



Ten Tips for Giving Effective Testimony

1. **Be connected and informed:** Look for opportunities and sign up for newsletters and updates so you will know when you may be able to submit written testimony and/or give oral testimony. There are many opportunities to speak locally and on the state level.
 - a. Federal testimony and comments are usually by invitation only. Someone may advocate for you to give testimony on federal issues. NDSC regularly submits comments on federal regulations. State coalitions often submit comments on state regulations.
2. **Read and Follow the Rules:** Ensure you understand and adhere to the guidelines provided for giving testimony, which are usually available online. These specify things such as when and how to sign up, how long the testimony should be, and how many copies to bring.
 - a. **Register early-** Sign up as soon as registration opens. Often, you can register in advance, but sometimes you need to arrive early to secure your spot.
3. **Know Your Time Limit:** Find out how many minutes you are allowed to speak and prepare your testimony accordingly. Practice in advance so you are confident you can adhere to the time limit.
4. **Get Permission for Group Representation:** If speaking on behalf of a group, obtain permission from the group leaders. Introduce yourself with your name, position, and the group you represent, including a brief description of the group.
5. **Coordinate with Others:** If you are part of a coalition or group, divide the topics among members to ensure all relevant issues are covered without repetition.
6. **Prepare a Written Testimony:** Write your testimony formally, including your name, address, cell number, and email. Share copies with the media, local organizations, and policymakers if possible.
7. **Use Your Personal Stories:** As with all advocacy efforts, avoid attacking anyone, and instead stress the positive of what you are promoting.
8. **Practice and Edit:** Print your testimony in large font, double or triple spaced, and read it aloud several times. Adjust the wording to ensure it sounds natural when spoken and fits within the allotted time. If possible, make a video of yourself, watch, and adjust your testimony.
9. **Respect the Time Limit:** Stay within the allowed minutes. If the buzzer sounds, quickly conclude your remarks with a final wrap-up sentence that states what you are asking the members to do.
10. **Follow up:** After the testimony, send a thank you and any additional information requested during the hearing. This helps reinforce your points and shows your commitment to the issue. You might also follow up with media and social media.