

Participate in legislative bill public hearings * Nebraska Legislature 2021

1 - Attend the hearing and testify in person

- In-person testimony is generally limited to 5 minutes (3 minutes in Judiciary), but the chair of each committee has discretion to modify that time limit.
- Persons verbally testifying will be listed as a testifier on the committee statement and have their position included within the official committee hearing record and committee statement; and
- Committees are asking testifiers to eliminate or limit handouts.

2 - Written Testimony In Lieu of In-Person Testimony for Public Hearings

- For the 2021 Session, the standing committees will accept submitted written testimony for public hearings on a bill or resolution
- This option was created to address concerns about the pandemic and is for those who wish to have their testimony and name recorded on the committee statement and included in the formal committee hearing record as if they had testified in person
- Please note that the committee statement will note that the testimony was provided in writing; and your testimony will not actually be read at the hearing.
- The following six specific rules must be met in order to successfully have your testimony submitted for the record:
 - Submission of written testimony will only be accepted in person between 8:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. in the hearing room where the bill will be heard later that day.
 - You must sign-in when you submit your written testimony
 - NO handouts or exhibits may be submitted with your written testimony. If you want senators to have your handouts, take them to each senator's office
 - Submit 12 copies of your written testimony. Failure to submit 12 copies will result in the treatment of the submission as a *position letter* and not *written testimony*
 - The written testimony must not be longer than 2 single-spaced, or 4 double-spaced, typed pages in length
 - *Write the testimony as if you are at the hearing in person and addressing the committee. Do not use a regular letter format*
 - Only the written testimony of the person actually delivering the testimony will be accepted. No handouts, testimony, or letters from *other individuals* may be submitted with an individual's written testimony
 - Special procedures are available for lobbyists who are submitting testimony on behalf of clients. [Click here](#) for those rules
 - Written testimony will be handed out to each member of the committee during the hearing and made a part of the hearing transcript when the transcript is made public

Failure to meet all of these procedures for submitted written testimony will result in not being listed on the committee statement as a written testifier. However, the testimony will be included in the official hearing record as an exhibit.

3 - Position Letter

- If you would like to submit a position letter to be included in the official hearing record as an *exhibit*, you must deliver your letter to the office of the committee chair or email to the committee's email account [List of Committee Emails](#) by 12:00 p.m. CST on the last work day prior to the public hearing
- Emailed letters must be sent to the committee's email address or they will not be included as part of the official hearing record. Do not email your letter to senators or staff.
- Your letter must a) identify the bill or resolution, b) include your name and address, c) state a position of for, against, or neutral on the bill, and d) include a request for the letter to be included as part of the public hearing record
- Please note that mass communications will not be included as part of the official hearing record regardless of delivery time or requests to have the communication included

4 - Submission of Online Comments

- A new feature has been added to the Nebraska Legislature's website for submission of written comments on pending legislation on the Legislature's website
 - To access this feature, search for the bill on the Legislature's website. On the bill page, click the button that says "submit comments online"
- Online comment submissions will not be considered testimony or part of the public hearing record, but the submitted comments will be available for access by senators and staff throughout the session.
- Comments submitted in this format are not private; there is a 300-word limit.

Why does it matter whether I'm on the committee statement? *The committee statement indicates to senators and the public the number of proponents/opponents on a bill. Often senators only look at the committee statement to give them an overview of the public hearing.*

What is the difference between having my written testimony submitted for the record and having my position letter submitted for the record? *Written testimony submitted as required will be listed on the committee statement. Position letters are not listed on the committee statement but are part of the official record and legislative history. Position letters can only be viewed by senators via a google drive file for each committee.*

How do I know if my letter is part of a mass communication? *If it is a form letter, into which you fill in your name and the identical letter is sent to senator's offices in bulk. The exact standard for this type of letter or email is not clear.*

Are comments submitted online just as effective as letters or written testimony? *It isn't known yet the effectiveness of comments submitted online. Senators have never used this method, and with the limitation of 300 words, it may be difficult to fully explain your position.*

What is the most effective way to communicate my position on bills this session? *At this time, we would recommend submitting written testimony or appearing in person. For both methods, senators are more likely to hear or read your testimony. Unfortunately, as both methods require going to the capitol in person, these methods are not the safest due to the coronavirus pandemic.*

Can I take written testimony and submit it for others if they don't want to or can't go to the capitol in person to hand it in? *The rules have been clarified for lobbyists submitting letters for their clients. No accommodations have been made for individuals submitting letters for others who simply want to avoid the capitol.*