

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**  
**Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chairman**  
**Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chairman**  
**2 East Miller Senate Building**

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**Witness Guidelines**

For questions regarding oral testimony sign-up and written testimony submission for VIRTUAL BILL HEARINGS. Please reach out directly to the Committee at [aa\\_jpr@mlis.state.md.us](mailto:aa_jpr@mlis.state.md.us) or check the Maryland General Assembly Hearing Schedule.

- Public Bill Hearings:

The Committee typically schedules bill hearings on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays during the legislative session. Bill hearings usually begin at 1:00 pm. However, the start time is subject to change due to the workload of the Committee and the length of floor sessions. **Please monitor the hearing schedule for any scheduled changes. If bill hearings are scheduled for anytime earlier than 1:00 pm, the witness sign-up and testimony submission deadline noted below may also change.** Any unscheduled changes will be announced from the Senate floor prior to conclusion of the Senate floor session, and then posted on the Committee room doors.

The Chairman will announce a tentative bill order at the beginning of each hearing. The order is subject to availability of sponsors, the number of witnesses and any high-profile witnesses signed up to testify.

All bill hearings are streamed live over the internet and may be accessed through the Maryland General Assembly's website.

House Bills: In general, the Committee does not hold hearings on House Bills that have been cross-filed in the Senate. Additionally, when the Committee schedules a House Bill for a public hearing, the Committee will accept oral testimony from the bill's **sponsor only UNLESS there is opposition**. If there is opposition, the Committee will hold a full bill hearing.

- Testimony for Public Bill Hearings:

The Committee accepts both oral and written testimony. **New this year, witnesses planning to provide oral testimony OR submit written testimony must sign-up in person using the electronic process outlined below.**

- Sign-up/Written testimony submission is available between 9:00 am and 12:00 pm.
  - **The Committee strongly suggests individuals wishing to sign up arrive well before the deadline to avoid missing the deadline due to lengthy lines.**
- Written Testimony
  - The bill's number, the name of the individual or organization submitting the testimony, and the individual or organization's position (Support, Support with Amendments, or Opposed) should be clearly marked on the first page of testimony.
  - Emailed or faxed testimony will not be accepted.
  - The Committee is no longer able to accept written testimony in advance.

- Late testimony will not be shared with the Committee until the next Committee work day.
- **Written testimony must be uploaded as a PDF file with a flash drive.** All individuals submitting written testimony must bring **1 (one) hard copy** in case the flash drive fails to be accepted by the system.
- Oral Testimony
  - Oral testimony is timed and limited to 2 (two) minutes.
  - Please do not read from your testimony.
  - Witnesses signing up late must check in with Committee staff and fill out a late witness sign-up sheet. Calling late witnesses to testify is at the discretion of the Chairman.
  - If you plan to stream an audio-visual presentation during your oral testimony, please alert the Assistant to the Chair prior to the scheduled hearing. All audio-visual presentations must be loaded on the Committee computer and also uploaded as witness testimony prior to the scheduled hearing. Additionally, **audio visual presentations and oral testimony is limited to 2 (two) minutes per person/presentation.**

#### Electronic Sign-up/Written Submission Process

Step #1: All witnesses planning to provide oral and written testimony **MUST** sign up on the electronic witness sign-up computers which are located in the lobby outside the Committee Room. All requested information should be filled out, **including an email address**. Move to step #2 once this process is complete if you are planning to submit written testimony.

Step #2: Check in with Committee Staff. Only Committee Staff are permitted to scan the flash drive to check for viruses.

Step #3: If the flash drive is approved for use, move to one of the two computers located in the front of the Committee suite to upload your testimony. If the flash drive is not approved, staff will scan any hard copy that you have provided so that you may upload the testimony to the system. You will sign-in with the same email address that you entered during Step #1. All pdf documents should be saved/uploaded to the system using the following title:  
Organization/Name\_Position\_Bill#

- Committee Briefings

Please note, the information above pertains to bill hearings. For oral and written testimony procedures for Committee briefings, please reach out directly to the Committee at 410.841.3623.

- Committee Bill Files

The Committee retains bill files of all bills assigned to the Committee during each legislative session. Bill files include a copy of the bill, fiscal and policy note, amendments, written testimony, a list of witnesses who signed-up to testify, committee recorded votes, and the floor report (if voted out of Committee). Bill files are available to be viewed or copied by the public, in person, after the bill is heard. Bill files will not be shared electronically and bill file may not be taken from the Committee.

Bill files from previous sessions may be found in the Department of Legislative Services Library. The Library is located in the basement of the Legislative Services Building at 90 State Circle in Annapolis. The Library can be reached at 410.946.5400.

Please note, all bill files from the most recent session will be transferred to the Library no later than June 1<sup>st</sup> of that year.