



## Testifying “Cheat Sheet” for the 2025 Legislature

The United States and Montana Constitutions ensure that citizens have the right to speak on issues that impact at every level of government. The Montana Legislature extends this right to all Montanans.

### **Nurses need to speak about nursing issues! You are the EXPERT!!**

Most people have a fear of public speaking. The following tips may be helpful in preparing to ease any potential nervousness. Whether you are speaking at the podium or on ZOOM during the session, the process is the same. Montana has a citizen’s legislature allowing regular Montanans to shape laws and policy. Remember YOU are the expert!

#### **\*TESTIFYING TIPS and BEST PRACTICES:**

##### **\*\*\*IN Person\*\*\***

You will be required to sign in when you testify in person. The Chairperson determines the order of the bills to be heard. Typical testimony order is: introduction, proponents, and opponents, and informational witnesses. The Chairperson will also state any limitations such as “keep your remarks to two minutes” or “keep your comments specific to the legislation”.

##### **\*\*\*ZOOM\*\*\***

You may sign up to testify remotely using Zoom up to two (2) hours prior to a meeting’s scheduled start time. Once you successfully submit your information, you will be emailed the Zoom link for participation. That link is specific to you, so please do not share it. Once you receive your specific testimony zoom link, you MUST follow all the instructions to the letter to ensure your voice is heard.

If you request to testify via Zoom and have attachments or information to upload there is specific guidance on <https://www.legmt.gov/> with instructions on how to upload your testimony and supporting documents.

**\*\*\*From Montana Legislature home page click on committees the click on the Public Participation Under Newly Released. PARTICIPATE page describes the process and other ways to participate the click on public participation box. This takes you to the public participation page then you can choose how you want to participate and in which committees then follow the prompts.\*\*\***



**\*Remember - we will HELP with talking points and/or reviewing your testimony\***

1. Address the Chairperson in the following way:

*“Chairperson/Madam Chair/ Chairman (Last name) and members of the committee:*

*For the record, my name is (First and Last Name). My last name is spelled (spell it out). I live in (Your hometown and legislative district if you know it.) I am her representing (self/organization). I stand in support/opposition of (Senate or House Bill Number and Title)”.*

2. Share your relationship to the issue – why your position is relevant. Add 1-3 key points. Try not to be redundant. Mention if you agree with specific points made before you then add any new information that might be important for the committee to hear.
3. Reiterate your position on the bill. Let them know you are available for questions during Q&A. **(Important to stay for the entire committee meeting. If you must leave early at the end of your testimony address the Chair and ask permission to leave early.)**
4. Thank the Chair and the committee for the opportunity to testify. Ask permission of the chair if you have testimony or documents to submit before handing them to the staff.

**\*MORE Tips:**

- Speak from the heart. Do not skip your stories that bring relevance to the issue.
- Stick to approved talking points. An additional review ensures that there are no red flags in your testimony.
- Try not to read your testimony. Practice ahead of time and look at notes if you need a prompt. Be brief.
- **No need to be nervous!**

**\*Answering Questions from Committee members:**

If you are called back to the podium or questioned during a ZOOM call, the following tips will be helpful:

- Address the chair and the committee member who is asking you the question. (“Chair (Last name)” and “Representative/Senator (Last Name)”.

Answer the question to the best of your ability. If you do not know the answer, offer to get the information asked for. If (in person) someone in the audience you know can answer the question, ask if you can defer to that individual. If you have written testimony or any handouts, ask the chair if you can submit it for committee members.

**REMEMBER: YOU are the expert!**