

Public Testimony 101

- Research the committee prior to testimony
 - Who sits on the committee?
 - Does a legislator from your area serve on this particular committee?
 - Speak to members before the committee meeting!!!

- Prepare your remarks prior to the meeting.

- Avoid Duplication.

- Public testimony is an effective way to help legislators understand how an issue, policy or situation affects people across the state, presents difficulties or addresses needs.

- Most committees will limit the time witnesses have, so expect to have three minutes
 - Be brief and to the point. Often there are other witnesses present, and the Committee will appreciate your cooperation in allowing everyone to have an opportunity to be heard.

- Making your remarks:
 - Begin by introducing yourself to the chair and committee members and stating your purpose. For example, "Mr. or Madam Chair and members of the committee, I am _____ from Clearwater, Florida. I support/oppose this bill because . . ."
 - In your opening remarks, make it clear whether you are representing other citizens or a separate group.
 - Be brief and be sure your remarks are clear. Avoid being too technical and do not repeat previously made remarks. You do not need to be nervous or worried about how you present your testimony.
 - Be prepared for questions and comments from committee members. These are designed to gain additional information, but don't answer if you are not sure of the answer. Tell the members you will send a written answer to the committee, and then follow through.
 - Restrict yourself to your testimony. Abstain from other overt demonstrations such as clapping, cheering, booing, etc.

- Smile! You're on television.

- Slow down and breathe.