

# Public Participation Guidance



## **Standing Committee Overview**

The South Dakota Legislature divides itself into committees to make a systematic study of proposals placed before it. The primary role of a standing committee in the legislative process is to thoroughly examine the bills and resolutions assigned to it and recommend whether a bill should become law and whether the Legislature should pass a resolution. A standing committee is required to take final action on every legislative proposal submitted to it. Each bill and resolution will have their own hearing.

Once a bill or resolution has been introduced in the Senate or House of Representatives, the Senate President Pro Tempore or the Speaker of the House, as applicable, assigns the bill or resolution to a committee for study and consideration.

After a bill or resolution has been referred to a committee, the Chair will decide when to add it to the committee's agenda to be presented for a hearing before the committee. Committee agendas are posted on the LRC website at <https://sdlegislature.gov/>. On the date named for the hearing, the committee convenes in its assigned meeting room. The committee is called to order by the Chair, who will announce each bill to be considered. Keep in mind that scheduling, location, and the order of bills and resolutions to be heard are subject to change.

## **Bill/Resolution Hearing**

A bill/resolution hearing has two parts: the presentation and committee action. The presentation portion typically includes the introduction of the bill or resolution, usually by the prime sponsor, followed by proponent testimony, opponent testimony, proponent rebuttal, and committee questions and discussion. Committee action includes any motions made by the committee.

The Chair of each committee determines when a bill or resolution is scheduled for a hearing and the order in which testimony, if any, will be taken. The Chair of the committee announces each bill or resolution, after which the sponsor addresses the committee. The Chair may then ask for testimony from proponents and opponents.

## **Registration Website and Required Information**

To testify, all registrants must register to provide remote testimony by visiting <https://sdlegislature.gov/>. To register, witnesses must provide their name, email address, phone number, zip code, position on the bill, and the name of the organization they represent, if any.

To testify remotely, testifiers must register in advance and must be registered as a remote testimony witness at the time the bill or other hearing item begins.

## How to Testify at a Committee Meeting

One way a citizen interacts with the Legislature is by offering testimony in a legislative committee meeting. Members of the public who wish to testify must register before they testify.


Although in-person testimony is the most effective way to participate in a legislative committee meeting, the Legislature understands that not everyone can participate in person. For this reason, the Chair may permit an individual to appear from a remote site and give testimony using Microsoft Teams. An individual may also submit a digital handout or written testimony for the committee's consideration.

Keep your testimony brief and to the point. In general, testimony should not be more than five minutes, preferably less. Note that in long hearings, the Chair may limit testimony, often to only two or three minutes per testifier.

Testimony submitted to a committee is public information. DO NOT INCLUDE any information you do not intend to make public, such as medical or other personal information.

## In-Person Testimony

To register to testify:

1. From a personal device, navigate to <https://sdlegislature.gov/> and click the  icon for the meeting you wish to testify at, or from your cell phone, scan the QR code located at the bottom left corner of the agenda.

**Committee Agenda**

**Committee:** Joint Committee on Appropriations  
**Room:** Room 362  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025  
**Time:** 8:00 AM-4:00 PM

**Register electronically to testify:** <https://sdlegislature.gov/testify/271055>



A person may submit a request to appear from a remote site and give testimony before this committee. Submit requests, a digital handout, or written testimony at least 24 hours before the scheduled meeting to [appropriations@sdlegislature.gov](mailto:appropriations@sdlegislature.gov).  
Individuals needing assistance, pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, should contact the Legislative Research Council (605-773-3251) 48 hours before convening to make any necessary arrangements.

Register to Testify

Title: House Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Date: 1/31 7:45 AM (in 1 day)  
Room: Room 414

Name  Lobbyist Registration Number (Optional)

How would you like to join the meeting?  
 In Person  Remotely  Written

Email (Optional)

Representing

City

State  South Dakota

(Note: We will seek approval from the Chair for any remote requests.)

