

THINGS TO REMEMBER

1 YOUR LEGISLATOR WORKS FOR YOU

- Testifying is one of the most effective ways to educate your policymakers on a perspective they might not know about.

2 WE CAN BE A RESOURCE

- Let us know when you plan to testify beforehand to see if we have information or materials you can use.
- After you testify, let us know how it went. Your insight can be critical in helping our legislative priorities move forward.

BONUS TIPS

1 TRY, TRY AGAIN

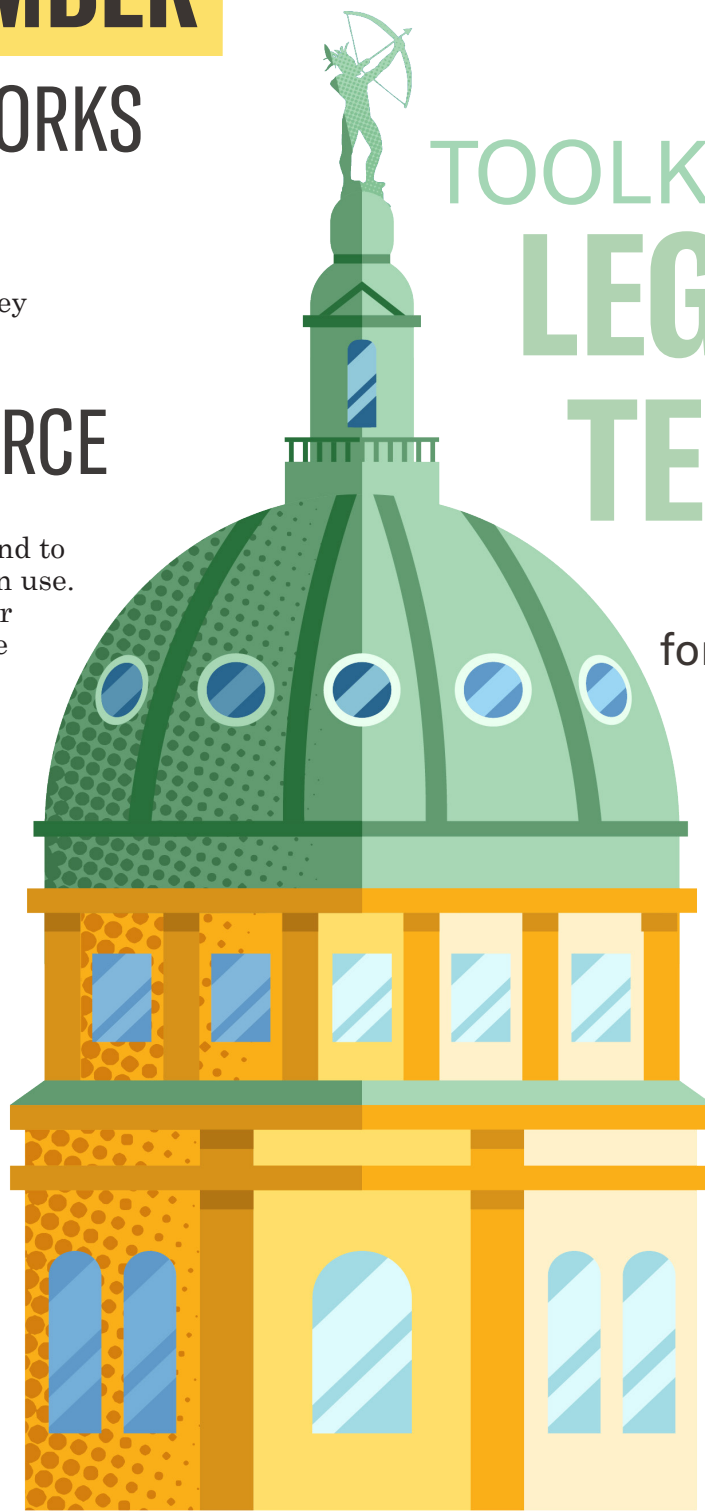
- If you were disappointed with the outcome of the legislation on which you testified, try again! It's likely that the topic you spoke on will reemerge at some point in the year.

2 LEVERAGE SOCIAL MEDIA

- Post about your testimony on social media to increase social pressure.

A KANSAN'S TOOLKIT TO GIVING LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

A Guide to Best Practices
for Getting Your Voice Heard
In Kansas Policy-Making



ACLU

Kansas

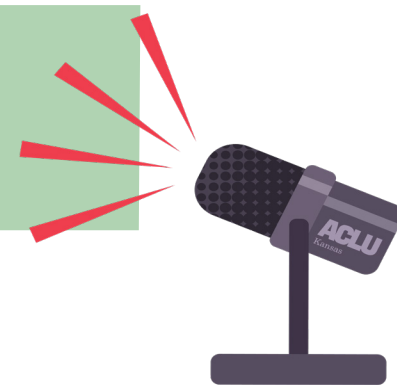
#KSLEG



WRITTEN

VS

ORAL



TESTIMONY

There are two possible ways to submit testimony (written or spoken). Either method is an effective way of making your voice heard in the Kansas Legislature. Here are some pros and cons of each method to consider before you begin your writing process.

