



## **Guide to Crafting and Submitting Testimony to Legislative Committees** April 2021

Due to pandemic restrictions, public hearings before committees of the Maine Legislature are being held via Zoom. Instructions below for testifying “live” indicate via Zoom.

### **Submitting testimony**

[Legislature site](#) for signing up to testify live (via Zoom) or submitting written testimony

[Legislature site](#) with examples of written testimony

**Committee holding public hearings on health care bills:** [Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee](#) (HCFIS). Senate Chair Heather Sanborn, House Chair Denise Tepler.

Live testimony at public hearings is usually limited to three minutes per person so that all can be heard. If you plan to testify live (via Zoom), we strongly suggest practicing and timing your testimony so you’ll be more comfortable speaking during the hearing and will stay within the three minute timeframe.

### **Crafting Your Testimony**

#### **Introduction:**

Greet committee chair(s) by title and name. State your name, where you live, and

your organization/expertise (if applicable for the hearing):

*“Good morning, Senator/Representative [NAME] and members of the [NAME] Committee. My name is [NAME], I live in [TOWN], and (if applicable) I am [YOUR TITLE AND ORGANIZATION]”*

**Clearly present your position:**

*“I support” or “I oppose” followed by bill number and title.*

**Say why you have taken your position:**

Share your personal story clearly and honestly.

This is often the most powerful and persuasive aspect of public hearings. Stories ground policy in real life and humanize the issue. It is easier for people to grasp concepts and retain information about provisions in a bill tied to real experiences. With a story, the issue is not about candidates or parties, the issue is about someone – like the person you are engaging – who will be helped by the bill. Stories can open doors and connect people to common ground.

Include factual arguments and/or data as evidence to support your position, but *only* if you are well versed in the information.

The committee may ask questions and you should be comfortable and confident that you can respond or offer to get back with an answer.

**Ask for specific action:**

*“I urge you to vote in favor of...” or “against” [BILL #]*

**Thank the committee** for the opportunity to speak and offer to answer questions they may have.