



## PREPARING YOURSELF FOR PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Part of being an AAUW issue advocate may require testifying before public bodies in an advisory or informational hearing. A particular public body may ask you to testify, or you may choose to testify on an individual basis. It is an opportunity to share information and to present a point of view.

- Here are some guidelines:
- You should be a registered voter.
- Know what to expect and be prepared. See information on Legislative web site or call legislative staff, or relevant local individual or office for date, time, time allotted per presenter, prior sign-up, and any other scheduling or logistic questions.
- Find out who your audience will be and try to adjust your testimony to the audience's knowledge base, especially your use of jargon.
- If in person, have copies of your testimony ready in advance for each person on the hearing committee and for the recorder.
- Introduce yourself: I am name representing 500 AAUW-NM members. We support or We oppose title of bill.
- Present your position strongly, without being antagonizing.
- Timing is crucial. Have a summary or "key points highlighted" version of your testimony to read from if time is running out. The House usually allows 1 minute; The Senate may allow 1 or 2 minutes.
- Rehearse your testimony, long and summary versions.
- Have another person ask you questions about the subject of your testimony. If you anticipate questions and prepare answers, you will be less nervous during your appearance.
- Listen to questions carefully. Ask for clarification if you don't understand the question. Pause for two or three seconds before answering (this seems much longer to you than anyone else) to allow yourself a chance to organize your response.
- Answer questions accurately. If you don't know the answer -- say so. Offer to call or email an answer if you don't have the information immediately at hand. Do so promptly!
- Thank the board for the opportunity to present your testimony.
- Write follow-up letters or notes to staff people or others who provided you with information.
- Send a legislative report form.