

COMMITTEE TESTIMONY

You may find information on the status of all bills and other matters currently before the Legislature on the Hawaii State Legislature's website, www.capitol.hawaii.gov. The website contains links to hearing notices, information on past legislative actions, and testimony. You may also use the website to create an account that will enable you to receive hearing notices by email, create personalized measure tracking lists, and submit testimony electronically. The website also contains searchable archives of information from past legislative sessions.

If you cannot or choose not to use the Hawaii State Legislature's website, you can also access information on currently pending matters through your district Representative or Senator's office or through the office of the Chief Clerk of either house. You may receive paper copies of hearing notices, agendas, and informational briefing notices via US Mail by contacting the appropriate committee chair's office.

All citizens have the opportunity to influence the legislative process by expressing concerns and voicing opinions in support of or opposition to legislation. Opportunities to participate in the legislative process start as soon as a bill has been referred to its committees. If you wish to contact a committee chair or committee clerk, either on behalf of yourself or an organization you represent, about scheduling a bill for public hearing, you should provide background information on the bill and answer any questions that the chair or the committee clerk may have on the contents of the bill and why it is important to you. You may also want to send a letter to the chair or committee clerk expressing your support of or opposition to the bill. For the most part, committee chairs schedule bills for hearing and otherwise control the committee's agenda. However, it may help to contact other individual committee members to express your opinion.

Once a measure has been scheduled for public hearing and notice is given therefor, members of the public are invited to submit testimony expressing support, opposition, or comments at the hearing. If you would like to submit testimony on a measure scheduled for public hearing, keep these guidelines in mind:

- Follow instructions on the hearing notice regarding the procedure and minimum number of copies for submitting written testimony. Written testimony should be submitted to the appropriate office at least 24 hours prior to the hearing. Testimony may also be delivered electronically to committees using the Submit Testimony link or the appropriate committee e-mail address, which may be found on the Hawaii State Legislature's website.
- 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, be prepared to submit written testimony summarizing your oral comments as soon as possible after the public hearing.

- All testimony submitted to committees is posted on the Legislature's website as submitted. Be aware that if you include personal information, such as your address, in your testimony, that information will be posted online as you submitted it.
- Generally, each committee chair follows the order of the bills listed on the hearing notice 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.
- When testifying at the public hearing, be brief unless asked to elaborate. It is not necessary to read your written testimony aloud. If you are asked to summarize your oral or written testimony, comply with the committee chair's request. There may be a large number of measures scheduled and many testifiers. When presenting oral or written testimony, it helps to be specific and to the point regarding the measure on which you are testifying and prepared to answer questions from committee members about your testimony or your position on the measure. If you don't know the answer to a question, just say so. You can always get the information to the committee later.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OUTLINE

CHAIR OF THE HOUSE OR SENATE COMMITTEE
NAME OF THE HOUSE OR SENATE COMMITTEE

Your name
The group or organization that you represent (if any)
A contact number or address

Day and Date of Hearing

Your position on the measure (support, oppose, or comment)
and the measure number, including draft numbers (if any)

Introduction:

- (1) Introduce who you are and/or the group or organization that you represent;
- (2) Identify the measure you are testifying on; and
- (3) State your position on the measure (e.g., "*I am testifying in favor of/in support of*" or "*I am testifying against/in opposition to*" or "*I am providing comments on. . .*")

Content:

State or list the reasons for your position, starting with the most important or compelling reasons. Include any facts, figures, statements, and experiences to support your position.

Closing:

- (1) Include any closing remarks; and
- (2) Reiterate your position on the measure (especially if you did not state your position previously within the testimony).

SAMPLE WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Representative Dwight Y. Takamine, Chair
Representative Noboru Yonamine, Vice Chair
Committee on Labor and Public Employment

Hawaii Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition

Tuesday, March 19, 1991

Support for S.B. No. 818, S.D. 1, Relating to Family Leave

The Hawaii Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition is part of a national cooperative group of private and non-profit organizations and individuals committed to improving maternal and infant health in the State of Hawaii through educational and advocacy efforts. We strongly support S.B. No. 818, S.D. 1, Relating to Family Leave, which would give employees working for employers of fifty or more employees the right to 3 months of unpaid parental leave for the birth or adoption of a son or daughter of the employee.

People should not be forced to choose between work and family. We have a situation in the U.S. of supporting children and family in our popular culture but not fully supporting them in our social policies. Compared to other industrialized nations, the U.S. ranks poorly in several key indicators of children's and families' quality of life. We need to develop social and working policies that adequately support new lives and the mental and physical health of families.

Even though a number of businesses are beginning to provide parental-leave options, this act would broaden this protection to more of Hawaii's workforce. Some will argue that such a policy need not be mandated. Child-labor laws had to be mandated, and we are all glad they were. Our society decided that in some cases the family needed legal protection. Unpaid parental leave is a modest but vital step toward recognizing the relationship between job security and family security.

In expanding the options for Hawaii's labor force, we are creating a health-promoting atmosphere and a foundation for future generations of healthy people and healthy families. We urge the committee to pass S.B. No. 818, S.D. 1. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.