



HOW TO TESTIFY IN COMMITTEE

Washington State has one of the most open legislatures in the country. A bill has a public hearing before Senate and House committees before being considered on the floor of the House and Senate. During the 2021 session, House and Senate committees will meet virtually. You have the opportunity to provide written testimony, state your position on a bill, or register to testify remotely via videoconference by registering at [Committee Sign In](#). You may also contact your legislator making your position on a bill known. You can do so by writing a letter, sending an email, calling the legislator's Olympia office, or by calling the Legislative Hotline at 800.562.6000.

Committee Hearings

Legislative hearings are conducted informally. The rules are somewhat relaxed but are intended to help preserve decorum and allow respectful courteous debate. Anyone can testify; you do not need formal training.

To find out when a hearing is scheduled:

- Go to: [Committee Schedules, Agendas, and Documents](#) to view committee meeting schedules.
- Call or email the Legislative Information Center at 1.800.562.6000 or support@leg.wa.gov.
- Subscribe to the Legislature's Committee Email Notification Service.

Before the Hearing

Prepare Your Remarks. Time is usually limited, so be brief and direct. Written testimony should not be read at committee hearings. Writing your comments in outline form will be helpful when you speak, and you should summarize your written testimony.

Avoid Duplication. If other persons will be offering similar testimony at the hearing, try to coordinate your testimony and avoid duplication. Well-organized testimony is the most effective.

Meeting Virtually

- Be punctual; usually, there is only one public hearing at which testimony is taken on a particular bill.
- Sign-in is done electronically in all committees at Committee Sign In. You will receive an individual link to join the virtual meeting after you sign in. See detailed instructions on how to join a House or Senate meeting once signed in.
- Check to see if copies of proposed amendments or substitute bills are available at the Committee Schedules page. Click view docs for the meeting you are interested in.

How the Meeting Is Conducted

Be present at the beginning of the hearing. The committee chair will open the hearing on a particular bill. Frequently, opening comments will be made by the bill's sponsor or by committee staff. Sometimes, however, the chair will ask for testimony from proponents and opponents immediately.

The chair will organize the hearing to ensure:

- The committee members hear relevant information
- Interested persons are given the opportunity to express their positions.
- The hearing does not exceed the time available.

Most committee hearings are limited to two hours and may have several matters pending. The chair will attempt to be fair and provide each person an opportunity to testify. It may be necessary, however, to restrict testimony so that everyone is given an opportunity to express his or her opinions. You may not be called on to testify, however, you may still provide written testimony for 24 hours after the start of the hearing.

Making Your Remarks

1. Begin by introducing yourself to the chair and committee members and stating your purpose. *Ex. "Mr. or Madam Chair and members of the committee, I am John Doe from Spokane. I am here representing myself. I support this bill because . . ."*
2. In your opening remarks, make it clear whether you are representing other citizens or a separate group.
3. Be brief and be sure your remarks are clear. Avoid being too technical and do not repeat previously made remarks. You do not need to be nervous or worried about how you present your testimony.

4. Be prepared for questions and comments from committee members. These are designed to gain additional information, but don't answer if you are not sure of the answer. Tell the members you will send a written answer to the committee, and then follow through.
5. Restrict yourself to your testimony. Abstain from other overt demonstrations such as clapping, cheering, booing, etc.

How to Submit Written Testimony

If you are unable to attend a committee meeting, you may use the following method for submitting written testimony:

House - You may submit written testimony up to 24 hours after the start of the hearing. Or you may email your written testimony directly to all committee members as well as to the Committee Chair or the Chair's LA. Be sure to include the bill number and your position on the bill.

A list of Committee Chairs can be found at:

<http://app.leg.wa.gov/Rosters/CommitteeMembersByCommittee/House>.

Senate - You may submit written testimony up to 24 hours after the start of the hearing. Or you may email your written testimony directly to committee members as well as to the Committee Chair or the Chair's LA. Be sure to include the bill number and your position on the bill. Another option is to email your written testimony to committee staff, as an alternative or in addition to submitting testimony to committee members.

