

# Fighting Voter Suppression Bills: Going on the Record

# 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

# Housekeeping

- All trainings will be recorded to keep accurate notes to share with attendees and others after the call.
- If you are not speaking, please mute yourself to minimize sound issues.
- Make sure you identify yourself (name, League, State & pronouns) when asking questions
- **Staff will be monitoring the chat box.** If you have any questions or thoughts throughout the call, please feel free to drop them in the chat box.

# Agenda and Intros

- Testimony Overview
- Giving Testimony in Different States
- Virtual Testimony
- Leaving a Record for Litigation
- Testifying in Challenging Environments
- Conclusion
- Q&A



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**POLL**

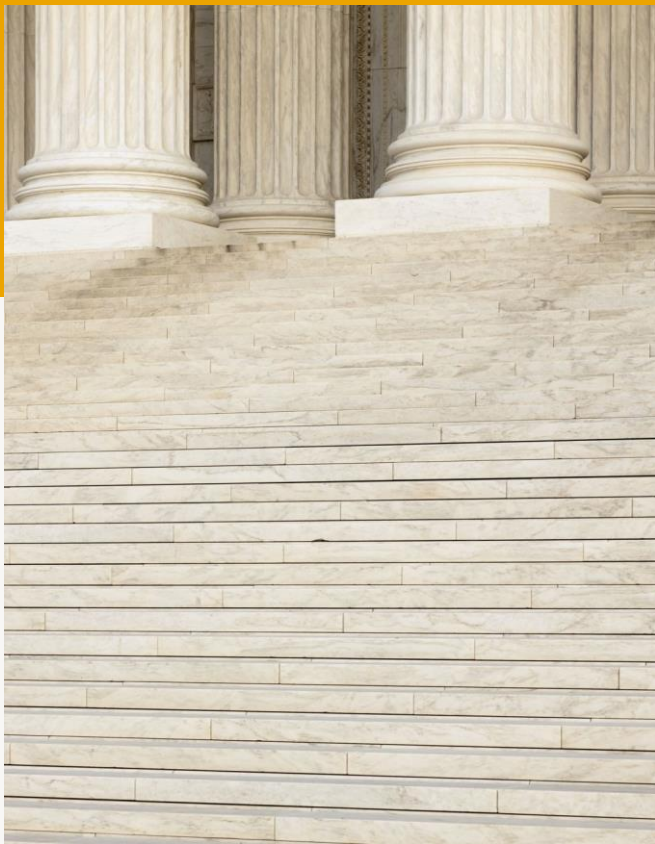
# What Does It Mean to Give Testimony Against Voter Suppression Bills?

# The Basics of Submitting Testimony

- **Influence on Policy:** Testimony can influence lawmakers' decisions and the crafting of policies, making it a powerful tool for shaping legislation.
- **Leaving Behind a Formal Record:** Your testimony becomes part of the public record, contributing to the official documentation of legislative proceedings and laying the groundwork for litigation.
- **Civic Engagement:** It is one thing to vote, but testifying against voter suppression bills is the ultimate way to fulfil your civic duty in a democracy.

# Why We Testify (even when the odds are against us)





# The Paradox

The places where giving testimony feels the most daunting are the places testimony is needed most!

## Common Hurdles

- **Unfriendly committees**
- **Geographic disadvantages**
- **Lack of results in the past**

# How We Overcome These Hurdles

- Resilience
- Virtual testimony
- Building a local base



# Giving Testimony in Different States

# What Testimony Might Look Like in Your State

## Three main options:

- In-person only
- Virtual only
- Hybrid/allows both

# Finding Out What it Looks Like in Your State

Visit your state legislature's website to find out the formal process for submitting your own testimony!



# Giving Testimony Virtually

# Before Giving Testimony Virtually

- Research your state's testimony process, deadlines, and submission requirements, especially for virtual testimony.
- Understand the specific procedures of the conducting committee or body.
- Prepare a concise draft of your testimony within the determined time frame. Submit your testimony at the time you register to testify.
- Test your audio and/or video equipment and ensure a stable internet connection and create a contingency plan in case of technical issues.



# While Testifying

- Prepare a short "elevator" version of your written testimony that can be delivered in a minute or less. You will have submitted a more complete testimony before the hearing.
- Speak clearly but quickly. Rehearsing the quick version is helpful.
- Be prepared to refer to your notes during the Q&A period if needed.
- If you are the State spokesperson, always begin by identifying yourself by name and state clearly that you are representing the LWV members.

