

## COMMITTEE TESTIMONY

Information may be easily obtained from the Hawaii State Legislature website: [www.capitol.hawaii.gov](http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov). Find out which committees your bills have been referred to by checking this website or by contacting your district representative's or senator's office, the Clerk's Office of either the House (Ph: 586-6400/Fax: 586-6401) or the Senate (Ph: 586-6720/Fax: 586-6719).

To get on a committee mailing list to receive copies of agendas, public hearing notices, and informational briefing notices, inform the appropriate committee chair of your interest. The most timely and cost-effective method, however, is to be placed on an automatic e-mail list through the Hawaii State Legislature website listed above.

You may have an opportunity to influence the decision of a committee chair to consider a bill and to schedule the bill for a public hearing by contacting the committee chair or committee clerk as soon as the bill has been referred to the committee. At this time, you should provide the committee chair or committee clerk with background information on the bill and answer any questions that they may have. You may also want to send a letter to the committee chair to raise your concerns about the bill or express your support or opposition to the bill, either as an individual or on behalf of your group or organization.

For the most part, committee chairs control their committee's agenda and schedule the bills that they feel should move through the legislative process. However, you may want to consider communicating your views to the individual members of each committee who may then voice your concerns to the committee chair.

If your bill is scheduled for a public hearing, keep these guidelines in mind:

- When submitting testimony on a bill, follow instructions on the notice regarding the minimum number of copies of written testimony for distribution to committee members and staff. Written testimony should be submitted to the appropriate office at least 24 hours prior to the hearing. Testimony may also be delivered via e-mail to House committees using the appropriate committee e-mail address (see pages 23 - 24 for House committee e-mail addresses).
- If you are unable to prepare and submit written testimony in time for a hearing, some committee chairs may allow the presentation of oral comments at the public hearing. However, you should be prepared to submit written testimony summarizing your oral comments as soon as possible after the public hearing.
- Generally, each committee chair follows the order of the bills listed on the agenda.
- As a courtesy to departmental and other government officials who must testify before a number of committees each day, most committee chairs allow government representatives to present their testimony before the general public presents its testimony.

Prepare your oral testimony in advance and be brief unless asked to elaborate. Do not read your written testimony. If you are asked to summarize your oral testimony, comply with the committee chair's request. There may be a large number of bills scheduled and many testifiers. When presenting oral testimony, it helps to:

- Be specific and to the point regarding the bill on which you are testifying.
  
- Be prepared to answer questions from committee members about your testimony or your position on the bill. If you don't know the answer to the question, just say so. You can always get the information to the committee later.