



How to Testify before the Joint Finance Committee

Thank you for being willing to testify!! Here are some tips:

Arrive Early: You want to get there as early as possible, even 20-30 minutes before the start time to get your name on a slip and to get in the queue. The committee hearing goes all day, and they will have large numbers of people from many groups show up to testify. Some people have to wait hours before they are called to testify.

Hearing Slip: Anyone wishing to testify before the committee will need to fill out a hearing slip. Hearing slips need to be given to the legislative pages who will give the slips to the committee clerk. Hopefully, you get called early to testify, but you should be prepared for a long day while waiting for your name to be called.

Dress: Business or Business casual is great. The legislators on the committee will likely be wearing suits.

Greeting: Good morning, Chairman Marklein, Chairman Born, and members of the committee. Feel free to say hello and recognize your own senator or representative if they are a member of the committee. State your name, title, and your municipality.

Explain your position clearly and simply. Individuals will have 2 minutes to speak (you can submit longer written testimony) and groups of 3 or more will have 5 minutes. It's always great to be respectful and to say thank you for the work they are doing. This is a time for you to say why your issue is so important. Those testifying are not able to ask questions of legislators – the public hearing format is a time for those testifying to present before the committee. Short and to the point is great – 2 minutes and 5 minutes is not a lot of time. Personal examples from your own municipality are great and highly encouraged!

You can bring notes with you and written testimony. If you bring written testimony, you may want to bring 20 copies (enough for the members of the committee, the committee clerk, and any legislative council staff that may be present). Include your contact information on your written testimony.

You are allowed to bring water with you when you speak.

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Committee members generally do not ask questions of the people testifying at JFC budget hearings, but, if they do, feel free to answer the question to the best of your ability. You can always let them know that you will get back to them with the information (via email, etc.) in a timely manner. It's great to be responsive to legislators and legislative staff. Legislative staff are critically important to the process. If you commit to responding at a later date, please follow through in a timely manner.

If you need to leave before you are called, you can leave your written testimony with a legislative page, and they will distribute it to the committee. The committee may end right at 5pm, or it may go longer.

If you are unable to attend a JFC hearing but would like to provide comments, you can submit your comments on JFC's website: <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/topics/budgetcomments/>. All comments will be sent to all members of the committee. JFC also has an email address for input only: budget.comments@legis.wisconsin.gov, and every email submitted will be sent to all members of the committee. It's always great if you are able to also send any messages or comments to your own direct state senator and state representative as well. You can enter your address on [this site](#) to find your legislators.

Thank you for being willing to testify!! Feel free to contact us with any questions.

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