



Easy Read Edition

Sharing Your Story For A Political Purpose

Part 3: Giving Testimony

Words to Know in Part 3



Legislators

A group of people who vote to make laws. Legislators are usually elected officials.



Legislative testimony

When you speak in front of legislators about a policy



Hearings

Meetings to talk about laws that might get passed.

Giving testimony



Legislators are a group of people who vote to make laws.



Legislators are usually elected officials.



They need to decide if they will vote “yes” or “no” to make new laws.

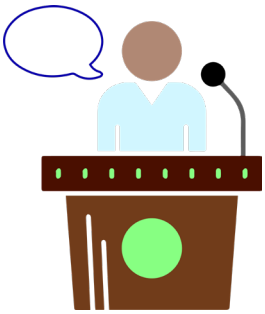


Sometimes, they want to learn more about a policy before they vote on it.

They will have meetings to learn more.



This is a chance for you to give legislative testimony.



Legislative testimony is when you speak in front of legislators about a policy.



When you give legislative testimony, you can talk to many legislators at once.



You can tell them how a law will affect you or the people you care about.



When can I give legislative testimony?



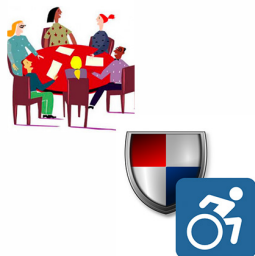
Chances to give testimony happen at meetings called hearings.



Hearings are meetings to talk about laws that might get passed.



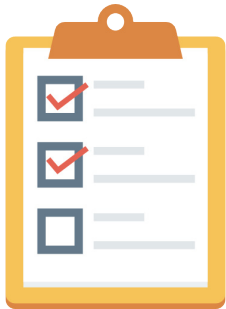
Not all hearings are open to everyday people.



Keep track of advocacy groups that care about the same policies that you do.



They can tell you about hearings that everyday people can go to.



Some hearings make you sign up to give testimony before you get there.



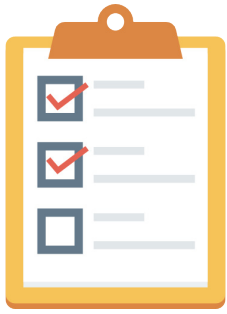
Check the information about the hearing.



There should be a phone number or email address listed.



You can contact the number or address to sign up.



Other hearings have you sign up to give testimony once you get there.

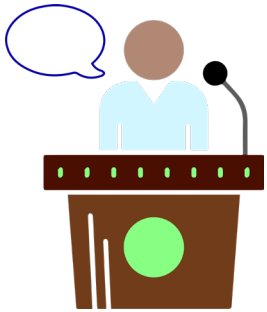


There is usually only time for a few people to speak.

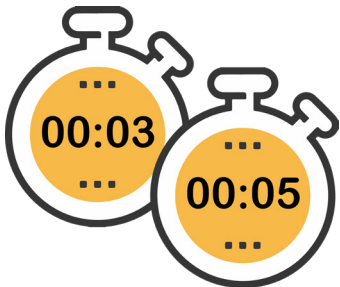


Try to get to the hearing early so you can sign up for a spot.

How should I prepare for a legislative hearing?



Be sure to prepare your testimony before you go to the hearing.

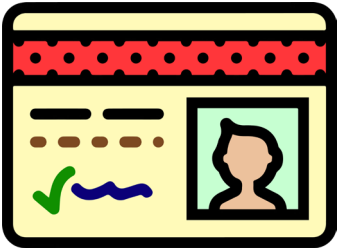


Your testimony should usually be between 3 and 5 minutes.



If you talk for too long, you might get asked to stop so the next person can talk.

Here is an outline for what should go in your legislative testimony:



1. Say your name and where you are from.



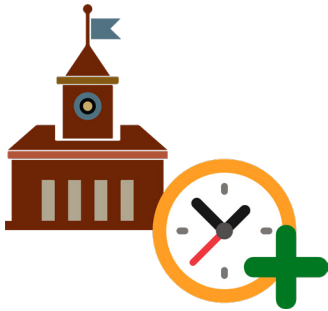
Also say if you work with any advocacy groups about this law.



2. Say the name and number of the law.



3. Say what you think about the law and share your story.



You will have a little more time than at a Town Hall.



So you can put a little more detail in your story.



4. Sum up your main points in one sentence at the end.



5. Thank the legislators for listening to you.



You should type up and print out your testimony before the hearing.



You can give each legislator a written copy.



Be sure to bring enough copies for all the legislators.



You may not have time to say everything you want in your spoken testimony.



You can add some more details in your written testimony.

