

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE (APP)

Delegate Maggie L. McIntosh, Chairman
Delegate Tawanna P. Gaines, Vice-Chair

WITNESS GUIDELINES AND COMMITTEE FAQ'S

Witness Guidelines:

Decorum:

- All visitors are expected to observe common standards of decorum.
- Talking is not permitted and all audience members must be seated.
- Neither food nor beverages are permitted in the committee room.
- Audience members may not approach a committee member at his or her desk.
- Visitors are required to disable the sound features on their mobile phones and other electronic devices.

Hearing Procedures:

The committee generally has three types of hearings where witnesses may testify – bill hearings, budget hearings, and bond bill hearings. Generally, committee hearings will begin at the time published in the hearing schedule or as announced by the chairman or subcommittee chair from the House floor.

Bill Hearings:

All witnesses offering oral testimony must sign up using the electronic boards in the lobby outside the hearing room. If you require assistance, please see the committee staff in room 121. Witness sign ups are open until 15 minutes prior to the scheduled time of the hearing.

The order in which witnesses testify will be determined by the chairman. The order of bills to be heard, the bill currently being heard, and the bill “on deck” are displayed on the monitor outside of the hearing room. Every effort will be made to follow this order, though the order bills will be heard is at the chair’s discretion. To expedite the hearing and allow all witnesses an opportunity to be heard, the chairman has the prerogative to limit questions from members or the time for witnesses to testify. In any event, witnesses should limit testimony to three minutes. Witnesses will NOT to read prepared testimony or repeat the testimony of previous witnesses.

For written testimony, the bill number should appear prominently on all copies of testimony submitted. The committee requires government agencies and bill sponsors to submit 40 copies of any written testimony, and requests other witnesses do the same. Written testimony should be provided to committee staff no later than two hours prior to the scheduled start time of the hearing. Written testimony delivered after this time will be considered late, and will not be distributed to committee members prior to the bill hearing. Late testimony will be included in the bill file

Budget Hearings:

All witnesses must sign up using the electronic sign up system prior to the scheduled beginning of the budget hearing. The electronic system can be found in the lobby outside the committee hearing room and is available until 15 minutes prior to the scheduled time of the hearing. **Please Note:** often, several subcommittees will meet at the same time in different rooms throughout the House Office Building. All subcommittee witness sign ups are taken on the electronic system outside room 120. When signing up to offer testimony, please confirm you have selected the correct subcommittee and confirm the subcommittee meeting location.

The budget hearing order is usually scheduled in advance by staff. However, the chairman or subcommittee chair may change the order of the hearing to accommodate department secretaries or agency personnel. Testimony is usually taken in the order in which individuals sign up; however, the chair has the discretion to change this order and the time allotted for testimony.

For written testimony, the name of the department or agency should appear prominently on all copies of testimony submitted. The committee requires government agencies to submit 25 copies of any written testimony for subcommittee budget hearings and 40 copies for full committee budget hearings – the committee requests other witnesses do the same. Written testimony should be provided to committee staff no later than two hours prior to the scheduled start time of the hearing. Written testimony delivered after this time will be considered late, and will not be distributed to committee members during the hearing. Late testimony will be included in the committee file.

Bond Bill Hearings:

Traditionally, the committee hears all bond bills on one Saturday in March called “Bond Bill Saturday” and the following Monday, and is coordinated with the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee. Total testimony for each bill is limited to three minutes per bill with a maximum of 15 minutes per sponsor.

All witnesses must sign the witness sign-up sheet in room 121 prior to the scheduled beginning of the bill hearing. The sign-up sheet is generally available in the committee office by 3 p.m. on the Wednesday prior to Bond Bill Saturday.

For written testimony, the bill number should appear prominently on all copies of testimony submitted. The committee requires bill sponsors to submit 30 copies of any written testimony, and requests other witnesses do the same. Written testimony should be provided to committee staff no later than two hours prior to the bill’s assigned time slot. Written testimony delivered after this time will be considered late, and will not be distributed to committee members during the bill hearing. Late testimony will be included in the bill file.

Briefings:

Briefings are public meetings held at the request of the chairman to provide specific budget and policy information to the committee. Due to the nature of the briefings, only individuals who are invited by the chairman to present may do so.

Equipment:

The committee has audio-visual equipment available for use during committee meetings. As a courtesy, the committee staff should be notified in advance of a hearing's scheduled start time if audio-visual equipment will be used. Due to time constraints, the use of the committee's audio-visual equipment is not permitted during bond bill hearings.

Recording of Committee Proceedings:

All briefings, bill hearings, and budget hearings – for both the full committee and subcommittees - are recorded and are available on the General Assembly's website. Committee voting sessions are not recorded, nor is recording permitted during voting sessions. Members of the press or public who wish to record or photograph portions of a briefing or hearing are expected to remain in the audience or press area and follow the posted rules, unless a special exception has been made. The committee wishes to keep disruptions caused by lights, cameras, and individuals moving around the room with equipment to a minimum. The assistant to the chairman should be notified prior to the start of a briefing or hearing if you wish to record or take photographs.