

# **TIPS FOR TESTIFYING**

## **HELPFUL HINTS TO MAKE YOUR COMMITTEE EXPERIENCE FLAWLESS**

### **OML LEGISLATIVE STAFF**

Susan J. Cave, Executive Director  
John K. Mahoney, Deputy Director  
Edward L. Albright, Senior Legislative Assistant  
Kent M. Scarrett, Legislative Assistant

Testifying before a legislative Committee can be intimidating to those not accustomed to speaking before a legislative body. Following are some tips about what to expect when testifying and how to make your testimony as meaningful as possible.

#### ***Location and Parking***

Before traveling to Columbus, be sure to find out where the Committee is holding its hearing. Although members of the House of Representatives have offices in the Riffe Center at 77 South High Street, committees for the House of Representatives meet across the street in the State House. Senate committees usually meet in the Senate Annex building connected to the State House by the Atrium on the east side of the building.

A call to the OML legislative staff will save you some time in finding out in which hearing room the Committee will meet.

A parking garage is located under the State House and is accessed from Broad Street (east bound), Third Street (south bound) or State Street (west bound). Additional garages are located under or south of the City Center and accessed from Third Street or Rich Street (west bound) or Main Street (east bound).

#### ***Protocol/Etiquette***

Arrive early at the State House, usually twenty to thirty minutes before the Committee is scheduled to begin taking testimony. The OML will assist you in finding the location and answer other questions you may have about the Committee meeting.

Committees take testimony from those who sign “witness slips” in advance. The slips may be at the podium, may be in front of the Committee, or may be obtained from a staff person. You will be asked if you are testifying as a proponent, an opponent, or as an “interested party.” An interested party is one who doesn’t have a position either for or against the object of testimony. The witness slip also asks if you are a registered lobbyist. You are a registered lobbyist only if you are licensed through the Ohio Legislative Ethics Committee. The Chairperson of the Committee will arrange the witness slips in the order that testimony will be taken.

If possible, you should provide enough written copies of your testimony for each member of the committee. They appreciate having a copy for future reference or to mark if they have a question about your position. You may give these to a staff person at the same time you turn in your witness slip, or you may give them to the Chairperson at the time of your testimony.

At the beginning of your testimony, thank the Chairperson and the Committee members for the opportunity to testify on the issue before the Committee, then introduce yourself, indicate where you are from, and why you are there.

When your formal testimony is complete, the Chairperson will ask if any of the Committee members have questions for you. In response, you speak *through the Chairperson*: “Madame Chairman (or Mr. Chairman), the answer to the question is....” If you do not have the information on hand, tell the Chairperson that you will provide the requested information as soon as possible. Providing follow-up information is an excellent technique for ensuring your testimony is fully considered and also provides you with additional contact with the Committee.

### ***Testimony Presentation***

*Be brief and to the point.* Often there are other witnesses present, and the Committee will appreciate your cooperation in allowing everyone to have an opportunity to be heard.

*Avoid repeating a previously made point.* If the point you want to make is made by a witness before you, think of a new angle from which to make your point, or frame it a little differently from the way those who testify before have done. If you are with a group, each person should address a different point, rather than repeat each other’s testimony.

If you want to tape record the Committee proceedings, either on audio or video, you must first get permission from the Committee Chairperson.

While at the State House, be sure to visit your district representatives. It is important that your Senator and Representative know that you are testifying about an issue. Visiting with them is the best way to let them know your concerns and that you want to be included in future discussions of issues affecting your municipality. Provide them with copies of your testimony.

Finally, relax and enjoy giving your testimony. Legislators want to know what is the municipal perspective on issues, and they want to hear your personal experience or position. Every Committee member is an elected official who appreciates the sacrifice you are making to participate in the committee process. Just as you are a conduit for your community to the Legislature, you are also a conduit for the Legislature to your community.

## **LEGISLATIVE CONTACT NUMBERS**

Bill & Legislative Information:  
800-282-0253  
Senate Clerk’s Office: 614-466-4900  
House Clerk’s Office: 614-466-3357

To find your legislator and/or get copies of bills

[www.legislature.state.oh.us/](http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/)

### **Mailing Address for Senators:**

The Honorable  
Ohio Senate  
State House  
Columbus, Ohio 43266-0604

e-mail:sd(2 digit district #)@mailr.sen.state.oh.us

Exp: sd03@[mailr.sen.state.oh.us](mailto:mailr.sen.state.oh.us)

EXCEPT THE FOLLOWING:

Coughlin, Kevin: [kcoughlin@mailr.sen.state.oh.us](mailto:kcoughlin@mailr.sen.state.oh.us)

Dann, Marc : [madann@maild.sen.state.oh.us](mailto:madann@maild.sen.state.oh.us)

Fingerhut, Eric: [SenatorFingerhut@hotmail.com](mailto:SenatorFingerhut@hotmail.com)

Gardner, Randy: [ra-gardner@mailr.sen.state.oh.us](mailto:ra-gardner@mailr.sen.state.oh.us)

Hagan, Robert: [haganoffice@maild.sen.state.oh.us](mailto:haganoffice@maild.sen.state.oh.us)

Herington, Leigh: [heringtonoffice@maild.sen.state.oh.us](mailto:heringtonoffice@maild.sen.state.oh.us)

Miller, Ray: [rmiller@maild.sen.state.oh.us](mailto:rmiller@maild.sen.state.oh.us)

Prentiss, C.J.: [prentiss@maild.sen.state.oh.us](mailto:prentiss@maild.sen.state.oh.us)

Spada, Robert: [rspada@mailr.sen.state.oh.us](mailto:rspada@mailr.sen.state.oh.us)

Watchmann, Lynn:lwatchmann@mailr.sen.state.oh.us

White, Doug: [white@mailr.sen.state.oh.us](mailto:white@mailr.sen.state.oh.us)

**Mailing Address for Representatives:**

The Honorable  
Ohio House of Representatives  
77 South High Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43266-0603

e-mail:rep.,district #@ohr.state.oh.us

Exp: Rep.Charles Blasdel, District 01 is

rep.01@ohr.state.oh.us