

At committee meetings, you can share your thoughts on bills and current issues in Washington. Anyone can testify; you don't need training. See how to testify remotely, in person, and in writing.

We're open to public participation

Washington has one of the most open legislatures in the country. Typically, a bill has a public hearing in House and Senate committees before it goes to all members of the House and Senate.

You can participate in committee meetings by:

- Submitting written testimony
- Noting your position on a bill
- [Testifying in person or remotely](#)

You may create a legislative account to speed up the sign-up process. [Information on how to create and use your account can be found here.](#)

How we conduct meetings

The rules for committee meetings help ensure people behave appropriately and respectfully.

Accessibility for committee meetings

Need help with testifying or attending a committee meeting? The [accessibility](#) page has information about:

- Reasonable accommodations
- Interpretation in other languages

Testifying in person or remotely

Follow these steps to sign up to [testify at a meeting](#).

1. Find out when a meeting is scheduled

- Visit our [committee meeting schedules page](#)
- Subscribe to [email updates about committees](#)

2. Prepare your testimony

Time is usually limited, so be brief and direct. Write your comments in outline form and summarize your written testimony. Don't read testimony you plan to submit, or have already submitted, to the committee.

Don't repeat other people's testimony

If you know other people plan to give similar testimony at the meeting, work with them to avoid repeats. Well-organized testimony is the most effective.



Every person may freely speak, write and publish on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that right.

— Article 1, Section 1
Washington State Constitution

3. Sign in

You can [sign in online to testify](#) for all committees or at the kiosks located around the legislative campus. You can sign in as soon as the bill is added to an agenda for public hearing and up to 1 hour before the meeting starts.

Regardless of whether you sign in to testify remotely or in person, you'll be emailed a Zoom link to join the meeting remotely. Don't share your Zoom link.

After signing in

See if proposed amendments or substitute bills are available on the [committee meetings schedule](#) page. Choose "View docs" for the meeting you're interested in.

4. Be on time

Be at the meeting when it starts. If you're late, you might not be able to testify.

Joining a meeting in person

Don't use your Zoom link unless you can't testify in person. Don't share your Zoom link.

Approach the testimony table when the committee calls on you to testify. The microphones will already be turned on. Don't bring signs or props into the hearing room.

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.

Joining a meeting remotely

Once you're signed in, see the following instructions:

- [How to join a House committee meeting remotely](#)
- [How to join a Senate committee meeting remotely](#)

Your Zoom background cannot include:

- Campaign-related signs, slogans, or other materials
- Offensive or defamatory statements

If you don't follow the committee chair's rules for testimony, you might not be allowed to testify.

5. Understand the committee procedures

The committee chair will open a public hearing on a specific bill. Usually, committee staff brief the bill and then the bill's sponsor may comment first.

The chair's job is to ensure:

- Committee members hear relevant information
- People can share their opinions
- The meeting stays within the time limit

6. Give your testimony

Wait your turn

- Wait to speak until you are called on
- Be respectful and professional during your testimony
- Be mindful of the testimony timer, if it is being used
- Follow the chair's rules for testimony

Share your comments

First, introduce yourself to the Chair and committee members and give your reason for testifying. For example, you could say, "Mr. or Madam Chair and members of the committee, I am John Doe from Spokane. I support this bill because..."

Follow this advice

- Be clear about whether you're representing other citizens or a separate group
- Be brief and clear
- Don't be too technical
- Don't repeat what someone else already said
- Don't clap, cheer, boo, or act in any inappropriate or distracting way

7. Be ready for questions and comments

Committee members may ask you questions to get more information. Don't answer if you're not sure. Instead, offer to send a written answer to the committee after the meeting.

8. Submit written testimony

Most committee meetings are limited to 2 hours and may have several topics to discuss. The chair will try give everyone an opportunity to testify, but may be limited. You can still [submit written testimony online](#) up to 24 hours after the start of the meeting.

Lobbyist guidelines

If you are testifying and represent only yourself, you usually don't need to register as a lobbyist. This includes if you:

- Appear only at public meetings of legislative committees or state agencies, or
- Don't receive money or other consideration for lobbying and don't make payments for or on behalf of a legislator, elected official, or state employee in connection with lobbying, or
- Lobby only up to 4 days during any 3-month period and spend no more than \$35 for or on behalf of a legislator, elected official, or state employee.

If you're unsure, check the [lobbyist guidelines](#) on the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) website.

Submitting written testimony

You can submit written testimony in one of these ways.

For a House committee

- [Submit written testimony online](#) up to 24 hours after the start of the meeting
- Email your written testimony to all committee members

Be sure to include the bill number and your position on the bill. See a list of [House committees](#).

For a Senate committee

- [Submit written testimony online](#) up to 24 hours after the start of the meeting
- Email your written testimony to all committee members and committee staff

Be sure to include the bill number and your position on the bill. See a list of [Senate committees](#).

For the Select Committee on Pension Policy

- [Submit written testimony](#) online up to 24 hours after the start of the meeting
- Email your written testimony to committee staff at state.actuary@leg.wa.gov

For your district's legislators

You may also contact your legislator to share your position on a bill. You can do so by:

- Writing a letter or sending an email
- Calling the legislator's Olympia office
- Calling the Legislative Hotline at 800-562-6000

See [how to comment on a bill](#) for instructions on sending bill comments to your district's legislators.