Everything You Need to Know about Testifying Before the Joint Finance Committee on the State Budget Bill

Speaking In-person

1. **Prepare your testimony before the hearing.** There are strict time-limits. Typically, individual speakers are given 2 minutes to speak and groups are given 5 minutes to speak. You will want to write out and practice your testimony before the hearing to ensure you are within the required time. Bring 20 copies of your written testimony to the hearing to turn in.

2. **Get there VERY early** (between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m.) to guarantee that you will have a chance to speak. These hearings draw hundreds of people and you will be given a slot to speak based on when you arrive and sign in at the venue. Be prepared to stand in line when you get to the venue.

3. **Sign-in to speak!** You will not be called to speak unless you fill out a hearing slip and give it to the page staff who will be at the hearing.

4. **Be prepared to wait.** These hearings last all day, and you will likely wait several hours before your name is called to speak. Don’t get discouraged; testifying at these hearings is important! The Committee takes notice of the top issues that are brought up at the hearings.

5. **Listen for Your Name.** The chair of the Committee will call your name when it’s your turn to speak. Once you hear your name, go to the speaker’s line.

6. **When it’s your turn to speak, keep these best practices in mind:** Start off by thanking the Committee for the opportunity to testify. Clearly state your name, organization (if applicable) and ask. Stick to the script! Respect time limits (2 min solo; 5 min group). Use formal titles when addressing legislators (Representative, Senator).
Submitting Written Testimony

1. **At the public hearing.** If you don’t want to speak, you can still register as either “for” or “against” different proposals at the public hearings and submit written testimony. Written testimony can be as long as you want, and you can even hand in fact sheets or infographics.

2. **Via E-mail.** You can email written testimony on the state budget bill to budgetcomments@legis.wisconsin.gov.

**Tips for Crafting Public Hearing Testimony (Spoken or Written)**

1. **Start by saying thank you.** Thank the Chairs (Sen. Darling and Rep. Nygren) and Committee members for the opportunity to testify.

2. **Tell them who you are.** State your name and organization (if applicable). Put full contact information at the top of your written testimony.

3. **Clearly state your ask.** (i.e. I’m here to ask that you increase the Medicaid personal care reimbursement rate by 11%).

4. **Tell them why this matters.** Provide examples or stories to back up your ask. This could include Wisconsin specific data/studies or a personal story.

5. **Wrap it all up.** Re-state your ask and thank the Committee for their time.
2019-21 State Budget Public Hearing Schedule

Friday, April 5, 2019 (10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)
Pontiac Convention Center
2809 North Pontiac Drive
Janesville, WI 53545

Wednesday, April 10, 2019 (10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)
Oak Creek Community Center
8580 South Howell Avenue
Oak Creek, WI 53154

Monday, April 15, 2019 (10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)
University of Wisconsin – River Falls
University Center – Riverview Ballroom #260
500 Wild Rose Avenue
River Falls, WI 54022

Free Public Parking Accessible at: PAY 1 LOT, North Second Street, River Falls, WI 54022

Wednesday, April 24, 2019 (10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)
University of Wisconsin-Green Bay
University Union - Phoenix Rooms
2430 Campus Court
Green Bay, WI 54311