

You are an important part of how we make laws. Learn how to contact a legislator, participate in committee meetings, and share your opinion effectively.

## Contact a legislator

There are several ways to contact a legislator:

- Look up your legislator's contact information in our list of [legislators](#)
- Send your legislator a [comment on a bill](#)
- Schedule an appointment to visit your legislator
- Attend a legislator's town hall meeting in your district
- Write a letter to your legislator

## Participate in a committee meeting

During the legislative session, you can [sign in to a committee meeting](#) to:

- Register to testify in person or remotely
- Submit written testimony on a bill
- Ask us to note your opinion on a bill

For more information, learn how to [testify at a committee meeting](#).

### Accessibility for committee meetings

Need help with testifying or attending a committee meeting? Visit our accessibility help page for information about:

- Reasonable accommodations
- Interpretation in other languages

## Call us with questions or comments

Not sure where to start? Call us toll-free at 800-562-6000 to ask questions or leave a message about any issue.

## How your participation affects our laws

Every year, the Legislature meets to make decisions. The goal is to agree on issues affecting Washington's citizens and future. The process involves working together to make important choices that help everyone.

Legislators rely on information from staff, state agencies, and lobbyists, but what they do depends on citizens' opinions. This is exactly how the lawmaking process is supposed to work. It's based on a close, open, and positive relationship between you and your legislators.

The lawmaking process is a way for us all to contribute to our state. No matter what your opinion is, your participation makes a difference.



It is not the fact of liberty, but the way in which liberty is exercised that ultimately determines whether liberty itself survives.

— Dorothy Thompson

## Tips for participating

However you choose to get involved, follow the tips below to make the most of your participation.

### Know how the process works

To participate effectively, you'll need a basic understanding of the lawmaking process. For more information, you can:

- Call the Legislative Information Center at 360-786-7573
- Call your legislator's office
- Read the [how a bill becomes a law](#) page
- Learn [how to read a bill](#)
- Listen to or watch [videos of committee meetings on TVW](#) to see how they work

### Become an expert

Before contacting your legislator about an issue, find out:

- Who it affects
- What others think about it
- How it will affect the future

By doing research, you'll sound more confident and credible.

## Get to know your legislators

The best way to get to know your legislators is to meet them during the months between legislative sessions.

While you may have disagreements, you can still work with them and have a positive relationship. Remember: Your legislators are also your neighbors. Learn who they are as people and find things you agree on.

## Get to know legislative staff

Legislators rely on their staff for information. Staff members always appreciate new sources of clear and correct information, and your personal knowledge and experience can provide an important perspective. They can also give you current information.

There is but one element of government, and that is THE PEOPLE. From this springs all government.

— John Adams

## Work with other citizens

Many people are part of organizations that care about the same issues as you. You're much more likely to be effective by working together than by yourself.

## Be prepared and polite

No matter how often you contact your legislators, follow this advice:

- Be prepared for your discussions
- Provide written statements with verbal presentations
- Make letters and emails formal, specific, and short
- Don't get upset or argue with your legislator
- Thank them for their time and ask to speak again in the future

## Additional Information about Testifying

- Registration opens when a bill is scheduled for public hearing. Registration closes one hour before the meeting is scheduled to begin. You should receive a link within a couple minutes of registration. Watch for your link and save the email to a location you can easily find it on the day of the hearing. If you do not receive a link see the troubleshooting tips below.
- Every registrant will automatically receive a Zoom link to the meeting. Each link is unique to the registrant. Registrants are prohibited from sharing links.
  - Those who signed up to testify in person should plan to do so, and only use their link as backup.
- Do not sign up multiple testifiers by using the same email address. Only one person per email account will be let into the meeting. Even though the system allows you to sign up multiple people using the same email address, only one link will work. **Use a different email address for each testifier, including panels.**
- Remote participants may participate via Zoom or phone. See instructions above on how to connect to the meeting.
- **Be advised: Registering to testify does not guarantee you a chance to speak or speak at specific times. Time constraints, technical issues, changes to committee schedules, etc. could affect your ability to testify.**
- Remote participants will be connected to the Zoom Webinar meeting in attendee view until called to speak.
- The committee Chair may limit public testimony (for example, one minute per testifier) due to time constraints. Be prepared to testify at any point during the hearing. It is also possible you will not be recognized to testify.
- Maintain proper committee protocol, which includes waiting to be acknowledged by the committee Chair before speaking, ensuring testimony is relevant; respectful, and professional; and following rules for testimony established by the chair and the House and Senate.
  - In-person testifiers may not bring signs into the hearing rooms and must adhere to the occupancy guidelines assigned to hearing rooms.
  - Remote testifiers may include the name of their organization in the background of video feeds, but backgrounds that include a campaign sign, a slogan, or any other material that is campaign-related, offensive, or otherwise defamatory will not be permitted.
- **Legislative committee and technical staff are unable to assist with any individual connection, Zoom link, or other technical issue you may experience.** Please see instructions document for tips on how to address any common link or other technical issues.
- **Anyone who fails to follow the rules for testimony established by the committee Chair and the House and Senate forfeits their opportunity to testify.**

*If you are a person with a disability and need a special accommodation, please contact the House at (360) 786-7271, or the Senate at (360) 786-7558. TTY 1-800-833-6388. For further legislative information, call the Legislative Hotline at 1-800-562-6000, or check the internet at [www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov).*