

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

SENATOR PAMELA BEIDLE, CHAIR

SENATOR ANTONIO HAYES, VICE CHAIR

2026 WITNESS COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

I. Bill Hearings

- All bill hearings will take place in person in the committee room and will be streamed live via the Maryland General Assembly (MGA) Website.
- The committee traditionally hears bills on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays beginning at 1:00 p.m.
- All scheduled bill hearings will be posted in the MGA hearing schedule. Please check the schedule periodically for the most up-to-date information.
- The bill order will be posted in the MGA hearing schedule by 12:00 p.m. on the day of the scheduled bill hearings. The committee chair will also announce the order of bills at the beginning of each hearing day. The order may be adjusted at the discretion of the chair.
- **To register to provide oral testimony or submit written testimony, individuals MUST create a MyMGA account* through the MGA website. Click here for a tutorial.**

*Please note, the MGA website does not support Internet Explorer. Please use another web browser to upload your written testimony.

- Oral testimony sign-up and written testimony submission will open two (2) business days prior to the scheduled bill hearing, from 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. **All submissions must be completed by 6:00 p.m.**

Bill Hearing Timeline

	<u>Monday Hearing</u>	<u>Tuesday Hearing</u>	<u>Wednesday Hearing</u>	<u>Thursday Hearing</u>	<u>Friday Hearing</u>
Oral Witness Sign-up and Written Testimony Submission	Previous Thursday from 8AM - 6PM	Previous Friday from 8AM - 6PM	Monday from 8AM - 6PM	Tuesday from 8AM - 6PM	Wednesday from 8AM - 6PM

Oral Testimony

- While witnesses are strongly encouraged to provide in-person oral testimony, to include as many citizens as possible in the legislative process, *up to 14* members of the public may provide virtual oral testimony via Zoom per bill.
- For bills the committee heard and voted out unanimously during the 2025 Maryland General Assembly, the committee will only hear oral testimony from the bill sponsor.
- For any other bills that the committee heard during the 2025 Maryland General Assembly, the committee will hear from two proponents and two opponents. If more than two proponents and two opponents sign up to testify, the committee will notify individuals that were *not* selected to testify.
- Witnesses must designate whether they will testify in person or by Zoom. Witnesses may *not* change their oral testimony designation (virtual or in-person) after the sign-up system closes, even if they are not selected for virtual testimony.
- Witnesses signing up to provide oral testimony in a Favorable with Amendment (FWA) position must also submit written testimony detailing their proposed amendment(s) and position.
- Witness testimony via pre-recorded video will *not* be allowed.
- Late witness sign-up will *not* be allowed.
- Witness testimony will be timed. Each witness will have two-minutes (2:00) to provide oral testimony.
 - **At the discretion of the committee chair, or if a bill has more than 30 witnesses, each witness will have one-minute (1:00) to testify.** If that situation arises, the committee will notify witnesses.
- Witnesses providing in-person oral testimony will be called to testify before those providing testimony via Zoom. Any changes to this order are at the discretion of the committee chair.
- Sponsors and witnesses are permitted to share an audio-visual presentation with the committee and are strongly encouraged to upload the presentation as written testimony. Requests to show an audio-visual presentation, must be made to the committee manager at least 24 hours in advance of the scheduled bill hearing. **All audio-visual presentations must be received (via email) by the Committee Manager by 6:00 p.m. the day before the hearing.** For witnesses, the audio-visual presentation must fit within the two-minute allotted oral testimony time. Witnesses providing testimony via Zoom will not be permitted to show an audio-visual presentation during their testimony.
- Typically, committee members will ask questions after the conclusion of a witness's testimony. However, any changes to this format are at the discretion of the committee chair.

Zoom Instructions

- Zoom links will ONLY be sent to witnesses selected to testify who chose “virtual oral” or “virtual both” when they signed up to testify on a bill.
- Zoom links will be sent from noreply@mga.maryland.gov by 12:00 p.m. on the day of the scheduled bill hearing.

If a witness is NOT selected to testify, the witness will receive an email from noreply@mga.maryland.gov to inform the witness they were not selected.

- **The Zoom link is confidential and should not be shared.**
- **Witnesses must log into Zoom with their first and last names,** so committee staff are able to quickly identify the user and admit them into the meeting at the appropriate time. Witnesses who do not log into Zoom with their first and last name may miss their opportunity to testify.
- Zoom witnesses should follow the hearings via the MGA website to know when the bill they are testifying on is going to be called by the committee chair and should log into Zoom when the bill before their bill is called.
- When testifying, witnesses must have their camera on.
- After the committee chair indicates that there are no further questions, the witness should exit the Zoom meeting, or they will be logged out by committee staff.

Written Testimony

- Any written testimony submitted to a committee is public testimony. It will be posted on the Maryland General Assembly website and therefore accessible to the public. Testimony cannot be removed after the scheduled bill hearing.
- Written testimony MUST be in a PDF format to be uploaded.
- Late written testimony will be accepted but will not be uploaded in advance of the bill hearing and will be marked as late. Please reach out to the Committee Manager on how to submit testimony.

Accommodations

- For Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requests, please contact the committee directly.
- For an MGA sign language interpretation request, please request sign language interpretation at least 5 – 7 businesses days in advance of the event by filling out the following form: [Request Sign Language Interpretation Form](#). The committee will attempt to arrange interpreters on shorter notice but cannot guarantee availability; interpreters are not generally available on an emergency or short-notice basis.

II. Voting

- The committee voting schedule is at the discretion of the committee chair and will depend on the workload of the committee.
- Voting sessions and voting lists will be available in the MGA hearing schedule 24 hours in advance of a voting session, when feasible.
- All voting sessions will be live-streamed via the MGA website, when feasible.
- The results of a voting session will be published in the MGA hearing schedule within 24 hours after a voting session and on the bill page of the MGA website after the committee reports out.

III. Public Bill Files

- The public can request an electronic copy of a public bill file by emailing the committee at AA_FIN@mga.maryland.gov.
 - Witness testimony and the oral witness list will be available the day after the bill is heard in committee.
 - Any additional materials will be available after the bill passes third reader on the Senate floor.
- Written testimony will also be available through the MGA website when the bill is on the Senate floor for second reader. For bills that do not pass out of a committee, written testimony will be available on the website after the legislative session.
- For bill files that are not available on the MGA website, please contact the Department of Legislative Services Library at 410-946-5400.

IV. General Policy and Procedures

- Late filed Senate bills will be sponsor only and may not be heard before crossover.
- 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 *only* from the bill's sponsor UNLESS there is opposition. If there is opposition, the committee will hold a limited bill hearing.

For questions, please contact the Committee Manager,
Tammy Kraft at 410.841.3677 or tammy.kraft@mga.maryland.gov.