What to expect

A committee may consider several bills during an afternoon. The committee chairperson will announce the order in which bills will be heard, the rules for testifying and whether there will be a time limit on your testimony. The length of time spent on each bill varies, depending largely on the number of people testifying, the length of their testimony and the number of questions asked by committee members.

Each bill will be presented by the senator who sponsors it. The committee chairperson then will ask proponents of the bill to testify first. Then opponents of the bill will be invited to testify, followed by those giving neutral testimony.

Senators routinely come and go during hearings. They have other commitments, including the presentation of bills in other committees that are meeting simultaneously.

Letters or written communications expressing support, opposition or neutral testimony also are accepted by committees during a bill’s public hearing. If you wish to send written information, address correspondence to the office of the senator who chairs the committee and allow enough time for it to arrive before the hearing.

To find the names and contact information of committee chairpersons, visit NebraskaLegislature.gov/committees.
**About Committees**

Bills introduced in the Legislature must receive a public hearing by a legislative committee. These hearings are an opportunity for citizens to speak directly to state senators regarding the creation of Nebraska laws.

Everyone is allowed to testify at public hearings and all testimony is included in the official committee record.

The Nebraska Legislature has 14 standing committees:

- Agriculture
- Appropriations
- Banking, Commerce and Insurance
- Business and Labor
- Education
- General Affairs
- Government, Military and Veterans’ Affairs
- Health and Human Services
- Judiciary
- Natural Resources
- Nebraska Retirement Systems
- Revenue
- Transportation and Telecommunications
- Urban Affairs

Each of these committees has seven to nine members.

**Hearing locations and times**

Public hearings on bills typically are held in the afternoons during the first half of the legislative session. Committees have regularly scheduled rooms and meeting days, although they sometimes meet in different rooms at varying times in order to accommodate testifiers or large audiences.

Hearings usually begin at 1:30 p.m. See the hearing room assignments and a Capitol map on the back of this brochure.

The weekly schedule of committee hearings is published on the last legislative day of the week throughout the legislative session.

The schedule is available on a table in front of the Clerk’s Office, in the Sunday editions of the Lincoln Journal Star and the Omaha World-Herald, in the weekly Unicameral Update (update.legislature.ne.gov) and at NebraskaLegislature.gov.

If auxiliary aids or reasonable accommodations are needed for you to attend a hearing, please call the Office of the Clerk of the Legislature at 402-471-2271.

If you have a hearing or speech impairment, please call the Nebraska Relay System at 800-833-7352 (TTY) or 800-833-0920 (Voice).

Advance notice of 10 business days is needed when requesting an interpreter.

**Providing public testimony**

If you are providing printed copies of your testimony to distribute to the committee, please bring enough copies for each committee member, plus three more for support staff. You might call ahead to see if the committee prefers electronic submissions.

Before testifying at a committee hearing, you must fill out the green sheet provided in the hearing room. Once you are seated at the testifier’s table, you must identify yourself, spell your first and last name and state what organization you represent, if any. Be sure to speak directly into the microphone, as committee proceedings are transcribed verbatim.

Be prepared to limit your testimony to three to five minutes, and try not to repeat testimony offered by previous testifiers. If you are providing written testimony, please summarize your main points rather than read your written testimony verbatim. Senators want to hear what you have to say, but there may be numerous other people who want to testify.

Committee members may ask you questions after your testimony. However, testifiers are not allowed to ask questions of committee members.

Addressing committee members or testifiers from the audience is prohibited. Applause and other public demonstrations are not permitted.

Please turn off phones to avoid disturbing the hearing.