

TIPS FOR TESTIFYING BEFORE A LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Location and Parking

Before traveling to Columbus, be sure to find out where the Committee is holding its hearing. Although members of the House of Representatives have offices in the Riffe Center at 77 South High Street, committees for the House of Representatives meet across the street in the State House. Senate committees usually meet in the Senate Annex building connected to the State House by the Atrium on the east side of the building.

A call to the OML legislative staff will save you some time in finding out in which hearing room the Committee will meet.

A parking garage is located under the State House and is accessed from Broad Street (east bound), Third Street (south bound) or State Street (west bound). Additional garages are located under or south of the City Center and accessed from Third Street or Rich Street (west bound) or Main Street (east bound).

* Legislators always appreciate the time and input from local officials to help them craft legislation they are working on, both in a committee hearing setting and one-on-one back in the communities they represent.

* State policy makers value the experiences of a community leader or elected official related to a topic being addressed, circumstances unique to a municipality that could be effected by a legislative proposal or unforeseen consequences on the local level not being considered which may result if a particular piece of legislation is enacted.

* Municipal officials should take the time to remind state legislators of the critical role cities and villages play in the economic vitality of the state as a whole. When a municipal official is testifying on an issue or discussing matters related to jobs or employment issues and if part of the conversation highlights a number of jobs gained or lost in that community, the municipal official should relate those statistics in a way relevant to state legislators. As part of the information presented, municipal officials should convey that any new jobs brought to that municipality is a key contributor to the state's economic recovery or that losses in employment in the city or village is a direct drag to the state's progress. The message is to affirm that financial investments by the state in its municipalities directly affects the ability of Ohio to be a place where a strong workforce has an interest in residing and where current and future businesses can be successful.

* Although legislators appreciate being presented with the "big picture" when talking about issues during committee meetings or in general, when talking about budget, tax or finance issues, municipal officials should include figures specifically related to their city or village.

* By sponsoring legislation, legislators are usually seeking a solution to a real or perceived problem. If a local official is providing testimony as an opponent, it is more constructive if the testimony provides an alternative solution or approach to address the concern, instead of only sharing with committee members why you are against something.

* Committee chairman generally request two things of witnesses prior to delivering testimony. First, witnesses are asked to fill out a "witness slip" and return it to the chairman or their aide before the beginning of the committee hearing, identifying who they are and what legislation they are presenting

testimony on. Witness slips can be filled out directly before committee meetings and are usually available in the committee hearing room or can be accessed through the committee chair's legislative webpage. Secondly, chairman request that a copy of the written testimony to be delivered to their committee be submitted to the chairman's office 24 hours before the committee is set to meet. Email addresses and other information for each committee and its chairman are listed on the Ohio General Assembly's website at www.legislature.ohio.gov.

* Testimony is always delivered "through the Chairman", meaning witnesses are asked to address the Chairman first when speaking to the committee, either when delivering testimony or responding to a legislator's question.

* Brevity is important. It is recommended that testimony be limited to 5-10 minutes in length. If testimony is too long and detail oriented, the presenter runs the risk of losing the attention of the committee members and weakening the effectiveness of the opportunity.

* If legislators have questions regarding specifics to the testimony presented, those details can be addressed in follow-up questions by legislators, after the testimony.

* Municipal officials can go to the Ohio Municipal League's website, www.omlohio.org, each Monday to find an updated schedule of committee hearings for bills related to municipalities, for that week. Committee schedules include information such as which hearing in the process is being held (sponsor, proponent, opponent or interested party), the hearing room location and times for the meetings to convene.



LEGISLATIVE CONTACT NUMBERS

Bill & Legislative Info: 614-466-7154
 Senate Clerk’s Office: 614-466-4900
 House Clerk’s Office: 614-466- 3357
 To find your legislator and/or get copies of a bill
www.legislature.state.oh.us/

Mailing Address for Senators:

The Honorable
 Ohio Senate
 State House
 Columbus, Ohio 43215

Senate Republicans e-mail:
 E-mail: SD(2 digit district #)@mailr.sen.state.oh.us
 Example: SD03@mailr.sen.state.oh.us
 Senate Democrats e-mail:
 E-mail: SD (2 digit district #)@maild.sen.state.oh.us
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Mailing Address for Representatives:

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 Ohio House of Representatives
 77 South High Street
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TIPS FOR TESTIFYING

HELPFUL HINTS TO MAKE YOUR COMMITTEE EXPERIENCE FLAWLESS

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