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November 17, 2021



**PEOPLE  
POWERED**   
**FAIR MAPS™**

**WORKING TOWARD FAIR MAPS:**

*Testimony 102 Training*



Demetrius Fisher  
**CAMPAIGN MANAGER**



# AGENDA

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Welcome & Introductions

Overview of Testimony 102 Training

Grounding: Why We Are Providing This Training Again

Preparing for Testimony & Testifying

Delivering Your Testimony

After Your Testimony

Upcoming Trainings

Questions & Answers

# HOUSEKEEPING ITEMS

Everyone enters the session muted

Use the chat box to ask questions throughout the presentation

If you want to ask your question at the end of the presentation, raise your hand and a panelist will call on you

Make sure to identify yourself (name and league) when asking questions

A short follow-up email will be sent with materials highlighted on the session

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## Community Norms

! Bring your full self and limit distractions

💬 Use the chat box to add thoughts, experiences, and/or questions

🌱 What is learned here, leaves here

🗨️ No one knows everything, together we know a lot

🍴 Don't yuck my yum

🩹 Oops, ouch, and educate

😊 Assume best intentions

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# Presenting...

## the LWVUS People Powered Fair Maps Team!



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# Grounding: Why are we providing this training again?

- On August 12, Census Bureau released data that states are using to start their community districting process
- Our best chance for fair maps is to ensure that the process is transparent and as many community voices are involved as possible
- Part of this preparation means training ourselves and our communities in understanding and advocating for criteria, like protecting communities of interest
- And making sure people are participating in the hearings by testifying and providing testimony
- In addition, as Legislatures come into session next year we want to make sure you are as prepared as possible to testify around any legislation you find important to speak out on/ whether for or against

*We know that many Leagues are already in this process and have been training members of the public so look forward to having you bring your expertise to this conversation!*



# Preparing for Testimony and Testifying





# Steps to take to prepare to give testimony

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- Attend/Watch a public hearing of the committee that you wish to present in front of
- Read the bill to ensure you are as informed as possible
- Sign up for notices about the bill you are testifying around
- Connect with other speakers testifying



Image from: iava.org





Image from: legislature.ky.gov

## Why should you Testify?

- To elevate community stories and issues
- Ensure that Legislators are considering all possible impacts of the bill
- Pressure your representative
- Promote your organization's advocacy work



# Redistricting and Testifying: Why it matters

- Gives communities a voice & access to the political process
- May create maps that better represent all communities
- Allows for community oversight in the process





# Testifying is **ADVOCACY POWER!**

- Builds skills – for your organization & community
- Applies to any issue
- Applies to any person or group in power
- Gets you/your organization on the record
- Builds coalitions
- Gets media attention



# Things to consider when drafting your Testimony



Image from: [courant.com](http://courant.com)

- Keep it short: Between 3-5 minutes
- Often you can draft a longer written statement
- Focus on what you know best: Your Personal Story
- Stay within your expertise
- Draft a notecard with important detail/points

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# Delivering your Testimony

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# Key parts: Preparing for Testimony and Testifying

## Getting started

- Know the issue!
  - In this case, how redistricting impacts your community! Luckily, we are all experts on our lived experiences and communities
- Know the guidelines for offering a statement/testimony
  - How much time will you have to present your statement?
  - Can you follow up with additional details in writing?
  - If you are invited to present a statement, does it have to be submitted in advance?
  - What is the deadline for responding to questions and follow-up from the committee?
  - Is there a limit on the length of written testimony?
- Will it be in-person or virtual



A stylized illustration in shades of red, blue, and grey depicting a group of people in a meeting. One person in the center is wearing a red shirt and is looking at a document. Other people are shown in profile or from behind, some holding papers or devices. The overall style is flat and modern.

# Structure of your Testimony

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- Introduction
- Clearly present your position
- Talk about why you've taken this position
- Recommend a specific action
- Thank the committee

Image from: [litigationinsights.com](https://www.litigationinsights.com)



## Testimony Delivery: What you need to know

- Nail down your audience
- Understand the issue at hand
- Be familiar with the committee process
- Apply a DEI Lens





## A note on accessibility

- You have the right to reasonable public accommodation if you need it
- Most state legislatures have programs in place to make testimony a submission accessible for people with disabilities
- Contact your state capitol's ADA coordinator
- Examples of accommodation that can be made:
  - Assistive Listening Devices
  - Interpreters and Readers
  - Communication Access Realtime Translation (live captioning)
  - Documents in alternative formats

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# Key parts: Preparing your testimony

## Introduction of self and community

- Who are you and who do you represent? *This is where you can describe your relevance to the community being discussed? How is the issue at hand relevant to you?*
- Be clear in your goals!

