

# Tips for Testifying Before a Legislative Committee



## Check The Schedule

Check the legislative website, with your legislative liaison, and with legislative staff to know when a bill is scheduled to be heard. Be advised- schedules can change quickly, especially in the final days of a legislative session.



## Know the Process and Players

Before testifying, know who is sponsoring the bill, who supports or opposes the bill and why. Be familiar with the committee chairs, committee members, and legislative staff. Let the sponsor of the bill or key legislators know beforehand you are testifying on the bill.



## Know the Purpose of Your Testimony

Understand why you are testifying. Are you there to persuade, dissuade, provide expertise, or delay action on a bill? Know how to separate out the important points of your testimony to ensure they are heard.



1. Thank the committee for the opportunity to speak.



2. Identify yourself and your organization.



3. Clearly state your position and what you support or oppose in the proposed bill .



4. Refer to the bill by the bill number and be sure you are using the most recent version of the bill.



5. Summarize your recommendations first, then add explanations.

6. Wrap it up with a closing statement. Ask lawmakers to vote for or against the measure.



## Essential Components of Testimony

## IMPORTANT

Triple check your facts and figures and be prepared to explain how you collected your data, especially if you have staff prepare remarks for you. Remember that what you say will become part of the public record. A person who knowingly misrepresents any fact when testifying in a committee meeting or in communications to a legislator preliminary to that meeting is guilty of a misdemeanor per *Nevada Revised Statutes 218E.085(2)*.





# Nevada Legislature Website

[www.leg.state.nv.us](http://www.leg.state.nv.us)

## A few more tips...

- When you arrive, fill out the sign-in sheet and indicate if you wish to testify.
- At the appropriate time, go to the witness table, turn on the microphone, and introduce yourself: “Chair, and members of the committee, my name is . . .”
- Explain your position clearly and simply, and do not repeat earlier testimony.
- Be brief (testimony may be limited to 3 minutes).
- If you have written materials to present, bring enough copies for the committee members, for the committee secretary, other staff, and members of the public.
- If you believe a change in the law is needed or some other action should be taken by the committee, be specific about your recommendation (for example, written material explaining changes to wording in the law are encouraged).
- Be ready to answer questions from the committee members. If you don't know, say so. Say you will follow up with the information, and do so.
- Check the committee deadline for providing a written copy of your testimony to the committee secretary (some committees require all written material to be submitted electronically 24 hours in advance).

## PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The Legislature is pleased to make reasonable accommodations for members of the public who are disabled and wish to attend interim committee meetings. If special arrangements are necessary, please contact the Legislative Counsel Bureau as soon as possible before the meeting. You may call the committee secretary at the number on the webpage for the committee, or you may notify the appropriate division of the LCB, in writing, at:

Legislative Building  
401 South Carson Street  
Carson City, NV 89701

## RESEARCH DIVISION

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