Hearing of SB1  
 For  Against  Presenting  Other  Not Applicable

Written comments for this agenda item (optional)

2. Enter your **first and last name**.
3. Select **In Person** for how you would like to **join the meeting**.
4. Enter the **email** address where you wish to receive the remote invitation.
5. Select **representing Self** or

For those testifying as a registered lobbyist, select the organization you represent from the dropdown or type the organization if not available. If representing multiple organizations, please submit a Register to Testify form for each organization.

*Note: This dropdown list is populated by previous committee testimony and the Secretary of State's Lobbyist Registration list.*

6. Enter your **city** and **state** of residence.
7. Select the applicable option for the **agenda item(s)** you wish to testify on.

*Note: You must select an option for one bill or agenda item to be able to submit the registration.*

- a. For: You are for a bill or agenda item and wish to testify as a proponent.
  - b. Against: You are against a bill or agenda item and wish to testify as an opponent.
  - c. Presenting: You are presenting a bill or agenda item.
  - d. Other: You are neither for or against a bill or agenda item, but provided an answer to a committee question.
  - e. Not Applicable: You do not wish to testify on the bill or agenda item. Leaving a bill or agenda item blank also indicates you do not wish to testify on this item.
8. Click Submit Registration.

An iPad may be made available in each committee room for members of the public to register to testify.


## Remote Testimony

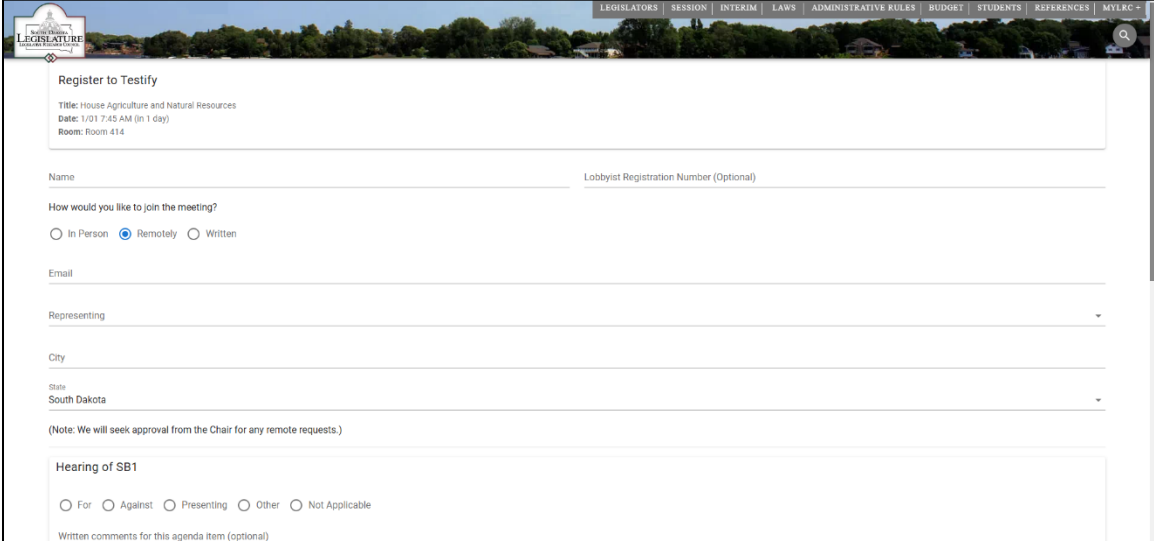
An individual may submit a request to appear from a remote site and give testimony before a committee (JR 7-28). The request must be submitted at least 24 hours before the scheduled meeting. Remote testimony must be approved by the Chair, on a case-by-case basis, for each committee meeting.

