

## Tips for writing compelling testimony

- Include the name of the committee or body meeting, the date and a title that conveys your basic point
- Begin by addressing the chair, vice chair and ranking member by name and the committee in general
- State who you are, your city, affiliations, credentials or other reasons why you have standing to offer this testimony
- If you have a story to tell, tell it simply and from your point of view
- State whether you are in favor or opposition to the legislation being considered
- If you have recommendations to change a piece of legislation or solve a problem, include them in your introduction and again at the end
- If you have documents, photos or other information to back up your testimony, include them
- VERY IMPORTANT: Keep your oral testimony to 5 minutes or less of just-the-facts, most compelling evidence. Write it down and read it. By doing so, you make sure your main points aren't lost, you facilitate better attention from the committee or body meeting and you respect the time of others who wish to testify. Your written testimony can be as long and involved as you feel necessary
- Keep your voice slow and steady and make eye contact while reading your testimony, if possible. Sometimes legislators may be distracted and a confident delivery and eye contact may help to keep their attention
- Offer to answer questions at the end of your oral testimony and be prepared to do so. When answering a question, begin by addressing the committee chair, "Chair \_\_\_\_\_ and members of the committee..."

*Prepared 5-4-2015 by Melissa English, Ohio Citizen Action*