A list of Senate committees and staff can be found at:

<http://leg.wa.gov/Senate/Committees/Pages/default.aspx>.

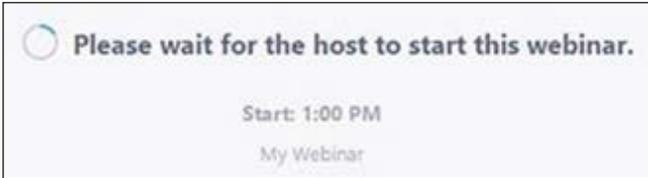
The image is a screenshot of a web application interface for supporting a bill online. On the left, a green vertical banner contains the text "HOW TO SUPPORT A BILL ONLINE" in white, with a mouse cursor pointing to the word "BILL". To the right, a white area contains five numbered steps, each with a green circle containing a white number. Step 1: "GO TO: leg.wa.gov/legislature/Pages/Participating.aspx" with a small logo for "NORTHWEST COMMUNITY BALANCE" in the top right. Step 2: "Register to Testify Remotely During a Hearing" with a dark green button and a mouse cursor. Step 3: "COMMITTEE SIGN IN - REMOTE TESTIMONY" with buttons for "House", "Senate", and "Joint". Step 4: "Committee: Please Select" and "Meetings: Please Select" with dropdown menus. Step 5: "SELECT TYPE OF TESTIMONY" with a dark green button containing the text "I would like my position noted for the legislative record." and a mouse cursor. The entire interface is framed by a thin green border.



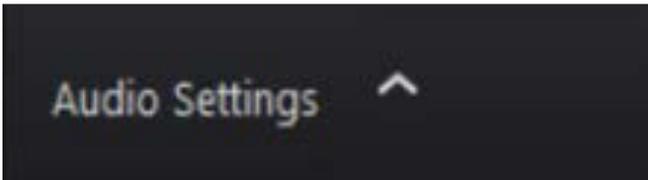
Testifying in a Virtual Committee Meeting

1 Joining a Committee Meeting: Video and Audio in Zoom

1. Click or tap the link included in the Zoom instructions. *(This link is unique to you and is prohibited from being shared.)*
2. If the meeting has not yet opened for attendees to join, you will see the following message:



3. Once you have joined the meeting, you will be able to adjust your microphone and speaker by clicking the upward arrow (^) next to Audio Settings. The Audio Settings button is located in the lower left corner of the screen.



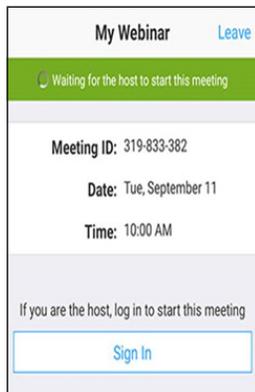
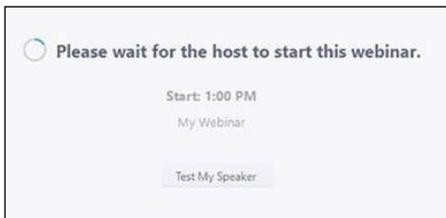
4. When it is your turn to testify, the Chair will call your name. At this time, you will be transitioned to a panelist, where you will be given permission to speak. During this transition, your Zoom window will briefly disappear and indicate it is “Rejoining” the meeting.



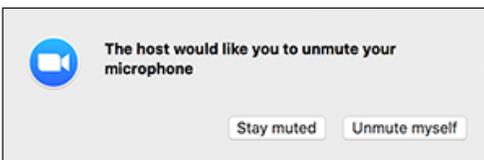
5. Once you have rejoined the meeting as a panelist, audio and video controls will display in the lower left corner. Click the **Start Video** button and **Unmute** to begin speaking to the committee. Remember to state your name, organization, and your position on the bill.
6. After you have concluded your remarks, you will be reverted to an attendee and will no longer be able to speak. If you have registered to testify on multiple bills during the same meeting, you will need to wait for the Chair to call on you again. When you wish to disconnect from the meeting, click the red **Leave** button located in the lower right corner of your screen. If you remain on Zoom for the remainder of the meeting, you will be automatically disconnected once the meeting adjourns.

