**Public Testimony Guide**

Testifying in front of a school board, city council, or other institution of government or civic board can be an incredibly effective way to tell your story. This resource will walk you through structuring your public testimony and provide some additional guidance around brainstorming and delivering your testimony.

Testimony Structure (Should be 3-5 minutes when delivered out loud)

Here is a general format that you can follow to write your testimony:

* Introduction - Greet and say thank you to the body that you are speaking in front of. State your name and explain why you are choosing to give testimony. If you are speaking in favor or in opposition to a piece of legislation or an idea, it can be helpful to clearly state that at the beginning of the testimony.
* Tell your story - After you have introduced yourself, you can start telling your story and why your experiences have compelled you to speak today. Keep your story clear, concise, and compelling. Your goal is for the people in the audience to remember who they are after they leave the meeting.
* Connect your story to the issue - Once you’ve told your story, explain why you were inspired to attend the meeting and speak on an issue. You can also provide some additional rationale or evidence for your position at this point in your testimony.
* Clearly state your call to action - You generally want to have a clear ask in your testimony. This can be for elected leaders to either support or oppose legislation. If you are looking to spread the word, you could ask for people to share the information that you conveyed with their network of friends and family.
* Conclude and say thank you - Wrap everything up by restating your opinion and your call to action. Thank the audience.

Tips for Writing and Delivering Public Testimony

* Research the Rules - Before writing your testimony, research the rules for delivering testimony in front of a body of government or a civic board. In these rules, they should tell you how to sign up. There should additionally be some guidance around the amount of time that you have.
* Practice - You should try practicing your testimony a few times before the meeting. By the time of the meeting, you want to seem very confident with the material. While you can read written testimony, the most engaging testimony is when someone appears conversational and comfortable with the content. You can practice giving the testimony in front of the mirror, or ask a friend to listen to your testimony and provide feedback.
* Deliver testimony if possible - Some bodies allow you to either submit written testimony or deliver spoken testimony. While written testimony can be helpful, if you are able to deliver the content you can really make an impression on your audience. Audience members will then be able to make a connection between your face and your story. This is powerful!