The NGCDD’s

Guide to Testifying at the

Nevada Legislature

For questions/concerns, please contact our office at:

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This publication is for educational purposes only.



Participation from constituents in the Legislative process is vital to the production of well-rounded public policy. It is essential for those who will be affected by change in public policy, to provide their input to those in a position to make changes. Nevada’s open legislative process gives you an opportunity to offer your perspective and opinion.

Once a bill has been introduced, it is then referred to a committee for study and consideration. The committee chair determines when a bill will be schedule for a hearing. Though committee hearings are generally less formal than full Senate or Assembly hearing, it is important that you follow the guidelines and protocols listed below, for all public hearings.

**Before the Hearing**

You’ll need to find out when and where your bill(s) will be heard. You can find this information on NELIS.

Plan your testimony in advance. You will be more effective in communicating your message/story if you have prepared your testimony in writing for distribution to committee members. You can then verbally summarize your remarks to conserve time.

If you have written or printed materials to present, bring enough copies for the members and for the committee secretary, other staff, and other members of the public;

Contact the Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities and notify us of your upcoming testimony. If this is regarding a bill the Council supports, we may be able to attend your testimony and provide any necessary informational supports.

**At the Committee Meeting**

Be on time for the committee meeting!

Be sure to sign in when you arrive and indicate whether you intend to testify. Sign-in sheets are available at the entrance of each committee room. Please print your name to ensure legibility.

Do not be nervous when you testify! The Senators/Assemblymen are elected to represent you; they want to hear what you have to say!

Wait your turn. The Chair will announce the beginning of the hearing on a particular bill.

The bill’s sponsor is generally the first to speak. After his testimony, the Chair may ask for testimony from any proponents and opponents, usually in the order in which they appear on the sign-in sheet.

Begin your testimony by addressing the Chair and the committee members. Give your name, the name of the organization or group you represent (if applicable) and state why you are there.

For example: “Mr. (or Madam) Chair, members of the Committee, my name is Pat Public from Reno, NV. I am representing myself, and I support/oppose this bill because….”

All testimony and all committee discussion must be addressed through the Chair.

For example: In answer to a committee member’s question, you would say, “Mr. (or Madam) Chair, through you to Senator Smith, yes, I do approve the changes that were discussed.”

If you believe a change in the law is needed or some other action should be taken by the committee, be specific about your recommendation. Brief written materials, for example changes to wording in law, are encouraged.

Be courteous and brief in your language and in the manner in which you address the members of the committee. Try not to repeat testimony offered by previous witnesses. Be prepared to answer questions asked by the committee’s members. Respond to the questions as best as you can. You need not be embarrassed because you do not have a specific answer. LCB’s Research staff may be able to answer difficult questions after further review.

Members of the public who cannot attend a committee meeting or who choose not to give oral testimony during a meeting may also submit testimony and recommendations to the committee in writing.

Demonstrations, applause or addressing committee members or witnesses from the audience are prohibited.

Do not be offended if Senators come and go during a hearing. They have other commitments, including the presentation of bills in other committees that are meeting at the same time.

**After Testimony**

Do not expect immediate committee action. The bill may be held until another day. After the discussion on your bill, you are welcome to stay and listen for the remainder of the committee meeting.

If the vote on your bill is postponed and the Chair does not announce a date for further consideration, check back with committee staff or monitory the LCB website for information on scheduling.

**Where to Find Bill Information**

A fast and easy way to find up-to-date bill information is by visiting The Nevada Legislature’s website. This site contains extensive information on where you can find bills, amendments, committee schedules, locations and agendas. The website is: www.leg.state.nv.us.

When Legislature is in session, call the Legislative Message Center from 8:00 AM until 5:00 PM, Monday thru Friday, at 1-800-995-9080 or toll free at 1-800-978-2878.

Copies of bills, resolutions, journals and histories can be obtained in the Public Bill Room on the first floor of the Legislative Building in Room 1201 or by calling the Public Bill Room at 775-684-1387.

The Senate also operates a Constituent Computer Center on the second-floor lobby of the Legislative Building. Here you can browse the legislative website, access your personalized bill tracking, view meeting agendas and minutes through NELIS and other legislative information at no cost to you as a constituent. A convenience designed to make the Legislative process more accessible.