2 Joining a Committee Meeting: Audio-only within Zoom

1. Click or tap the link included in the Zoom instructions. *(This link is unique to you and is prohibited from being shared.)*



2. If the meeting has not yet been opened for attendees to join, you will see the one of following messages:



Note: You can still access the audio settings by clicking on the ^ arrow next to the Unmute/Mute button.

3. Once you have joined the meeting, you will be able to adjust your microphone and speaker by clicking the upward arrow (^) next to Audio Settings.
4. When it is your turn to testify, the Chair will call your name. At this time, you should unmute yourself and you will be given permission to speak in Zoom. If you do not unmute yourself, staff may prompt you to unmute your microphone.
5. After you have concluded your remarks, you will be muted again and will no longer be able to speak. If you have registered to testify on multiple bills during the same meeting, you will need to wait for the Chair to call on you again. When you wish to disconnect from the meeting, click the red **Leave** button located in the lower right corner of your screen. If you remain on Zoom for the remainder of the meeting, you will be automatically disconnected once the meeting adjourns.

Testifying in a Virtual Committee Meeting

3 Joining a Committee Meeting: Phone-in Only

1. Call one of the phone numbers in the “Or Telephone” section of the Zoom instructions you received via email. **You must call into the meeting using the same phone number with which you registered, otherwise you will be unrecognized.**

Or Telephone:
Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):
US: +1 253 215 8782 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 669 900 9128 or +1 31
Webinar ID: 944 1724 1750
Password: 420236

2. Once connected, follow the prompts to enter your Webinar ID and Password on your phone’s dialpad. These may be referred to as a meeting ID and participant ID by the voice commands you hear.

3. You will now join the meeting.
4. When it is your turn to testify, the Chair will call your name. At this time, you will be given permission to speak. You will receive a notification that you have been unmuted.
*Control for the Phone-in option:
6 to Mute/Unmute (if permission granted)
5. After you have concluded your remarks, you will be muted again and no longer able to speak. If you have registered to testify on multiple bills during the same meeting, you will need to wait for the Chair to call on you again. When you wish to disconnect from the meeting, simply hang up from your phone dialpad. If you remain on the call for the remainder of the meeting, you will be automatically disconnected once the meeting adjourns.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What should I do if I am unable to find my Zoom link after I register to testify?

1. Check your spam, junk or other folders that the Zoom link email may have been filtered into.
2. Check if you have a firewall enabled. A firewall may be blocking the incoming email.
3. Search your inbox for the name of the committee for which you signed up to testify. The email sender profile will display the committee’s full name.
4. After you have registered to testify, visit the [CSI Remote](#) webpage to confirm you are signed in.

On the CSI Remote webpage:

- a. Select the chamber (House or Senate.)
- b. Select the committee and meeting date.
- c. Select the bill for which you registered to testify.
- d. Click “See who has signed in for this agenda item.”
- e. Verify that you are on the testifier list. If you are not, then you are not registered and must register again.

As a reminder, **testimony registration will close 1 hour before the start time of the hearing. Anyone who does not register before this deadline will be unable to testify before the committee.**

How early can I connect to the Zoom meeting before the meeting begins?

You can connect to Zoom at any time; however, you will not be permitted in the meeting itself until committee and technical staff admit you. This typically happens 5 minutes prior to the start of the meeting.

What should I do if I am called up to speak and my microphone is not muted, but it does not appear that anyone can hear me?

First, check your audio settings. To do so, click the upward arrow (^) next to Audio Settings and verify that the microphone is set to the device or headset you are using.