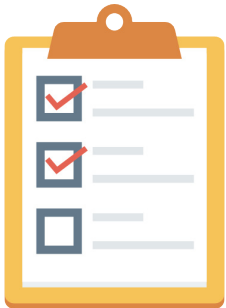


You can put things like pictures, or places to learn more about the law.

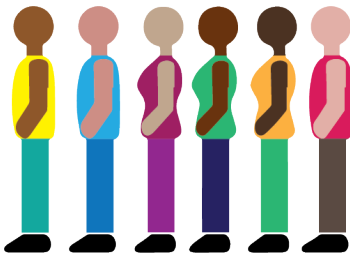
What should I expect at a legislative hearing?



Get to the hearing early.



Sign up to give your testimony if you haven't already.



Usually, people giving testimony talk in the order they signed up.



You can ask a staff member to hand out copies of your written testimony.



That way, legislators will have them before you testify.



You will testify in front of a group.



You might have to get up from your seat.



You might have to sit or stand in front of the legislators.



After your testimony, legislators may ask you questions.



Only answer questions that you know the answer to.



If you don't know the answer, don't make one up.



Say you will find the answers to those questions.



You can tell the legislators the answers in a phone call or email later.



Time might run out before you can give your testimony.



That could happen even if you signed up early.



You can still ask a staff member to give out copies of your written testimony.



The legislators will look at it after the hearing.

Scenario Script



The Beekeeping Act will get voted on by Congress next week.

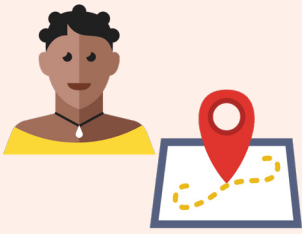


Sally goes to a hearing for the House of Representatives.



She gives testimony about the Beekeeping Act.

Here is her testimony:



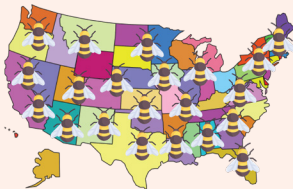
My name is Sally Jones, and I'm from Normaltown, California.



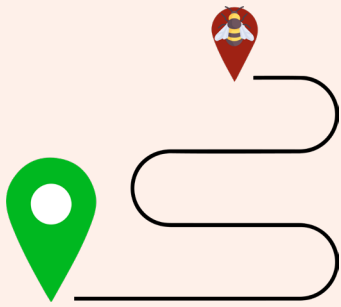
I am a member of the Stop the Bees Community Group.



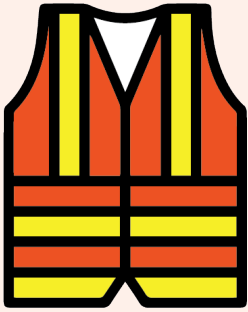
I am here to testify about the Beekeeping Act (HR-1BEE).



Right now, there are so many angry bees in cities all over the United States.



The Beekeeping Act would give money to build bee colonies away from cities.



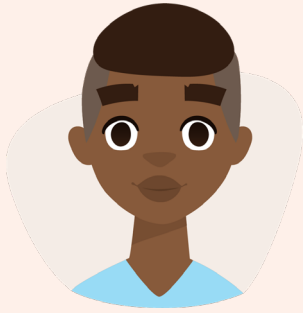
It would help make cities safe again.



All the families I know have gotten hurt by the bees.



I'd like to tell you a little bit about my family.



Last week, my nephew was stung by 57 bees.



He is still in the hospital as we speak.



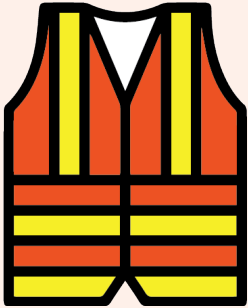
We don't have the money to pay for any more accidents like this.



The stress of living with the angry bees has made all our health worse.



I know I was afraid just to leave my house to come here and meet you.



Building these bee colonies will give us back our safety.



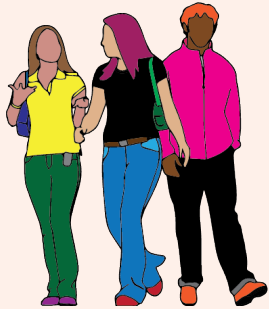
We won't need to feel afraid to leave our houses anymore.



The U.S. has spent lots more money on health care since the bees came.



So the Beekeeping Act would also save money on health care.



And the bee colony would not just help humans.



It would also help the bees.



They would finally have their own home.



Please vote "yes" on the Beekeeping Act.



Help make sure families like mine can be safe and healthy.



Thank you for your time.