

Written Testimony – Tips, Resources, & Guidelines

The Basics

- The length is your choice but one page is generally considered the norm.
- Be sure to use letterhead, if writing for an organization.
- Your header must include the bill number and must clearly state whether you're writing in support or opposition. Here are header examples that you should feel to copy:

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 301
Public Safety-Segregated Confinement-Report

TO: Hon. Chair Joseph F. Vallario, Jr., and members of the House Judiciary Committee
FROM: Your Name, Title
DATE: February 17, 2015

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 414
Public Safety-Segregated Confinement-Report

TO: Hon. Chair Bobby A. Zirkin, and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Your Name, Title
DATE: **TBD**

Laying Out What to Say

- The intro paragraph should be used to briefly describe your organization (if any) and state your support of the bill. For example, "XYZ Organization supports HB 301 because..."
- Use the middle paragraphs to more deeply describe the details of the issue at hand and to specifically state WHY it's so important to your organization, your members, you, and/or the people you serve.
- The closing paragraph often reiterates the organization's support for the bill and ends with a call to action such as, "We respectfully urge a favorable report."

Some Talking Points

- Maryland's use of segregated confinement is higher than the national average
- This is merely a reporting bill to measure progress and identify obstacles as well as best practices
- Mention why your organization cares about this issue.