



ADVOCACY 101:

TESTIFYING REMOTELY (DURING COVID-19)

Because the General Assembly is meeting remotely this session, there are special procedures in place for the public to testify.

How to give verbal testimony while the legislature is meeting remotely:

1. Each committee calendar will have a link at the bottom of the agenda which takes you to a separate webpage where you can sign up to verbally testify on a bill. The page will ask for your name, your contact information, the number of the bill that you want to testify on, and whether you support or oppose the legislation. **This MUST be done by 4pm on the day preceding the hearing for the bill.** For example, if the hearing is on a Wednesday, you must sign up to verbally testify by 4pm on Tuesday.
2. The committee hearing is entirely remote but will be broadcast online on Capitol TV. Here, you can watch and keep track of where the committee is on the agenda and who is testifying on both your bill and other pieces of legislation.
3. When it is almost your turn to testify, you will receive a call from the Statehouse informing you that you are next in line to speak.
4. Your call will be transferred, and you will hear the committee chair greet you and ask you to begin your testimony. If you have been watching the meeting online, make sure you turn off the sound. As with in-person testimony, you will usually be given only two or three minutes to testify, so be prepared!
5. All hearing recordings are posted on Capitol TV the following day, so you can always go back to review either your testimony or the testimony of others.

How to submit written testimony while the legislature is meeting remotely:

1. Submitting written testimony is an effective way to share your views on legislation with the Rhode Island General Assembly.
2. Each committee calendar will have an email address listed at the bottom of the agenda. This is the appropriate address for you to send your testimony for bills being heard in that committee.
3. In order to have your testimony distributed to committee members prior to the hearing, you should submit it at least three or more hours before the meeting begins.
4. Testimony submitted to committees of the House of Representatives will also get posted online.

Last Updated: May 2021

MORE INFO ON CIVIL LIBERTIES-RELATED LEGISLATION:

www.riaclu.org/legislation

American Civil Liberties Union
of Rhode Island
www.riaclu.org
(401) 831-7171