

HOW TO TESTIFY BEFORE A COMMITTEE

Before the Hearing

- Plan and prepare your testimony.
- Determine where and when your bill(s) will be heard.
- Do research on the group you will be speaking to
 - Things they may have in common
 - What will appeal to them

At the Committee Meeting

- ARRIVE EARLY!
- Sign-in when you arrive and indicate whether or not you intend to testify.
 - Sign-in sheets are at the entrance of the room.
- Give your business card/name to the recorder sitting at side of the room. You could include fact sheets.
- Wait for the Chair to call you. Then, begin by addressing the Chair, stating your name, who you represent and the position you are taking.
 - "Mr. Chair, members of the Committee, good morning. My name is Robert Johnson from Reno, Nevada. I am representing the Nevada FFA Association and I am in support of this bill because....."
- Explain your reasoning for your support or opposition of the bill(s).
 - If you support it, which parts do you agree with and why.
 - If you oppose it, offer suggestions to improve it.
- In closing, sum up your main points and tell the group what action you would like them to take. Be sure to end with thanking the Committee and the Chair.
- All testimony and committee discussion must be addressed through the Chair.
 - To answer a committee member's question, you would say, "Madam Chair, through you to Senator Sampson, yes I do approve of the changes to the bill that were previously discussed."
- You may have to answer question so be prepared for giving additional information or clarification.
- DOs
 - Be courteous and polite
 - Be brief, simple and to the point (maximum of five minutes)
 - Presenting yourself
 - Act confident and knowledgeable
 - Keep eye contact and watch your body language
 - Speak from the heart with a professional attitude.
- DON'Ts
 - Repeat previous testimony
 - Demonstrate, applaud or address the committee from the audience
 - Get mad, personal and/or defensive
 - Prepare a written piece listing every point possible
 - Make threats
 - Continue to speak if the Chair attempts to cut you off.
 - Use fancy language, acronyms or jargon.

After Testimony

- Thank the Chair and the committee
- Don't expect immediate committee action
- You can choose to stay and listen to the meeting (if leaving, do so quietly)
- Make sure to follow up if there were any unanswered questions
- E-mail a quick thank-you and any follow up information to the Chair and/or person aiding you in organizing the testimony.