

## 2021 House Judiciary Committee Witness Guidelines

### Hearing Procedures

- Bill hearings will begin on scheduled weekdays at **1:30 p.m.**
- A bill hearing for any bill will be posted to the Judiciary Committee's hearing schedule **seven business days** before the scheduled hearing
- Hearing Schedule link: <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Committees/Details?cmte=jud>
- Anyone who intends to provide input on any bill must sign-up to testify and/or submit written testimony via the **MyMGA** portal on the Maryland General Assembly Website at [mgaleg.maryland.gov](http://mgaleg.maryland.gov). Click the red "MyMGA" icon, which is located on the top right corner of the website homepage, and follow the registration instructions. To create a MyMGA account, you **must** offer your own email address during the registration process.
- People (including advocates, lobbyists, and MGA staff) **cannot** submit written testimony for other people under any circumstance. People can only submit their own written testimony via the MyMGA portal.
- People (including advocates, lobbyists, and MGA staff) **cannot** sign-up other people to provide oral testimony under any circumstance. People who want to provide oral testimony before the Committee must sign-up for themselves via the MyMGA portal.
- **Never directly email** your written testimony to the Committee. You **must** submit your written testimony via the MyMGA portal. Emailed testimony will **not** be accepted.
- For guidance on how to use the MyMGA portal, create your account, and navigate the witness sign-up and testimony submission features, refer to the two video tutorials on the Maryland General Assembly website.
- Video tutorials link: <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Information/VideoTutorials>
- Due to restrictions of the MyMGA portal, witnesses **cannot** sign-up to testify on specific panels. Witnesses may only sign-up to testify as individuals.
- The opportunity to sign-up to testify and/or submit testimony on a bill will begin **two business days** before the bill's scheduled hearing. At that time, the sign-up/submission window will open **8:00 a.m.** and close at **3:00 p.m.** on the same day.
- Due to the virtual and time adjustments for bill hearings, you are encouraged to submit **written** testimony.
- At any moment, the Chairman may pause the bill hearing and offer a break to Committee members and Committee staff. Before recessing, the Chairman will indicate the length of the break.

### Testimony Timing

- Up to **50 witnesses maximum** will be heard for each bill during bill hearings.
  - Of the 50 witnesses maximum allowed for each bill, **30 witnesses maximum** will be heard representing the majority registered position.

- Oral testimony for reintroduced bills that are in the exact identical posture for this Session as they were when they passed out of the Judiciary Committee during the 2020 Legislative Session:
  - **Two** minutes of oral testimony for the bill sponsor
  - **One** minute of oral testimony for all other witnesses
- Oral testimony for newly proposed bill that are being heard by the Judiciary Committee for the first time during the 2021 Legislative Session:
  - **Three** minutes of oral testimony for the bill sponsor
  - **Two** minutes of oral testimony for all other witnesses
- The bill order for bill hearings will be available on the business day before the scheduled hearing.
- Committee Members will have the opportunity to ask questions of all witnesses only after witnesses provide their oral testimony. Witnesses should keep their responses to these questions as concise as possible.

### **Testimony Standards**

- All submitted written testimony **must** have a...
  - Visible bill number located at the top of the first page of your testimony
  - Clear indication of support, opposed, or support with amendments
  - Name and address of the person and/or entity testifying and submitting the testimony

### **Access to Bill Hearings Via Zoom**

- After you signed-up to provide oral testimony for a bill hearing, you will receive an email (sent to the address associated with your MyMGA account) informing you whether you **have** or **have not** been selected to testify at the bill hearing.
- If you **have** been selected to provide oral testimony for a bill hearing, the email will include a Zoom link and this link will allow you to enter the Zoom waiting room. When it's your time to provide your oral testimony, you will be admitted to the virtual bill hearing room and then unmuted when you are recognized by the Chairman to testify.
- After you provide your oral testimony, Committee Members may ask you questions. After this question and answer exchange, you will be removed from the virtual bill hearing room.
- If you **have** been selected to provide oral testimony for a bill hearing, we recommend that you concurrently listen to the bill hearing via the YouTube livestream.
- Committee YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIjsiF5QnMYgaAU6CCuXOjq>
- If you **have not** been selected to provide oral testimony, please understand that your written testimony holds the same weight as oral testimony and Committee Members will read and refer to your written testimony. All submitted written testimony is provided to Committee Members ahead of the bill hearing and then added to the Committee's official bill file.

- If you **have not** been selected to provide oral testimony, we still encourage you to view the bill hearing via YouTube.

### **Crossover / Rules Procedures**

- All identical crossover bills from the Senate will be presented to the Judiciary Committee as **sponsor only**.
- All bills that are re-referred to the Judiciary Committee from the Rules Committee will be presented to the Judiciary Committee as **sponsor only**.
- The Judiciary Committee will accept oral testimony on crossover or re-referred Rules Committee bills from the bill sponsor, a bill sponsor's designee, **or** the representative of the Department that originally requested the bill.
- For crossover or re-referred Rules Committee bills, the public may still submit written testimony via the MyMGA portal to indicate their position for the bill. See MyMGA and testimony standards procedures above.