may contact any legislator in person, by telephone, email, or mail to make their opinions known on proposed legislation. If a citizen attempts to influence legislation on behalf of an organization or others, she or he must register as a lobbyist.
- Written testimony may be submitted and sent (via mail or email) to any Senator, Representative, or Committee. If you are going to be testifying orally, it is best to NOT read your written testimony verbatim. Submit your written testimony to each committee member and summarize your main points when orally testifying. House committees usually only allow three minutes per person to testify. Senate committees tend to allow more time. It is always wise to be as brief and succinct as possible. Also, be prepared to answer questions.
- When you arrive at a committee hearing to testify, there will be a sign-in sheet. Be sure to place your name on this sheet. Do not be upset if you do not get called. Due to a variety of reasons, even if you sign up to testify, you may not get a chance to speak. This is why written testimony is valuable to distribute to committee members.
- Legislators are known to display all sorts of behaviors during testimony (walking out, talking to other legislators, taking a phone call, sleeping, etc.) Do not take any of these behaviors personally.
- The chair of the committee is the leader in the room. Defer to this person before speaking and always use respectful language during your testimony.
- Start your oral testimony by acknowledging the chair and committee (*Example: Good Afternoon Mr. Chairman or Madame Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee*).
- If communicating by mail, please use the following format:

The Honorable (name of Senator/Representative)
State Capitol
200 East Colfax
Denver, CO 80203

Dear (Senator or Representative name),