My internet connection is unstable. What is my best option to testify?

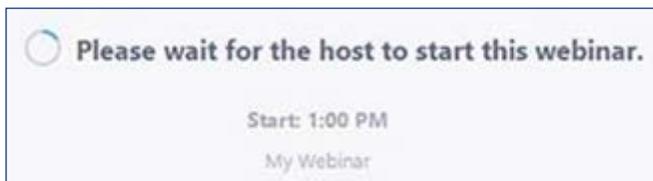
If your internet connection is unstable and you frequently have bandwidth issues, we recommend that you use your phone to call into the meeting to testify. See the instructions above in [#3 Joining a committee meeting by the Zoom link: Phone-in Only](#) for information on how to testify in the meeting by phone. *You must call into the meeting using the same phone number with which you registered, otherwise you will be unrecognized.* If the Chair calls your name but staff cannot determine who you are by the phone number, you could miss your opportunity to testify.



Testifying in a Virtual Committee Meeting

1 Joining a Committee Meeting: Video and Audio in Zoom

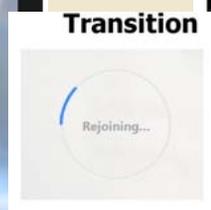
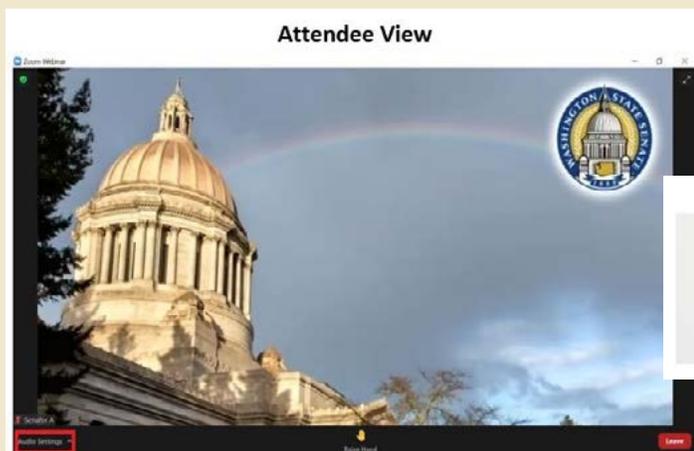
1. Click or tap the link included in the Zoom instructions.
(This link is unique to you and is prohibited from being shared.)
2. If the meeting has not yet opened for attendees to join, you will see the following message:



3. Once you have joined the meeting, you will be in the Attendee View. You will be able to adjust your microphone and speaker by clicking the upward arrow (^) next to Audio Settings.

4. When it is your turn to testify, the Chair will call your name. At this time, you will transition to the Panelist View, where you will be given permission to speak. During this transition, your Zoom window will briefly disappear and indicate it is "Rejoining" the meeting.
5. Once you have rejoined the meeting as a Panelist, audio and video controls will display in the lower left corner. To change to Gallery view to see the testimony timer while on a desktop or laptop, locating the **View** icon in the upper right-hand corner of the window. Select **Gallery View**. If you are on a phone or tablet, swipe left from active speaker view to change to Gallery to view the testimony timer. Click the **Start Video** button and **Unmute** to begin speaking to the committee. (See images below.)

