



GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE TESTIMONY IN TEXAS LEGISLATURE HEARINGS

Effective testimony before Texas legislative committees requires thorough preparation, established credibility, and strategic delivery. Your goal: provide relevant, helpful information that captures committee attention while advancing your position in the Texas legislative process.

BEFORE THE HEARING

Preparation Essentials

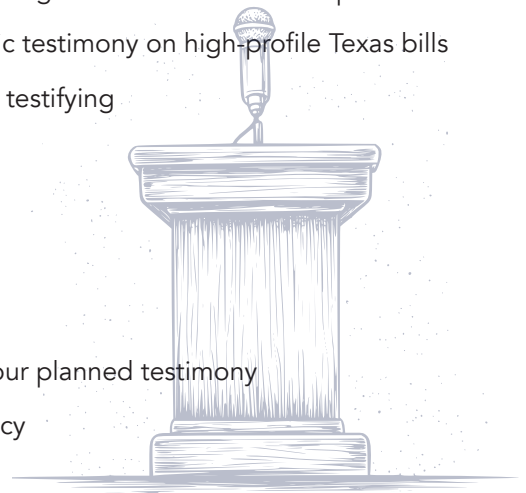
- **Evaluate relevance:** Ensure your testimony addresses the specific purpose of the Texas legislative hearing
- **Study format:** Watch previous Texas committee hearings online through the Texas Legislature Online portal to understand the committee's style and expectations
 - [Texas House Examples](#)
 - [Texas Senate Examples](#)
- **Know your audience:** Research Texas legislators' positions and voting records to identify allies and opponents
- **Learn by example:** Note effective techniques and common pitfalls from other witnesses
- **Master your content:** Prepare for challenging questions with thorough knowledge of Texas law and policy implications

Procedural Requirements

- **Register promptly:** Complete electronic witness registration at kiosks in the Texas Capitol hallway before the hearing begins ([watch here to see how to register](#))
- **Respect time limits:** Typically, 2-3 minutes plus Q&A; don't exceed allotted time
- **Arrive early:** Allow sufficient time for parking, security screening, and witness registration at the Texas Capitol
- **Plan for waiting:** Be prepared for potentially long delays, especially for public testimony on high-profile Texas bills
- **Communicate changes:** Inform the committee clerk if you must leave before testifying

Strategic Outreach

- **Support coordination:** Inform bill author's staff when testifying favorably
- **Opposition courtesy:** Alert author's staff when testifying against their bill
- **Local connection:** Inform your local Texas representative or Senator about your planned testimony
- **Coalition alignment:** Coordinate with allied organizations to avoid redundancy



TESTIMONY

- **Supplement writing:** Provide written materials to reinforce verbal points
- **Focus message:** Prepare concise presentation within the committee time constraints
- **Practice delivery:** Ensure conversational tone whether you are reading a prepared speech or speaking from the heart

DURING YOUR TESTIMONY

Making a Strong First Impression

- **Project confidence:** Use appropriate body language, attire, grooming, and eye contact
- **Address properly:** "Good [time], [Mr./Madam] Chair [surname], Vice Chair [surname], Committee Members" if time permits
- **Introduce clearly:** "[Name], [title], testifying on behalf of [self/organization]"
- **State position:** "Speaking [for/against/on] [bill number/issue]"
- **Request action:** "I hope you will [support/oppose/amend] [legislation/report]"

Delivering Effective Oral Testimony

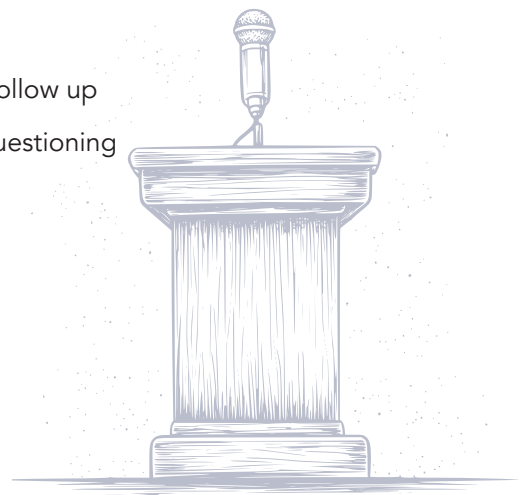
- **Establish credibility:** Briefly reference relevant experience or expertise
- **Provide rationale:** Share relevant, helpful information supporting your position
- **Focus purpose:** Align testimony with the hearing's specific topic – do not mention other bills
- **Cite sources:** Support position with credible research and expert opinions
- **Build progressively:** Reference or respectfully rebut previous testimony
- **Reference materials:** Direct attention to supporting written documentation
- **Respect timer:** When time expires, finish your thought and stop

Answering Questions Effectively

- **Prepare thoroughly:** Anticipate that you may be asked questions
- **Listen actively:** Focus completely on each question before responding
- **Answer directly:** Provide succinct, relevant responses without tangents
- **Admit limitations:** Acknowledge when you don't have information; offer to follow up
- **Maintain composure:** Stay respectful and professional even during hostile questioning

Concluding Your Testimony

- **Exit gracefully:** Maintain dignity and professionalism
- **Thank briefly:** Simple "Thank you" or "Thank you for your time"
- **Avoid elaboration:** Resist adding unnecessary comments



AFTER THE HEARING

Follow-up Actions

- **Reinforce message:** Visit staff members to emphasize key points
- **Deliver promises:** Provide any information requested during testimony
- **Express appreciation:** Thank everyone who assisted your efforts

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Reading the Room

- **Recognize fatigue:** Consider registering without testifying after a long session
- **Note momentum:** Observe when Texas legislators seem ready to report favorably
- **Avoid redundancy:** Skip testimony when you have nothing substantial to add

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Managing Nervousness

- **Practice thoroughly:** Rehearse testimony multiple times before the hearing to ensure your speech fits within the time constraints and to increase confidence and familiarity with the content
- **Self-evaluate:** Record yourself to identify improvement opportunities
- **Focus expertise:** Concentrate on your knowledge and passion for the subject
- **Remember purpose:** Committee members genuinely want constituent input
- **Breathe deliberately:** Take a calming breath before beginning

Sample Testimony Outline

1. **Introduction (15 sec):** Identify yourself and organization
2. **Position statement (15 sec):** Clearly state stance on Texas legislation
3. **Personal connection (30 sec):** Explain your relevance to the issue
4. **Key points (60 sec):** Present strongest supporting arguments
5. **Specific request (30 sec):** State exactly what action you want
6. **Conclusion (5 sec):** Thank the committee

Remember: These guidelines are flexible. Listen, observe, and adapt to each unique situation.