Anyone who desires to testify at a legislative committee meeting from a remote location must sign up using the Register to Testify form available online at [sdlegislature.gov](https://sdlegislature.gov). Once registered and approved by the committee Chair, testifiers who are approved by the Chair will receive a Microsoft Teams invitation to the committee meeting. Follow the instructions contained in the email. This meeting invitation may not be shared with anyone else. During the bill or resolution hearing, the Chair will call on you by name at the appropriate time to offer your comments. The Chair may prioritize in-person testimony. (See [Microsoft Teams for Committee Testifiers](#))

If a committee meeting is postponed or cancelled after an individual has signed up to testify remotely, the individual must sign up again when the meeting is rescheduled. No notification of a canceled or postponed meeting is sent to those requesting to testify.

In-person and remote testimony, along with materials presented or distributed to the committee, will be streamed live, recorded, and made publicly available on the Legislature's website and the SDNetwork operated by South Dakota Public Broadcasting. To register to testify:

1. Navigate to <https://sdlegislature.gov/>.
2. Click the  icon for the meeting you wish to testify at **or** Click the "Register electronically to testify" link on the meeting agenda. You may also scan the QR code located at the bottom left corner of the agenda using your cell phone.



The screenshot shows the "Register to Testify" form on the South Dakota Legislature website. The form is titled "Register to Testify" and includes the following information and fields:

- Title: House Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Date: 1/01 7:45 AM (in 1 day)
- Room: Room 414
- Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Lobbyist Registration Number (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_
- How would you like to join the meeting?  
 In Person  Remotely  Written
- Email: \_\_\_\_\_
- Representing: \_\_\_\_\_
- City: \_\_\_\_\_
- State: South Dakota
- (Note: We will seek approval from the Chair for any remote requests.)
- Hearing of SB1  
 For  Against  Presenting  Other  Not Applicable
- Written comments for this agenda item (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

3. Enter your **first and last name**.
4. Select Remotely for how you would like to **join the meeting**.
5. Enter your **email** address. This is the email address where the committee will send additional communications.

6. Select **representing Self** or

For those testifying as a registered lobbyist, select the organization you represent from the dropdown or type the organization if not available. If representing multiple organizations, please submit a Register to Testify form for each organization.

*Note: This dropdown list is populated by previous committee testimony and the Secretary of State's Lobbyist Registration list.*

7. Enter your **city** and **state** of residence.

8. Select the applicable option for the **agenda item(s)** you wish to testify on.


*Note: You must select an option for one bill or agenda item to be able to submit the registration.*

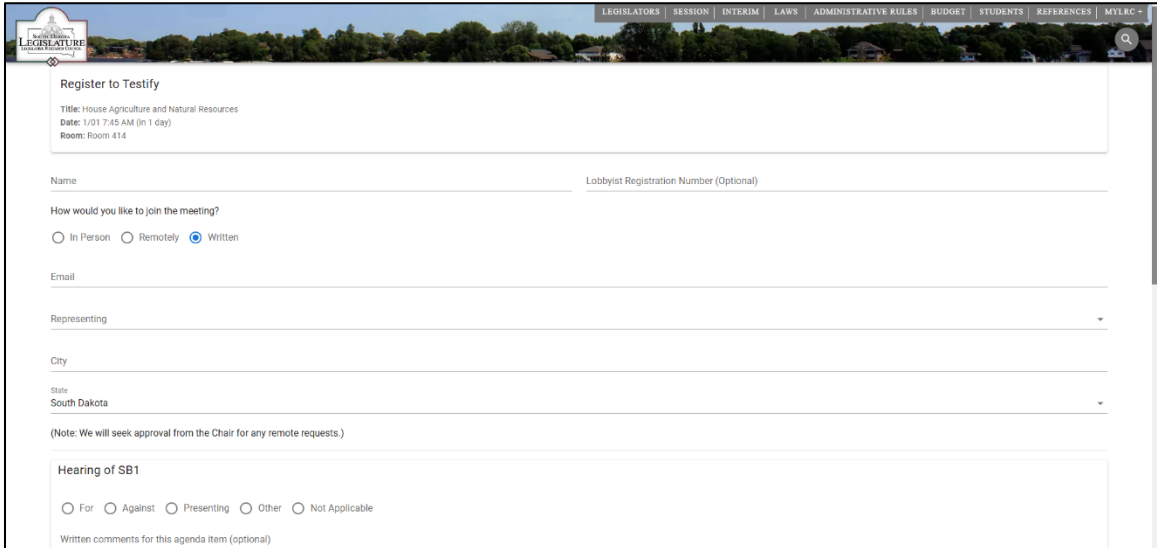
- a. For: You are for a bill or agenda item and wish to testify as a proponent.
  - b. Against: You are against a bill or agenda item and wish to testify as an opponent.
  - c. Presenting: You are presenting a bill or agenda item.
  - d. Other: You are neither for or against a bill or agenda item, but provided an answer to a committee question.
  - e. Not Applicable: You do not wish to testify on the bill or agenda item. Leaving a bill or agenda item blank also indicates you do not wish to testify on this item.
9. Click Submit Registration.

