



Guide to speaking at the minimum wage hearing on April 5th

Your voice will make a difference! Testifying at a public hearing can feel intimidating at first. The most important thing to remember is that the single most effective thing you can do is tell your story. This short guide will walk you through everything you need to prepare for the hearing.

First, the basics:

- The hearing will be held in the Cross Office Building at 111 Sewall Street in Augusta. The Cross Building is the big concrete building in front of the Capitol building, which has a copper dome.
- It's in Room 208, which is down the hallway immediately to your left when coming in from parking lot.
- The hearing begins at 10. People are coming as early as 8:30am to save a seat, but testimony by the public likely won't begin until 11 or even 12. (There's a cafe right in the Cross Building, so there's food available for lunch!)

What to expect:

The hearing will begin with legislators who are sponsoring the bills under consideration testifying. Next, members of the public will get to speak. Testimony will go back and forth between proponents and opponents every half-hour or so. It's very likely the hearing room will fill up early, and there will be an overflow room where you can listen into the hearing.

What to prepare:

You'll want to prepare testimony before the hearing and **print out 25 copies**. You don't need to read exactly what you write. You can tell the same story that you have written out right from the heart on the day of the hearing. You can only **speak for 3 minutes**, but your written testimony can be longer.

When it's your turn to speak:

First, you'll first hand in written testimony to the Clerk (you'll see other people do this before you). Walk up to the podium and introduce yourself like this: *"Senator Volk, Representative Fecteau and members of the Labor, Commerce, Research and Economic Development Committee, my name is _____, I am a resident of _____ and I am here today to speak in support of LD 1117 and against LD 673, 702, and all the bills being heard this afternoon."*

Then you read your testimony. There will be a clock going, and you'll get a gentle reminder when 3 minutes is up. After you're finished, you can offer to answer questions if you're comfortable. It's always OK to say you don't know the answer.

Here are the key messages to reinforce:

Real families are on the line.

- Personal stories are best!
- The median income (including tips) for a restaurant server in Maine is \$9.06 an hour
- Tipped workers are 2x as likely to be in poverty and three times likelier to access food stamps
- Incomes for tipped workers fluctuate greatly season to season and even shift to shift
- 79% of tipped wage workers are women, many of them single parents

Raising the tipped wage works.

- In the seven states with no subminimum wage and in others with higher tipped wages:
 - Tipping is just as high or higher and servers make higher incomes
 - Restaurant industry growth and employment is higher
- This is gradual - the subminimum wage won't reach the full minimum until 2027

It's the law and it passed with overwhelming support.

- Did you help gather signatures? Talk about it!
- Question 4 passed with 55.5% statewide
- It won with 54% support in Aroostook and Washington Counties
- More than 100,000 more voters said Yes on 4 than supported Gov. LePage in 2014
- It received more votes than any citizen initiative in Maine history
- More people cast ballots on Question 4 than voted for president
- A clear question listed the exact dates and amounts of the wage increases

Here's an example of how testimony can be structured:

- **Introduction:** "Senator Volk, Representative Fecteau and members of the Labor, Commerce, Research and Economic Development Committee, my name is _____, I am a resident of _____ and I am here today to speak in support of LD 1117 and against LD 673, 702, and all the bills being heard this afternoon."
- **Key messages:** Pick one or two - just one sentences on each.
- **Story:** Tell a story that illustrates your main point. This could be a story about your experience waiting tables for a subminimum wage with variable tips, or your perspective as a low-wage worker, or a story about volunteering on the Mainers for Fair Wages campaign and talking to other Maine voters about the issue. It can simply be a story that illustrates why you care about this issue.
- **Closing:** Reinforce your key message (again, just a sentence) and thank the committee.

These are the important things to remember:

- The best way to get your point across is to **share your story**. You don't need to be an economist to be effective. In fact, just being yourself and sharing why you personally care about this is always going to be better than reading a list of facts and figures.
- You have **3 minutes to speak**, and the time goes by fast! You really only have time to say your key message and tell a story to illustrate your point.
- **You are making a difference!** The legislature works for us, and you are helping to protect the will of Maine voters and raises for 180,000 workers in our state. Bravo!