**Example:** “Hello committee, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I’ve been a resident of this neighborhood for 5 years. I’m here with a group of my neighbors and the neighborhood coalition. I would like to urge the committee to keep my community together.”

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# Key parts: Preparing for Testimony and Testifying

## Getting started

- Organize your people!
  - Testimony is more impactful when you are able to (truthfully!) claim that you are representing a certain number of people or coordinate your testimony with others in attendance. If you're not part of a community group, reach out to one! If you are already part of a group, make sure you say that in your testimony. It is more effective when individuals work together to define and map out their community together.
- Think about your story beforehand
  - Effective community stories include what has been coined 'the 3 Cs' of communication: Culture, Concerns, and Count
- *Practice, practice, practice!*

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# Key Parts: Preparing your testimony

## Facts and details about your community

- Your testimony should be specific and factual!
- Define the unique qualities of your community
- Highlight the geographic or structural boundaries in your neighborhood
- Share and explain your COI mapping

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# Key Parts: Preparing your testimony

## Closing

- State what you are asking for!
  - What are you ask from the decision-makers? Keep your community together? Can you also submit and show your own maps?
- Thank the members of the committee/body and provide them with any written testimony and materials, acknowledge your community members and partners in attendance, and restate your goals!

# Key Parts: Preparing your testimony

## Share your story

- Connect your identity and specifics about your community in the context of how this all impacts YOU!



Example: As you can see on community interest map for Riverside South, Alman Park is where our families gather to celebrate. Our community is currently divided into 2 city council districts and represented by two city council members.”



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## Best Practices for Delivering Testimony

