



GENERAL INFORMATION

At this time, there are both in-person testimony and virtual/remote testimony opportunities. Please note that in person testimony remains the preferred option by most legislators and tends to be more effective. Virtual testimony has proven to be effective if there are a number of people testifying. It is also recommended to contact the Committee before the meeting using the resources below.

Montana State Capitol Contact Information:

- Legislative Operator/Information Desk 406-444-4800
- Legislature Website: <https://www.legmt.gov/> 2025
- Legislative Questions 406-444-3064
- Technical Questions (i.e. website, streaming) 406-444-0912

Upload your testimony

If you have not done so already, create your online account at the MT Legislative website (see website [Home - Montana Legislature](#) : top right "Sign In" will lead you to "Create Account" section). You can then proceed to the ["Public Participation" application](#),

- Select the box "Testimony or Exhibits"
- Select "Regarding a Bill"
- Select *HB or SB XXX* from the drop-down menu,
- Select "Proponent" or "Opponent" from drop down menu.
- Follow the prompts
- Upload your comments in pdf format or you can also type comments here.
- Click submit!

1. You may also **email or call and leave a message** for the relevant Committee to voice your support or opposition for *HB or SB XXX* . It is recommended that you make these contacts before testifying either in person or by zoom. **Call (406) 444-4800** to voice your support or opposition of *HB or SB XXX* and your message will be delivered to the committee.

2. **Website messaging:** Place the Bill number in the subject line. It is most efficient to email or leave a phone message at the capitol switchboard during business hours for the entire committee a day or 2 before the hearing. You can also upload written testimony at this site. <https://leg.mt.gov/session/have-your-say/>

TIPS FOR IN PERSON TESTIMONY

Where: [MT State Capitol](#), Room ____

In person testimony does not require advanced sign up. Determine the committee hearing room and sign-in on the form at the back of the hearing room or just outside the hearing room. Identify yourself as a Proponent or Opponent. Then enter the room and have a seat until your bill is presented. Depending on the day there could be a number of bills or only one or two. The hearings can be several hours long and we don't know in advance when individual bills will show on the agenda so plan for patience.

The sponsor will give some opening remarks on the bill, then they will call for proponents of the bill. They will take proponents in the room and then they will go to Zoom for additional proponents. They will then repeat this process for opponents.

When you get to the podium or are called on to testify, address the chairperson and the committee members, state your name, who you represent, your position on the bill and/or your comments. Plan on expressing your thoughts in two minutes or less. If your testimony repeats what has been said previously, they appreciate it if you can simply say "I agree with points already made" and not repeat in full something that is repetitive.

Begin by addressing them: **"Madam or Mr. Chair and members of the committee, I am _____ , spell last name(zoom testimonials they have your name so may not need to spell it) from_____ and I support/oppose HB or SB XXX .**

- Give reasons for your support or opposition, (relevant short personal stories are great!).
- Be respectful.
- You don't have to answer questions if you do not want to.
- Recruit others to testify from locations across the state. The more diversity in testimony, the better!

It is important to practice expressing your thoughts in two minutes or less. If the hearing draws a large crowd of witnesses, the chair of the committee will typically limit testimony so it's a good idea to practice delivering a sharp, polished, testimony.

It's a good idea to write down your testimony or talking points so you have organized, complete thoughts, but it is recommended not to read prepared testimony. Speak to the committee and share your thoughts/comments. You can submit your written testimony for the record, but do not just read what you have written.

All questions are directed through the chair. If you are asked a question, go to the podium, address the chairperson and the legislator who asked the question and then do your best to answer the question. If you do not know the answer, that is okay. It is always appropriate to say you are not sure of the answer, but that you will follow-up with information.

TIPS FOR VIRTUAL TESTIFYING

After you have created your online account at the MT Legislative website (top right "Sign In" will lead you to "Create Account" section of the website [Home - Montana Legislature](#)) you can then proceed to the "[Public Participation](#)" application, where you will be able to sign up to remotely testify on bill hearings to participate virtually, submit public comment, or to send a message to committee members.

***All public comments and written testimony become part of the public record. This application will also allow you to submit written testimony and comments on a bill, to a committee, or directly to a legislator.

You may sign up to testify remotely using Zoom up to two (2) hours prior to a meeting's scheduled start time, however it is recommended to do it the day before by 5:00. Once you successfully submit your information, you will be emailed the Zoom link for participation. That link is specific to you, so do not share it.

At the "[Public Participation](#)" application site, click on the "Public Participation" button to register to testify virtually.

- Select the Testify Remotely box
- Select Testify "on a bill" and then select the *HB or SB XXX* from the drop-down menu, and the committee hearing time will automatically generate.
- Select "Proponent" or "Opponent" from drop down menu.
- Insert your personal info.
- If you're testifying via Zoom, click the "Yes" bubble when prompted. If you're sending in testimony before the hearing, upload your comments in a pdf format.
- Click submit!

When testifying virtually, the on-line form you submit will suffice for signing-in. The Presiding Officer will let you know when they are accepting comments from those on Zoom. Follow the directions provided in your email. Please be advised that there may be limits placed on how many people are allowed to testify remotely and what time restrictions are being imposed.

When they call your group (proponents or opponents), raise your hand using the "Raise Hand" function on Zoom. (They aren't looking at you, so if you physically raise your hand, they won't see you -- use the "Raise Hand" function). The Raise Hand button is located on the lower menu bar. We recommend hitting that button as soon as they ask for your group because that way you get into the queue (they sometimes move fast). When it is your turn to speak, they will call your name and a button will appear allowing you to unmute yourself. When testifying via zoom, the committee cannot see you; they can only hear you, so speak slowly and clearly.

When you are called on to testify, address the chairperson and the committee members, state your name, who you represent, and your position on the bill following the suggestions above.

Tips for Zoom

- BEFORE the meeting, ensure you have the ZOOM app downloaded on your phone or device and that all updates have been installed.
- Log-in 15-20 minutes before the meeting to make sure the technology is working. You can EITHER use your computer audio or call in. You CANNOT do both.
- If you are not talking, be sure to mute yourself. If you are connected using your computer there is a microphone icon which allows you to do so. • You cannot have two devices connected in close proximity or your voice will be distorted and there will be feedback.
- If you are calling in using a desk phone number, use *6 to mute and unmute yourself and *9 to raise and lower your hand.
- For the purposes of providing public testimony, you will be attending as a passive participant, meaning that you will not have the option to start/stop your video or mute/unmute yourself UNTIL prompted by the legislative staff when it is time for public comment.
- Committee etiquette remains while testifying remotely; address the Committee Chair and members before speaking or answering questions. • Try to remain in the waiting room after you've completed your testimony should any questions for you arise.