

DIY GUIDE TO BUDGET TESTIMONY

FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE SENATOR JABARI BRISPORT



Following the Governor's initial budget proposal each year, the State Legislature holds a series of public hearings before we release our counterproposal. Each hearing is on a loose topic. [You can see the full schedule here](#).

You can testify in person or in writing.

Written Testimony:

You can submit written testimony for any (or all) of the budget hearings, and it will be made an official part of the record to be considered by the committees. [Here is an example of what written testimony can look like](#).

If you are not also seeking to testify in person, then send your written testimony to wamchair@nyassembly.gov and financechair@nysenate.gov no later than 5pm on [the scheduled date of the hearing](#).

Here are some general guidelines to make your testimony as impactful as possible. You don't have to follow any specific format, but:

- **Be brief**
 - Try to write in a concise and direct way; people will be more likely to pay attention to what you have to say if it's short and to-the-point.
- **Be specific**
 - Try to identify particular items from the proposed [Executive Budget](#) that you like or dislike.
 - If there is something missing from the budget, state exactly what you think is missing; that will help legislators advocate for it.
 - When possible, include specific dollar amounts.

In-person Testimony:

You can also request to testify live, in-person during the hearings at the New York State Capitol in Albany – though not everyone who submits a request will be chosen.

To request to be an in-person witness at a Joint Legislative Budget Hearing:

- ①. Fill out [this witness request form](#), and
- ②. Submit your written testimony to both wamchair@nyassembly.gov and financechair@nysenate.gov by the [deadlines listed here](#) (depending on which hearing you would like to speak at.)

There are a few restrictions for in-person testimony you should keep in mind:

- ⚠ While submission of written testimony can be submitted by any witness/ organization for **multiple hearings**, in-person testimony can only be presented by a given individual or organization at **one hearing**.
- ⚠ Substitution of witnesses (sending someone else in your place) is only allowed in extraordinary circumstances. Substitution of written testimony is not allowed.
- ⚠ **No PowerPoint presentations, place cards, or signs are allowed in the hearing room**

Some tips for testifying in person:

- **Speak Confidently**
 - Clearly Introduce yourself (and your organization, if applicable) and state your stance as directly as possible.
- **Be Prepared for Questions**
 - Legislators may ask questions after your brief statement.