



## Guide for Submitting Legislative Testimony July 2025

In Massachusetts, each bill goes before a committee at a public hearing. Committees are often jointly led by legislators from the House and Senate and focus on a specific subject matter. A list of all Committees can be found [here](#). There are many bills before each Committee, so hearings often have dozens of bills on the agenda.

The hearing is an opportunity for stakeholders, legislators, advocates, and members of the public to share their opinions and make their case for why the bill should move forward, or why they oppose it.

### Logistics

- You can testify in-person at the State House or in writing. Most Committees also allow you to testify virtually.
- When the hearing is scheduled, the Committee will [publish](#) the logistical information for that particular hearing. They may tell you how to sign up to testify, what email address to submit written comments to, or how to access a link to testify virtually. These logistics vary by Committee, so be sure to check the hearing page for specifics.
- Remarks are often limited to 3 minutes. You can also testify with 1-2 other people as a “panel.”
- All hearings occur at the State House and are [livestreamed](#). Information about visiting the State House can be found [here](#).

### Testimony Best Practices

- Always include the bill numbers (House and Senate, if applicable), the bill title, and the bill sponsors. Include whether you support or oppose the bill and what your affiliation is (example: self-advocate who would be impacted by legislation)
- In a few sentences, briefly summarize the bill at a high-level. The Arc’s [bill fact sheets and summaries](#) are a great resource.
- While the facts are important, your story - your lived and/or professional experience - will make the most compelling case for the bill.
  - Answer these questions, using your story as evidence: Why is this bill important? What difference would it make in your life? Why does it matter to you? Why should the legislature make it law?
- Submitting written testimony
  - You can submit written testimony as your sole form of communication. But if you testify in-person or virtually, it is also wise to submit your comments in writing.
  - Format your testimony like a letter and address it to the Chairs of the Committee.
  - Share a copy of your testimony to your state Senator and Representative. You can find their contact information [here](#).
    - Tell them that you are their constituent and want them to know what issues matter to you! Ask them to advocate for the bill.



### Things to Remember

- Hearings can be long. Be patient! Legislators are often invited to testify first, followed by individuals who signed up. Depending on how many bills are on the agenda, and how many people are signed up to testify, the hearings can be several hours long.
- Legislators may ask follow-up questions. If you do not know the answer to a question, it is perfectly fine to say, "I do not know that answer but am happy to follow-up with you." The Arc team can help you with that follow-up.

### For More Information

The Arc of Massachusetts Government Affairs team is here to help! If you have questions or would like to see examples, please reach out to Nora Bent ([nbent@arcmass.org](mailto:nbent@arcmass.org)).