

# How to Testify!

## Understand the fundamentals:

Identify the House or Senate Bill that resonates with you, ensuring you note the correct number format (HB for House bills, SB for Senate bills). The legislature's official website (<http://www.kslegislature.org>) is the most reliable source for an updated list of pending bills in the current session.

Once you have the bill number, determine the committee responsible for hearing testimony about the bill, usually found under the "Current Sponsor" tab. Explore the committee's page for the posted agenda. If your bill is not listed, contact the committee's secretary (contact details available on the committee's website) to inquire about the schedule for accepting/hearing testimony on that particular issue.

## Drafting your testimony:

With the bill, committee, and hearing date in mind, begin crafting your testimony. Even if you plan to testify in person, submitting a written version is mandatory. Typically presented as a letter (Word provides templates for ease), the written testimony starts with an introduction stating your stance as a proponent or opponent and why you are passionate about the issue. The second paragraph provides supporting examples, such as personal stories, facts, or perspectives, while the third paragraph summarizes and restates your recommendation. Testimonies can vary in length, but clarity and coherency enhance the likelihood of legislators reading them.

*Optional testimony letter outline:*

1. Introduction with proponent/opponent statement
2. Support in the form of examples (stories, facts, perspectives, etc.)
3. Summary and closing
4. Submission:

After completing your testimony, submission procedures differ by committee. Testimony is typically due 24 hours before the hearing. Some committees require emailed .PDF submissions, while others may ask for 10 to 50 paper copies. Check the committee's website or contact the committee assistant for specific instructions. If paper copies are necessary and you're not in Topeka, inquire with your representative's administrative assistant about printing services. Alternatively, advocacy groups often collect and submit testimony on behalf of contributors. Email your testimony to the committee assistant, specifying if you plan to testify in person or virtually. If attending in person, your name will be added to the docket; if virtual, they will send a link to join the online platform. During the committee hearing, they will call your name, allowing you to express your thoughts within any time limits specified.

## **FAQs:**

### **How do I find out when a committee meeting is scheduled? Who do I contact if I would like to testify at the meeting?**

- Kansas has an open legislative process. All committee action on bills and amendments is conducted in open session. The public is invited to attend any of the meetings. Detailed information regarding legislative committees, including committee assignments, schedules, and minutes, is available on the Kansas Legislature website.
- To testify at a hearing on any bill, you should contact the committee secretary whose name and telephone number also appear with the Committee Agenda. When making an appointment with the secretary, identify your concerns.