## Written Testimony

Written testimony requests must be submitted at least 24 hours before the start of the committee meeting. Any written testimony requests received less than 24 hours before a committee meeting may not be posted at the discretion of the Chair.

Written testimony is posted as soon as possible. The posting of testimony may be delayed due to high volume and will be delayed if submitted or hand-delivered at the time of/or during the committee meeting.

1. Navigate to <https://sdlegislature.gov/>.
2. Click the  icon for the meeting you wish to testify at or Click the Register electronically to testify link on the meeting agenda. You may also scan the QR code located at the bottom left corner of the agenda using your cell phone.



The screenshot shows the 'Register to Testify' form on the South Dakota Legislature website. The form includes the following fields and options:

- Title: House Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Date: 1:01 3:45 AM (in 1 day)
- Room: Room 414
- Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Lobbyist Registration Number (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_
- How would you like to join the meeting?  
 In Person  Remotely  Written
- Email: \_\_\_\_\_
- Representing: \_\_\_\_\_ (dropdown menu)
- City: \_\_\_\_\_
- State: South Dakota (dropdown menu)
- (Note: We will seek approval from the Chair for any remote requests.)
- Hearing of SB1  
 For  Against  Presenting  Other  Not Applicable
- Written comments for this agenda item (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

3. Enter your **first and last name**.
4. Select Written for how you would like to **join the meeting**.
5. Enter your **email** address .
6. Select **representing Self** or For those testifying as a registered lobbyist, select the organization you represent from the dropdown or type the organization if not available. If representing multiple organizations, please submit a Register to Testify form for each organization.  
*Note: This dropdown list is populated by previous committee testimony and the Secretary of State's Lobbyist Registration list.*
7. Enter your **city** and **state** of residence.

8. Select the applicable option for the **agenda item(s)** you wish to provide written testimony on.  
*Note: You must select an option for one bill or agenda item to be able to submit the registration.*
  - a. For: You are for a bill or agenda item and wish to testify as a proponent.
  - b. Against: You are against a bill or agenda item and wish to testify as an opponent.
  - c. Presenting: You are presenting a bill or agenda item.
  - d. Other: You are neither for or against a bill or agenda item, but provided an answer to a committee question.
  - e. Not Applicable: You do not wish to testify on the bill or agenda item. Leaving a bill or agenda item blank also indicates you do not wish to testify on this item.
9. Per agenda item, type testimony in the **written comments** field with a limit of 4,000 characters and/or upload a supporting handout or document in the **supporting documents** field.

Hearing of SB1

For  Against  Presenting  Other  Not Applicable

Written comments for this agenda item (optional) 0 / 4000

Supporting documents for this agenda item (optional) 0 files (0 B in total)  
Accepted file types. Total attachments across all agenda items must be 25 MB or less.

10. Click Submit Registration.

### Chair's Authority Regarding Testimony

A Chair is authorized to manage hearings by limiting duplicative testimony and setting time limits for testimony, as needed. Committee Chairs may also modify the order of agenda items.

Registering to testify does not constitute a guarantee that registrants will be permitted to testify if the Chair determines that public testimony must be limited. The Chair will, however, make reasonable efforts to provide equal opportunities for in-person and remote testimony, and remote testimony will be given the same weight as in-person testimony.

