



## SUBMIT TESTIMONY ON THE BUDGET BILL

### Step 1: Decide to Testify

- Learn about the proposed budget and get clear about what you are advocating for with school funding.
- To give testimony on the Fair School Funding plan, you'll want to submit testimony to the Education or Finance committees
- Optional: [Create a "My Ohio Legislature" account](#) to join that committee's listserv so you get notified when there will be a hearing.

### Step 2: Decide How You Will Testify

Testimony is your opportunity to speak directly to an Ohio Representative or Senator and influence how they will respond to legislation under consideration in their committee.

- In-person testimony is presented live at the Statehouse during the appropriate committee hearing.
- Written testimony is submitted via email to the chair of the host committee and is uploaded to various legislature websites as a public record.
- **TIP:** Write your testimony now so you're ready to go when the time comes! Often, there is very little notice of hearings.

### Step 3: Prepare Your Testimony

- Focus on how this legislation personally impacts you, your family and those in your community. Don't get bogged down in the specifics. Some of the most effective and powerful testimony relates to personal experience.
- Remember to be concise and focus on 1-2 points in your testimony
- After you've decided on your point of view, use this [testimony template](#) to format your testimony. Open by introducing yourself, your school and district, your story, experiences and position on the budget.
- **TIP:** In-person witnesses are allowed five minutes for their testimony. Be sure to time out your remarks to ensure you're under the five-minute mark.
- **TIP:** There is no limit for written testimony; however, committee members tend to stop reading after the second page.

 [Testimony Template](#)

 [Watch sample in-person testimony](#)

### Step 4: Submit Your Testimony

- **IMPORTANT:** You must wait for the host committee to announce the hearing before submitting your testimony! Committees may reject your testimony if you submit it before a hearing is announced.



- Committee schedules and agendas are generally released Thursday or Friday, and committee meetings are Tuesday, Wednesday, or the first half of Thursday.
- You must email the Witness Slip ([Senate](#)) ([House](#)) and your written testimony to the chair of the committee (see below for contact info) **at least 24 hours in advance** of the scheduled hearing. Note that you can call the bill “the budget bill.”
- When emailing your witness slip and testimony to the chair:
  - Indicate which bill you are testifying about and your position (opponent or proponent) in the body of your email and on the witness slip
  - Send a PDF version of your testimony to the committee Chair cc’ing their legislative aide
  - Ask for a confirmation of receipt

## Step 5: Giving In-Person Testimony

### LOGISTICS

- **PLAN TO ARRIVE EARLY!** Arrive at the Statehouse well before the hearing is scheduled to begin to secure parking and seating. You can park in the garage underneath [the Statehouse](#) or the [Columbus Commons Parking Garage](#). You must go through a metal detector when you arrive. You can ask the security guards to direct you to the committee room where your hearing is being held.
- Be prepared to stay late. Committees usually have multiple bills up for a hearing and can last anywhere from a few minutes to several hours.

### TESTIFYING

- Committee hearings are televised live and recorded for later viewing on [The Ohio Channel](#).
- Witnesses are allowed five minutes for testimony.
- Speak directly to the Committee, and, if possible, make eye contact rather than read your testimony verbatim.
- Be prepared to answer questions. Committee members are allowed to question witnesses after their statements. This is an excellent opportunity to provide greater detail about your perspective. If you cannot answer a question, it is **OK** to answer “I do not have that answer” and/or “I am happy to send you that information after the hearing.”
- Bring several copies of your printed testimony for your own reference and to share with allies, reporters, or lawmakers, if asked.
- Stage Fright? [Here are some helpful tips](#) to help alleviate any anxiety around public speaking or addressing lawmakers. REMEMBER, our elected officials work for us. You are exercising your right to speak with public servants who are in the Statehouse to serve you!

### Testimony Etiquette

- Always address the chair first before answering another committee member’s question
- For example, “Through the chair to the Representative/Senator”
- It is OK if you forget to address the chair