

Tips on writing and delivering testimony at Committee Hearings:

- **Before the Committee Meeting:**
 - Find out when and where your bill(s) will be heard. You may do so by checking with Senate and House committee staff and by looking on the internet for daily committee agendas when the legislature is in session.
 - Plan your testimony. You will be more effective getting your message across if you have prepared your testimony in writing for distribution to committee members. You can then orally summarize your remarks to conserve time.
- **At the Committee Meeting:**
 - Be on time. Find out when and where the meeting is to be held, which can be found on committee agendas.
 - Be sure to sign your name when you arrive and indicate whether you intend to testify. Sign-up sheets are available at all meetings.
 - Wait your turn. The Chair will announce when a particular bill is coming before the committee for discussion. The bill's sponsor is usually the first to speak. After their testimony, the Chair then may ask for testimony from proponents and opponents.
 - All testimony and all committee discussion must be addressed through the Chair.
 - Begin your testimony by addressing the Chair and committee members. State your name, where you live, and why you are there. For example: "Mr. (or Madam) Chair, members of the Committee, my name is Pat Q. Public and I'm from Columbia. I am/am not in favor of this bill because..."
 - Be courteous and brief in your language and address. Try not to repeat testimony offered by previous witnesses. Be prepared to answer questions. Respond to the questions as best you can. Do not be embarrassed if you do not have a specific answer.
 - Do not be nervous as there is no right or wrong way to testify. Legislators are your friends and neighbors elected to represent you – they want to hear what you have to say.
 - Demonstrations, applause or addressing committee members or other witnesses in the audience is prohibited.
 - Do not be offended if legislators come and go during the meeting. They have other commitments, including need at times to present information in other meetings occurring simultaneously.
- **After you testify:**
 - Do not expect immediate committee action. The bill may be held until another day. You are welcome to stay after the discussion on your bill and listen until the end of the committee meeting.
 - If the vote on your bill is postponed, and the Chair does not announce a date for further consideration, check back with committee staff about future scheduling.



P.O. Box 20998
Charleston, SC 29413
843-720-1423
www.aclusc.org