

Tips and Tools

Tips and tools for giving a legislative testimony

Most testimonies are 2-5 minutes and often that is considered long! While a meeting with your legislator may be longer, a brief, concise and straightforward approach is highly recommended.

Clearly understand the overall concept and details of the proposed legislation

- Have a general position (support for, or against legislation)
- Point out ways to improve the legislation
Example: "We support HB 2002 allowing youth to remain in their foster home after age 18 and earning a high school diploma or GED, but the grade point average to retain eligibility should be a 2.0 instead of a 3.5."
- FACT CHECK statistics!

Always be polite, even if you are unsure who you are talking to, or do not like their decision

- Address legislators as "Madame Chair," or Yes Sir, I believe..."
- Remember, no one wins everything all the time. Even when it might seem like defeat, there is always something to salvage for the overall movement. Remain polite, and positive, you may have a new ally for the next time or next issue.
- "It ain't over til it's over" – Yogi Berra

Only share what is helpful to advancing the cause

- Only share what you are comfortable with people knowing
- Review your testimony with others that know you, and someone you trust
- It's okay to answer a question with boundaries
Example: "Thank you for the question Senator. I'm not really comfortable talking about my personal mental health, but I can tell you that I did not receive the support I needed."



Remember The Mockingbird Rule

- *“If you work hard, prepare and speak from the heart, it will be perfect for today.”*
- Evaluate your work not on the results that others control, but rather on your efforts and commitment to the task.

You always have the 3 R's

- Right to speak-up
- Responsibility to speak-up
- Respectfully speak-up so as to advance the effort

Sharing personal information and engaging in advocacy efforts can bring up strong emotions

- Have a plan in place to be with someone before, during and after the event
- De-briefing is important and best accompanied by good food and good company