User View from a Desktop Computer or Laptop



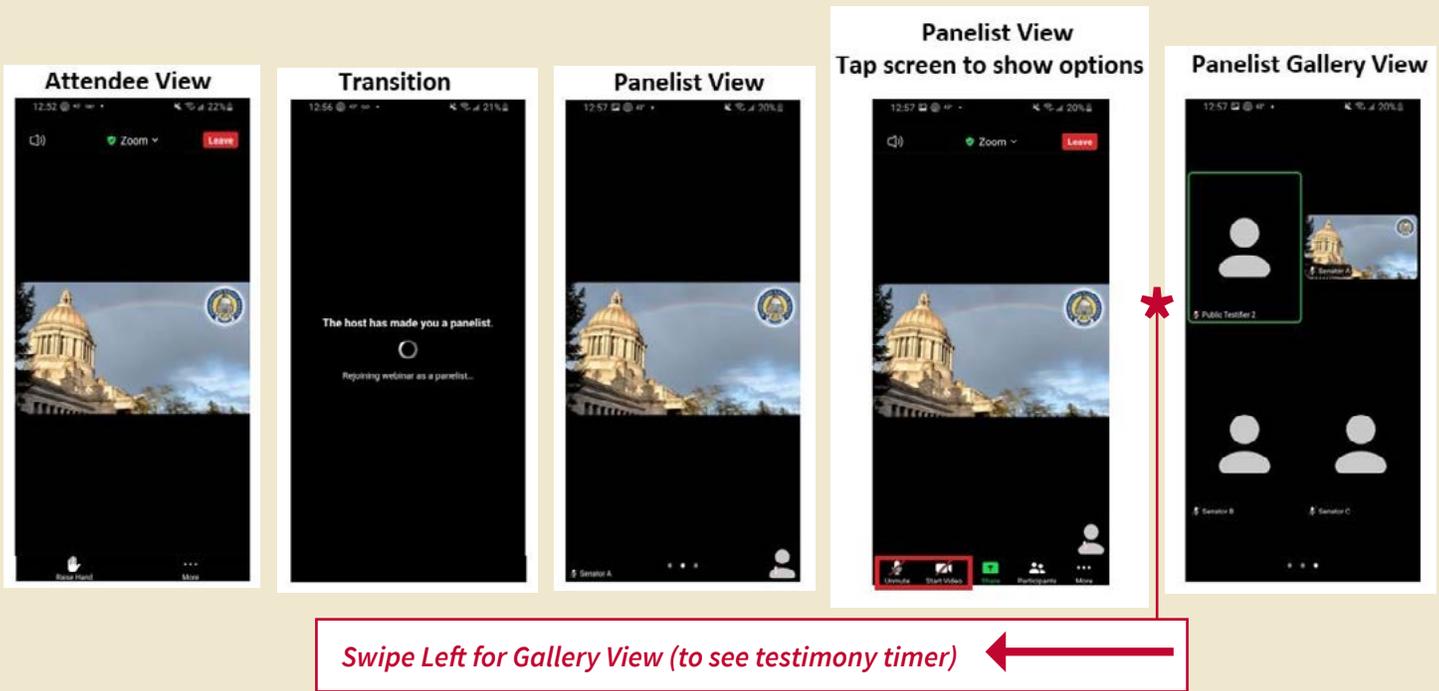
Testifying in a Virtual Committee Meeting

1 Joining a Committee Meeting: Video and Audio in Zoom *continued*

6. After you have concluded your remarks, you will be reverted to an Attendee and will no longer be able to speak. If you have registered to testify on multiple bills during the same meeting, you will need to wait for the Chair to call on you again. When you wish to disconnect

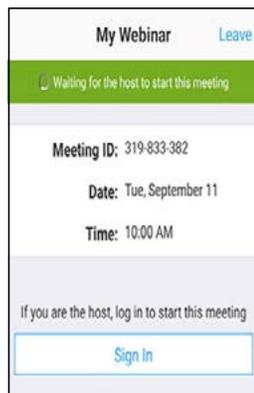
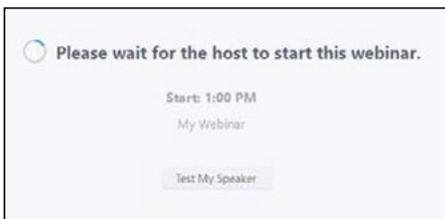
from the meeting, click the red **Leave** button located in the lower right corner of your screen. If you remain on Zoom for the remainder of the meeting, you will be automatically disconnected once the meeting adjourns.