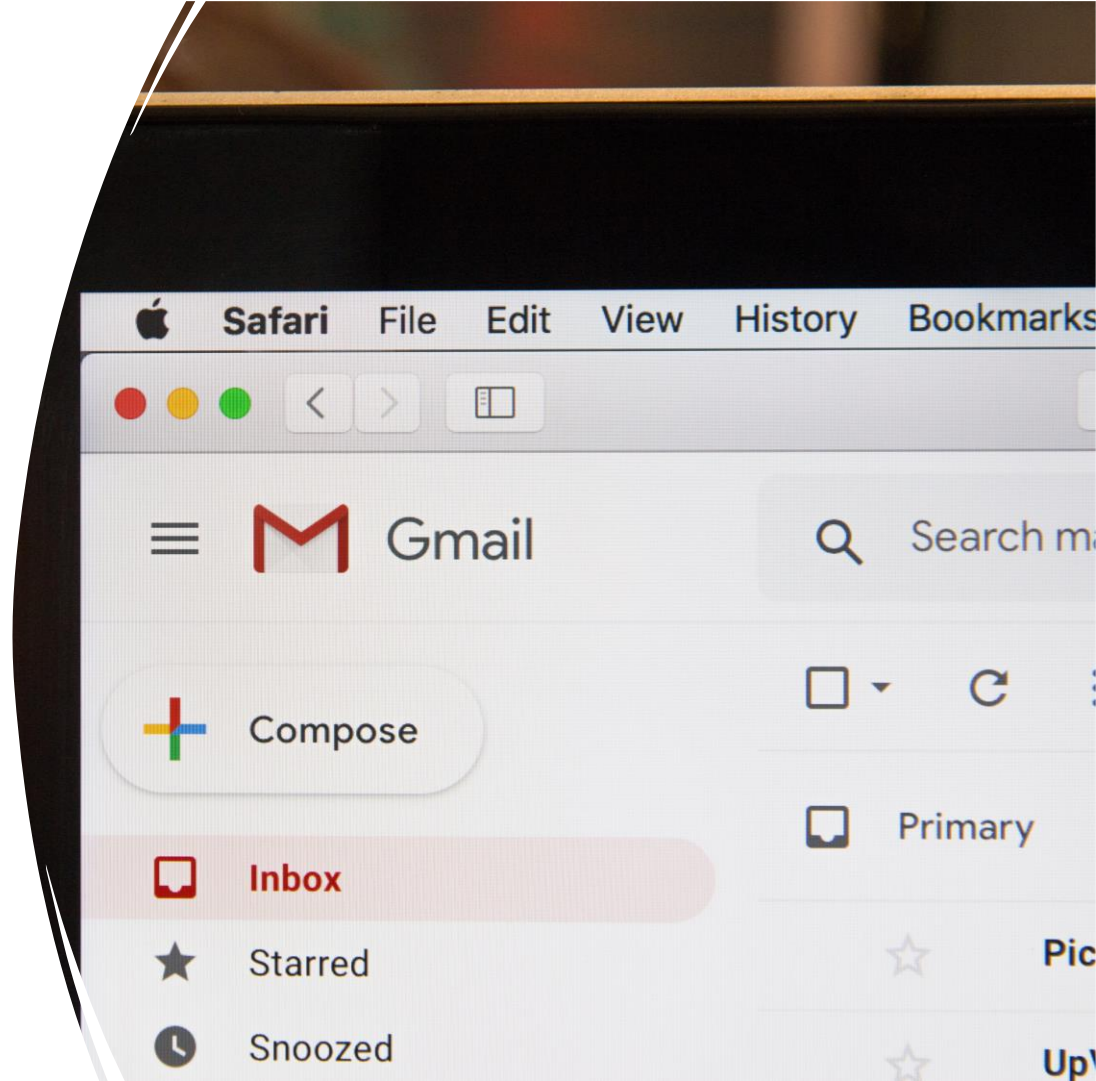
- Remember to observe all legislative guidelines and procedures.
- Arrive early to get a seat. Legibly print your name on the speaker registration sheet.
- Many bills may be heard that day and often are not presented in the order they appear on legislative calendars. Be patient and remain close by for when your name is called or join the line of people waiting for their turn to speak on your bill.
- Be flexible, polite, and respectful.
- Avoid repeating points made by other speakers. If all the points you wanted to make have been made, tell the committee you agree with the testimony given by the preceding speakers and urge them to take the appropriate action.
- Address your remarks only to the committee or task force.
- If asked questions, answer truthfully and factually.

# Submit testimony

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- Submit written testimony if you haven't already!
- Either submit it via an online State Legislature portal or email it directly to the members of the committee.
- Most states ask that you submit your written testimony within 24 hours of the hearing.
- If you didn't share verbal testimony at the hearing, you can still submit written testimony afterwards!

Photo by [Stephen Phillips - Hostreviews.co.uk](https://www.hostreviews.co.uk) on [Unsplash](https://www.unsplash.com)



# Tips for Virtual Testimony



Understand the virtual platform being used: Know when to unmute your microphone and turn your camera on and off.



Follow Committee procedure: make sure you do a virtual sign in!



Be clear and well paced when speaking; avoid using jargon or unclear terms

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# After your Testimony

# Follow up

Follow up with committee members via a phone call or thank you note

Consider hosting a note-writing party with your League!

Note should be simple, direct, and acknowledge the time and energy legislators put into serving the public

*Dear [title and name]:*

*I attended the public hearing for [bill number and title] on [date] and submitted testimony to the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to share my story [ex: about my daughter, Jack] in support of [bill title and number]. It means everything to know you will fairly consider my input on this important issue. [Add a sentence about why you want the law to pass or ask the committee to vote a certain way].*

*Sincerely, [name, address, phone number, email]*



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# Preparing your testimony

## Prepare for counter arguments

- You might be questioned. Know if there are opposing viewpoints and be able to defend your position.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, say you "don't know" but you will get back to them with the answer.

**Share!**

Tell us about your experiences testifying or preparing others to testify!

- What are lessons you have learned?
- Any best practices you would like to share?



# Split Decisions

Guidance for Measuring  
Locality Preservation in  
District Maps



**Upcoming  
Training**

**Split Decisions: Guidance for  
Measuring Locality Preservation in  
District Maps**

**Tuesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>**

**2:00pm ET**





**QUESTIONS????**