# After Testifying

- If necessary, correct the record through emails to the full committee, addressing mischaracterizations or additional information.
- Express gratitude to legislators or staff who were particularly helpful during the proceedings.
- Share your testimony on social media or Outreach Circle or with stakeholders to amplify your message and build relationships.
- Encourage LWV members to testify personally on bills or submit written testimony without including any reference to the LWV. Private citizens are a powerful influence on their State Legislatures.

# Building the Record

# Harnessing Legislative History for Litigation



- In federal litigation, understanding legislative history is paramount.
- Courts scrutinize legislator intent, law justification, and legislators' knowledge when the law passed.
- Gathering vital information during the legislative session sets the stage for later legal proceedings.

# Strategically Building the Legislative Record

- Friendly legislator can be a powerful ally in getting useful information into the legislative record.
- Friendly legislator can ask bill sponsors critical questions or present data to the floor or committees.
- Testimony is a tried-and-true method for advancing our position and supporting future legal claims.



# Helpful Information to Include for Litigation

- Harm to Specific Groups of Voters
  - Did you consider the impact on X group?
  - Did you know the law in X state had X impact on X voters?
  - How do you plan to lessen the harm on X voters caused by this bill?
- Legislators' Justification for the Bill
  - What specific problem is the bill trying to solve? Examples of this problem?
  - If voter fraud, what specific examples are there?
  - How will this law fix the issue of voter fraud?





**POLL**

# Testifying in Challenging Environments



# LWVFL's Experience Testifying in Florida

# Florida: SB 7066

# Florida: SB 7066 (Disenfranchisement of People with Felony Convictions)

- Pay legal financial obligations before voting
- Short notice amendment re interest and admin costs
- LWVFL acted!
- Result: Amendment withdrawn. **FOUR CORNERS DOCTRINE**

# Florida: SB 524

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- For VBM to count,
  - Required mail ballots be in 3 different envelopes in order
  - Required signatures in certain places
- League and allies testified against
- CBS story
- Bill amended to remove tricky envelope requirements

# Florida: SB 7050

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- Shortened time for turning in voter applications to SOE from 14 to 10 days
- Limited who can assist in voter registration
- Set fine for non-citizen & felon assistance at \$50,000
- Required certification re: non-citizen/people with felony convictions volunteers
- Required receipt with personal info
- Increased max penalties to \$250,000 per year

# LWVFL's Response

- Testified against in legislature
- LWVFL changed method of registering voters
- In rule making, State revised the certification required by volunteer
- Filed federal lawsuit
- Allies filed additional federal suit



# LWVOH's Experience Testifying in Ohio

# Ohio: HB 458

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- **Voter ID:** Requires in-person voters to present an unexpired photo ID during early voting and on Election Day. Acceptable photo IDs include an Ohio driver's license, Ohio-issued state identification card, U.S. or state military ID, or passport.
- **Limitation on Drop Boxes:** Limits the number of drop boxes to one per county and restricts their operation to business hours during early voting.
- **Shortened Absentee Ballot Request Window:** Shortens the window for requesting absentee ballots, requiring requests to be made a full week before Election Day, as opposed to the previous Saturday by noon.

# Ohio: HB 458 (continued)

- **Changes to Curbside Voting:** Alters the rules for curbside voting, limiting eligibility to those with physical disabilities or those physically unable to enter a polling location.
- **Provisional Ballot Cure Period:** Shortens the window for curing provisional ballots from seven days to four days.
- **Citizenship Designation on IDs:** The law adds citizenship as a designation on driver's license and state ID cards, introducing additional documentation requirements for voting.

# LWVOH's Response

- Seek new partnerships to strengthen voter education.
- Raise awareness about need for voter-related education for all Ohioans, especially historically disenfranchised communities and those most affected.
- Raise awareness in the media and with elected officials on the local and state level about related issues
  - Public funding for education
  - Poll worker training
- Focus on the root cause of democracy problems in Ohio:  
Redistricting



**POLL**

# Why YOU Should Get Involved in 2024

# Get in the Fight!

- Participate in Action Alerts
- Contact your state advocacy leaders about testifying
- Sign up for League in Action
- Contact [advocacy@lwv.org](mailto:advocacy@lwv.org) with any questions





**THANK YOU**

# Questions

# Share Your Feedback