User View from a Phone or Tablet

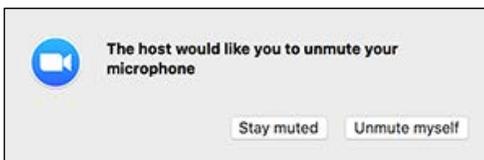


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Note: You can still access the audio settings by clicking on the ^ arrow next to the Unmute/Mute button.

3. Once you have joined the meeting, you will be able to adjust your microphone and speaker by clicking the upward arrow (^) next to Audio Settings.

4. When it is your turn to testify, the Chair will call your name. At this time, unmute yourself. If you do not unmute yourself, committee staff may prompt you and you will receive a notification, from which you should select **Unmute myself**.

5. After you have concluded your remarks, you will be muted again and will no longer be able to speak. If you have registered to testify on multiple bills during the same meeting, you will need to wait for the Chair to call on you again. When you wish to disconnect from the meeting, click the red **Leave** button located in the lower right corner of your screen. If you remain on Zoom for the remainder of the meeting, you will be automatically disconnected once the meeting adjourns.

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3 Joining a Committee Meeting: Phone-in Only

1. Call one of the phone numbers in the “Or Telephone” section of the Zoom instructions you received via email. You must call into the meeting using the same phone number with which you registered, otherwise you will not be identifiable in the meeting.

Or Telephone:

Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 253 215 8782 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 669 900 9128 or +1 31

Webinar ID: 944 1724 1750

Password: 420236

2. Once connected, follow the prompts to enter your Webinar ID and Password on your phone’s dialpad. These may be referred to as a meeting ID and participant ID by the voice commands you hear.

3. You will now join the meeting.
4. When it is your turn to testify, the Chair will call your name. At this time, you will be given permission to speak. You will receive a notification that you have been unmuted.

Control for the Phone-in option:

**6 to Mute/Unmute (if permission granted)*

5. After you have concluded your remarks, you will be muted again and no longer able to speak. If you have registered to testify on multiple bills during the same meeting, you will need to wait for the Chair to call on you again. When you wish to disconnect from the meeting, simply hang up from your phone dialpad. If you remain on the call for the remainder of the meeting, you will be automatically disconnected once the meeting adjourns.

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2. Check if you have a firewall enabled. A firewall may be blocking the incoming email.
3. Search your inbox for the name of the committee for which you signed up to testify. The email sender profile will display the committee’s full name.
4. Verify that you are in the testifier list before the start of the committee meeting. Visit the [CSI Remote](#) webpage, then follow these steps:
 - a. Select the chamber (House or Senate.)
 - b. Select the committee and meeting date.
 - c. Select the bill for which you registered to testify.
 - d. Below the table to choose which type of testimony you want to select, click **See who has signed in for this agenda item.**
 - e. Verify that you are on the testifier list. If you are not, then you are not registered and must register again.

How early can I connect to the Zoom meeting before the meeting begins?

You may connect to Zoom at any time prior to the committee meeting. However, the meeting’s video feed will not be viewable to you until committee and technical staff begin the broadcast. This typically occurs about 5 minutes prior to the start of the meeting.

What should I do if I am called up to speak and my microphone is not muted, but it does not appear that anyone can hear me?

First, check that your audio settings did not change automatically, which can happen within Zoom. To do so, click the upward arrow (^) next to Audio Settings and verify that the microphone is set to the device or headset you intend to use.

My internet connection is unstable. What is my best option to testify?

If your wired or wireless connection is unstable and you frequently have bandwidth issues, we recommend that you use your phone to call into the meeting to testify. See the instructions above in [#3 Joining a committee meeting by the Zoom link: Phone-in Only](#) for information on how to testify in the meeting by phone only. *Be sure to call into the meeting using the phone with the same number as the one you entered on the testimony registration form.* This will help legislative committee staff to identify you by the last three digits of your phone number, of which is the only identification available within Zoom. If the Chair calls your name but staff cannot determine who you are by the phone number, you may miss your opportunity to testify.