# Logo small no text no backgroundThe NGCDD’s Guide to Testifying at the

# Nevada Legislature

For questions or concerns, please contact our office:

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This publication is for educational purposes only.

Your participation in the Legislative process is vital to well-rounded public policy. It is important for those who will be affected by change in public policy, to give their input to those in a position to make changes. Nevada’s open legislative process gives you an opportunity to offer your views and opinion.

Once a bill has been introduced, it is referred to a committee for study and consideration. The committee chair determines when a bill will be scheduled for a hearing. It’s important to follow the guidelines listed below when speaking at the Legislature.

# **Where to Find Bill Information**

A fast and easy way to find bill information is by visiting [The Nevada Legislature’s website](https://www.leg.state.nv.us) www.leg.state.nv.us. This site has information on where you can find bills, amendments, committee schedules, locations and agendas. You can sign up to track certain Bills on [NELIS](https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/81st2021) through the Nevada Legislature website.

You can 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 when it is in session.

You can get copies of bills, resolutions, journals and histories 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 runs 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.

# **Before the Hearing**

* Find out when and where your bill(s) will be heard on [NELIS](https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/81st2021).
* Dress nice!
* Plan what you will say ahead of time. Be prepared and write down what you will say. This is called your testimony, or why you like or don’t like the bill. It helps to practice what you will say and how you will act in front of someone first.
* If you have written or printed materials you want to share, bring enough copies for the members and for the committee secretary.

* Let the Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities know you will be testifying. We may be able to attend and/or give you information for your testimony.

# **At the Meeting**

* Be on time!
* Sign-in sheets are available as you go into each room. Print your name clearly and put a check mark if you will be testifying.
* Don’t be nervous! The Senators/Assemblymen are chosen to represent you. They want to hear what you have to say!
* Usually lots of bills are heard at one meeting. Wait your turn. The Chair will announce the beginning of the hearing for the bill you are there to testify on.
* The bill’s sponsor is the first to speak. After his testimony, the Chair may ask to hear from people who support and oppose the bill, usually in the order in which they appear on the sign-in sheet.
* Testimony is typically taken in this order:

Supporters (for)

Opposition (against)

Neutral (doesn’t matter either way)

* Do not speak if you are not in that group.
* When it’s your turn, address the Chair first, then the committee. Give your name, the name of the organization or group you stand for (if any) and why you are there.

Say, “Mr./Madam Chair, members of the Committee, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ from Reno, NV. I represent \_\_\_\_\_, and I support/oppose this bill because\_\_\_\_\_.

* Be calm, polite, specific and brief. Don’t repeat what’s already been said.
* Sometimes the chair or committee members ask you questions. Always address the chair first unless he tells you not to. State your name for the record again.

Say: “Thank you Mr./Madam Chair, through you to (name of person asking question), for the record my name is\_\_\_\_\_” and then answer their question.

* Answer questions as best as you can. If you don’t know the answer it’s ok to say that. Never make things up. Research staff may be able to answer tough questions after further review.
* At end of public comment or testimony always say, “thank you for the opportunity to speak”.
* If you cannot attend a committee meeting or do not want to speak during a meeting you can send your testimony to the committee in writing.
* You are not allowed to demonstrate, applaud, address the committee members or audience.
* Do not be upset if Legislators come and go during a hearing. They have other commitments, including bills in other committees meeting at the same time.

# **After Your Testimony**

The committee may not take any action during the meeting. The bill may be held until another day. After the discussion on your bill, you can stay and listen to the rest of the meeting. check back with committee staff or monitor the website for information on scheduling if the vote on your bill is postponed and the chair does not announce another meeting date.