For both in-person and remote testimony, the Chair may limit testimony to that which, in the Chair's opinion, is sufficient for the committee to consider the bill on its merits. The Chair may limit the total time allotted for testimony and may limit the amount of time each witness may testify, regardless of whether the witness is in-person or remote. Remote and in-person witnesses may be called to testify at any point in the bill or resolution hearing.

## **Technical Issues**

Registration for remote testimony does not guarantee that a registered testifier will be able to testify. Remote testifiers may be unable to testify if there are technical issues with the remote testimony software or problems with the witnesses' computer, internet connection, or telephone connection.

When technical issues arise, testifiers may be skipped by the Chair and called upon once the issue has been resolved, if time permits. If technical issues arise that prevent a witness from participating remotely, the testifier may submit written testimony by completing the Register to Testify form on the Legislative website.

## **Decorum**

Remote testimony witnesses must automatically be muted and have cameras off when they enter the Teams meeting. To prevent delays, testifiers are expected to unmute themselves, turn on their camera, and be ready to testify. At all times, testifiers will be required to maintain proper committee protocol, which includes being acknowledged by the Chair before speaking and following the rules for testimony established by the committee Chair. Testifiers who fail to follow the rules for testimony established by the Chair forfeit their opportunity to testify and will be removed from the Teams meeting. Testifiers are requested to provide concise, truthful testimony in a dignified, respectful manner.

The purpose of the hearing is to educate the committee members. You may speak to the committee, and committee members may ask you questions. However, witnesses and members of the audience do not ask questions of the committee or committee staff.

Applause, cheering, booing, waving signs, or other expressions of sentiment are not allowed. In addition to maintaining an appropriate level of decorum, this is necessary to ensure that everyone, regardless of point of view, has the opportunity to address the committee without intimidation.

## **Tips for Testifying**

Be aware that sometimes the sponsor of a bill will offer amendments when he or she presents the bill to the committee. These proposed amendments may change the way you feel about the bill and, thus, affect your testimony.

Be prepared to limit your testimony and try not to repeat testimony offered by previous testifiers. Remember that while committee members want to hear what you have to say, numerous testifiers also want to be heard.

Be prepared to answer questions asked by committee members.


Be respectful. It is possible to disagree in the strongest terms while remaining courteous.

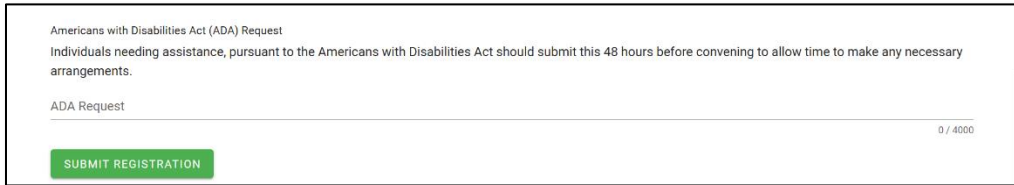
## **What if I Don't Want to Testify?**

You are welcome to attend a committee meeting and listen without filling out the Register to Testify form. All committee meetings are audio- and video-streamed on <https://www.sdpb.org/sdnetwork>.

## Accessibility for Committee Meetings

Individuals needing assistance, pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, should submit a request under the Register to Testify form at least 48 hours before the committee meeting convenes to allow time to make any necessary arrangements.

1. Click the  icon for the meeting you wish to testify at **or** Click the Register electronically to testify link on the meeting agenda.
2. Complete the Register to Testify form for the desired testimony.
3. Enter accommodation request in the ADA Request field at the end of the form.



A screenshot of a web form titled "Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Request". The form contains the following text: "Individuals needing assistance, pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act should submit this 48 hours before convening to allow time to make any necessary arrangements." Below this is a text input field labeled "ADA Request" with a character count "0 / 4000" on the right. At the bottom left of the form is a green button labeled "SUBMIT REGISTRATION".