* Some committees offer testimony over video conferences as an option for those who need to testify from home. Make sure to check with a staff member if you are seeking that option.

PROS:

- You will not have to join the committee in-person to testify. This is a great option for those uncomfortable with public speaking or who have health concerns that prevent them from being public spaces.

CONS:

- You will not be able to clarify or defend any points mentioned in your testimony to the committee. You must also depend on the good faith of the committee members to read your testimony in full. You also miss out on the opportunity to talk to your legislator face-to face.

PROS:

- You will have the in-person support on an ACLU KS staff member. You are able to speak directly to the elected officials you wish to speak to. You will be able to take questions to further clarify/defend your testimony after delivery. You can adjust your testimony in real time to speak on needs that haven't yet been addressed by other submitted testimony.

CONS:

- You may have to adjust your script while testifying to suit the rules/time limits of the committee. Depending on the amount of testimony submitted on your chosen issue, you may have less/more time to speak than you expect. Committee members are also able to ask questions that are not always for your benefit. They may attempt to confront you with counter-information to make you look less credible or to sway the opinions of their fellow committee members.

A QUICK NOTE: Legislative session can be chaotic. The rules of one committee may not be the rules of another. Make sure you submit your testimony at least 48 hours in advance and to regularly check up on your committee and to check in with ACLU Kansas staff.

PREPARE & SHOW UP

1 LEARN YOUR LEGISLATION

First do some research on the legislation you wish to testify on. What does it do? Who does it affect? Who is proposing this legislation? Why is this legislation being proposed now?

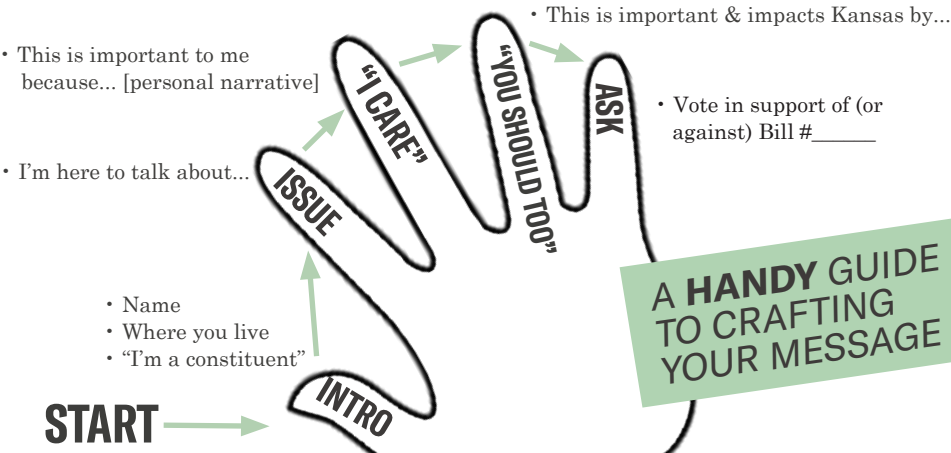
Knowing more about your chosen legislation can help you understand it's context and help you communicate your ask (support or don't support) to the committee you testify in front of.

- Find your bill at www.kslegislature.org.
- Focus on the issues you care about.
- See what other advocacy orgs are saying online.

2 WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW

Your experience makes you an expert—you do not have to be a policy expert to speak on and advocate for issues that matter to you. Before you testify, figure out how you can integrate your story with the issue to make your case.

- Visit the ACLU of Kansas' website throughout the session for insight on bills we're working on and talking points for legislation we support or oppose.
- Share your personal story and how a particular issue may impact (or may have impacted) you or a loved one. Our Handy Guide to Crafting Your Message can help you do this!



3 GET ORGANIZED

If you're testifying with a group, be sure you all have a unified message and an agreed-upon agenda beforehand.

- Agree on talking points so you can make a strong case together.
- Decide your goal. Do you want your legislators to vote for or against a bill, or introduce or co-sponsor legislation? Be specific in what you ask for.

4 OWN YOUR TESTIMONY

This is your opportunity to make your voice heard in the Kansas Legislature, so speak clearly and with confidence.

- **Practice.** Anticipate questions you might be asked and memorize powerful statements.
- **Be prompt and patient.** Show up on time and understand that committees run on tight schedules. It is not uncommon for committee times to be shortened or extended.
- **Start by introducing yourselves,** bringing up any personal, professional, or political connections you may have. Thank the committee for the opportunity to speak on your issue.
- **Keep it short and focused.** Stick to your talking points, you may have less time to speak than you expected. Provide personal examples of the impact of the legislation or issue. The committee is allowed to ask you questions after you testify.
- **Don't be afraid to say "I don't know"** - making up an answer to a question can seriously damage your credibility. If you don't have an answer, tell your legislator you will find it.
- **Track your bill:** Bills are constantly being edited and bounced around committees. Keep tabs on your bill after testifying through www.kslegislature.org.

5 BECOME A LEADER

Now that you're experienced in giving testimony, become a legislative leader by encouraging others to testify on the issues impacting them.

- Start the process over and teach the Testimony 101 steps to those new to testifying.
- Sign up on the ACLU of Kansas's website for more opportunities to get involved in Kansas advocacy such as lobbying.