



Thinking about testifying at the legislative hearing but have never done it before? This is what will happen:

- 1) Frequently, testimony for our bills will be before the Children and Family Law Committee in the House of Representatives or its equivalent in the Senate. These committees are small and typically consist of less than 20 members. Occasionally, you may testify before the whole House with 400 members, or the entire Senate which consists of 20 members.
- 2) When you come in, you will sign up if you want to talk, and register if you'll be speaking for or against the bill.
- 3) After introducing the bill and committee (if there is one), the hearing will be opened to the public, and when it's your turn, they'll call you to speak. There may or may not be a microphone on the table.
- 4) You should introduce yourself to the Committee Members (or Representatives or Senators) stating your name and what town you're from. You can address them as Committee Member, or Representative if you're in the House of Representatives or Senator if you're in the Senate. If you know who the Chairperson is you can call them Chairman or Chairwoman. At the end of the day, these are formalities though, and if you botch it, it's really ok and no one will hold it against you. Remember, that while NH has many legislators that have served for a long-time, as we have 420 legislators (the 4th largest legislative body in the world), many legislators have not testified before the legislature before becoming Senators or Reps. Ultimately, they're your friends and neighbors and the reason you're there is far more important.
- 5) You should come with at least 2 copies of your testimony- one for you to read and one for the record. Bringing a second copy will have it be compiled with the rest of the testimony on a bill and legislators can later go back and reference it when they're making decisions. If you'd like to bring one for each committee member, that can be a nice touch but it's not necessary.
- 6) Your testimony should be around 3 minutes long, give or take some time. Generally if there are lots of people wanting to speak, it's good to keep it shorter, but if there's not many people you have some more leeway.

7) You can use the template letters we post for the bills as a starting point and cater the message based on your experience, or write your own completely.

8) After your testimony, you may or may not be asked questions. When you're finished, you can get up, and there is usually a legislative aid who can collect your extra copy to be submitted in the record.

9) You can leave after your testimony, or stick around.