

## **Maine Lawmakers Need to Hear from You!**

### **Guide to Testifying**

Your voice and your story make a difference in securing a state budget that grows our economy and helps Maine people and communities thrive. Public hearings provide an opportunity for you to offer input, share your story, and talk about the impact of potential policy changes on you and your family.

This guide to testifying contains information for those planning to testify on the state budget. The most important thing is that you **focus on telling your story and how the state budget affects you and your community**. More information about emerging issues and ongoing opportunities to testify or how contact your state lawmakers can be found by going to the “Take Action” section at [mecep.org](http://mecep.org).

#### **Directions:**

The Appropriations Committee hearing room is located in Room 228 on the second floor of the State Capitol Building. Please allow extra time to pass through security screening at the entrance of the building. When you arrive at the hearing room be sure to sign up to testify.

#### **Public Hearing Procedures:**

- **Order of Testimony** - The committee chair will open the public hearing. Bill sponsors will speak first, then the public in this order: those favoring the bill, those against the bill, and those neither for nor against but who wish to offer information about the bill.
- **Your turn at the podium** - When it is your turn to testify, proceed to the podium and sign in. Begin your testimony by saying: “Honorable Senator Hamper, Representative Gattine, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs.” Then introduce yourself. Say where you live and share your story about why the proposed policy change matters to you. When you finish, remain at the podium to answer questions.

#### **Tips:**

- **Keep your testimony to 3 minutes.** To ensure all voices are heard, time limits are enforced.
- **If you can, write your testimony and bring 40 copies.** That way, it will become part of the public record and will be available to committee members who are not present. Your written testimony can be as long as you like. If you can’t write it, it’s OK. You can still speak.
- **Be polite and respectful.** Testimony is public record, streamed online, and often quoted in the media. Speaking clearly and politely helps legislators and the media focus on the important story you have to tell.
- **Tell your story and stick to the facts.** Public hearings are opportunities for legislators to hear Mainers explain how legislative proposals impact them. So tell your story. Explain how proposed policy changes will impact you personally.