

MAINERS for TAX FAIRNESS

How to Submit Testimony for a Public Hearing in Maine

Public testimony is a powerful way to advocate for issues you care about by speaking directly to lawmakers. Anyone can testify in person, remotely via Zoom, or submit written testimony. All testimony is broadcast online and becomes part of the public record.

Ways to Testify

- **In Person:** Speak before a legislative committee at the Maine State House in Augusta.
- **Written:** Submit testimony online any time before the hearing.
- **Remote:** Deliver live testimony to the committee via Zoom.

Writing Your Testimony

- **Understand the Bill:** Read the bill and consider how it would affect you.
- **Keep It Short:** Testimony is limited to three minutes, and it goes by fast! Keep your written testimony under 300 words to avoid being cut off. Stick to 2-3 key points.
- **Structure Your Testimony:**
 - **Introduction:** Your testimony should include a greeting to the [committee chairs](#) and members of the committee, your name, job title (if relevant) or your town, the bill you are there to testify about, and whether you support or oppose it.
 - Example: “*Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier, and members of the Taxation Committee, my name is Joan Smith and I live in Bangor. I am here to testify in support of LD 1047: An Act to Impose an Additional Tax on Certain Unearned Income.*”
 - **Tell Your Story:** Share how the issue affects you, your work, family, or community.
 - **Use Data:** When possible, reference at least one data point that supports your message. MECEP is available as a resource — check mecep.org or reach out to ryan@mecep.org.
 - **Make Your Ask:** Clearly state whether you want lawmakers to vote “yes” or “no.”
 - **Closing:** Thank the committee and restate your position.
 - Example: “*Please vote ‘Ought to Pass’ on LD 1089 and make Maine’s tax structure fairer. Thank you for your time.*”

How to Submit Written Testimony

1. Go to: mainelegislature.org/testimony
2. Select “Public Hearing” and choose the committee.
3. Select the hearing date and bill.
4. Upload your testimony (Word, PDF, or plain text) or paste it into the provided box.
5. Enter your name, town, and email, then click submit.

How to Testify In Person

1. Write your testimony in advance.
2. Print **20 copies** to give to the committee clerk.
3. Sign up on the sheet outside (or just inside) the hearing room.
4. When it is your turn, stand at the podium, read your testimony, and remain for possible questions. Most testimony is limited to three minutes.
5. Be respectful — address the committee, not the audience, avoid reactions like applause while others are testifying, and remember to silence your phone!

How to Testify Remotely

1. Register at mainelegislature.org/testimony up to 30 minutes before the hearing.
2. Select the committee, hearing date, and bill.
3. Check the Zoom testimony box and upload your testimony.
4. Enter your name, town, and email, then submit.
5. You will receive a Zoom link via email.

What to Expect at the Hearing

- The committee chair calls the hearing to order.
- The bill sponsor testifies first, followed by co-sponsors and other legislators.
- Public testimony is then invited by the committee chair, in order of the sign-up sheet. Listen for your name to be called.
- The schedule may change, and hearings can last for hours.
- Missing legislators may serve on multiple committees and be double booked, but they will receive all written testimony and the hearings are recorded.

Attending a Hearing at the State House

- **Location:** Most committee hearings are held in the State House (7 State House Drive) or on the second floor of the Cross Office Building (111 Sewall Street) in Augusta, ME. Visit legislature.maine.gov/committee/#Committees to find the hearing room for the bill you're testifying on.
- **Parking:** Available behind the Cross Office Building and in nearby lots.
- **Accessibility:** Visit legislature.maine.gov/lto/special-accommodations for accommodations.
- **Security:** All visitors pass through screening; personal belongings are scanned.

For questions or assistance, contact ryan@mecep.org.

Final Tip: Your testimony is valuable. Be clear, concise, and personal. Lawmakers need to hear your perspective!