

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**  
**Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chairman**  
**Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chairman**  
**2 East Miller Senate Building**

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**Witness Guidelines**  
**2022 Session**

**I. Committee Covid-19 Protocols**

- All individuals entering the Committee suite **MUST** have a scheduled appointment whether meeting with a member, members staff, Committee counsel, or Committee staff. Individuals that do not have a scheduled meeting will be asked to contact the individual they wish to meet with to schedule a meeting prior to entering the suite.
- All individuals entering the Committee suite and Committee room **MUST** wear a mask for the entire time they are in the Committee suite or Committee room, including during individual meetings.
- No more than four individuals who are not staff or members will be permitted in a meeting or in the Committee suite at one time.

**II. Bill Hearing Procedures**

- The Committee typically schedules bill hearings on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.
- All scheduled bill hearings will be posted in the Maryland General Assembly (MGA) Hearing Schedule.
- Bill hearings usually begin at 1:00 pm. However, the start time is subject to change due to the workload of the Committee and length of floor session. Please monitor the hearing schedule for scheduled changes. Any unscheduled changes will be announced by the Chairman on the Senate floor at the conclusion of the Senate floor session.
- The Committee accepts both oral and written testimony.
- Individuals, including sponsor witnesses, that wish to provide oral testimony and/or submit written testimony **MUST sign up for a My MGA account** on the MGA website. [Click here for a tutorial.](#)
- **All bill hearings will be heard virtually via Zoom and streamed live on YouTube through February 11, 2022. Beginning February 14, 2022, bill hearings will be held in person and streamed live on YouTube.**
- Hybrid and video testimony will not be permitted. Prior to and on February 11, 2022 all testimony will be virtual. Beginning February 14, 2022 all testimony must be in person.
- Late oral witness sign up will not be permitted.
- All witnesses will have two-minutes (2:00) to testify. All testimony will be timed. When the buzzer sounds, please conclude your testimony.
- Please do not read from your testimony.
- For written testimony, the bill's number, the name of the individual or organization submitting the testimony, and the individual or organization's position (Favorable, Favorable with Amendments, or Unfavorable) should be clearly marked on the first page of testimony.
- Written testimony should be saved with the bill number, name of person or individual, and position (fav, fwa, unf, info) i.e. SB 1\_jpr\_fav
- If you have an amendment to a bill in advance of a hearing, please include the amendment in your written testimony submission.
- Late written testimony will be accepted through submission of a paper copy. Electronic submission cannot be accepted.

***Oral Testimony Sign up and Written Testimony Submission for bill hearings scheduled January 12, 2022  
– February 11, 2022***

- Witness sign up and written testimony submission will open two (2) business days in advance of a scheduled bill hearing and will be open from 10:00 am – 3:00 pm.
- Bill sponsors must email the Committee Manager, Sandy Popp, the sponsor witness form two (2) business days in advance by 10:00 am. Sponsors witnesses are limited to three witnesses. As a reminder, sponsor witnesses **MUST** also sign up to testify via MyMGA.
- Audio visual presentations will only be allowed from the bill sponsor and must be provided two (2) business days in advance of the hearing date.
- Any special requests for bill order must be made by the sponsor of the bill and must be submitted to Sandy Popp, Committee Manager, two (2) business days in advance of the hearing date.
- All witnesses will be emailed a Zoom link the night before the bill hearing. The Zoom link will come from [noreply@mlis.state.md.us](mailto:noreply@mlis.state.md.us). If you did not receive the Zoom link, please check your spam box. The Zoom link is confidential and should not be shared.
- Bill order will be updated on the MGA website by 10:00 am on the day of the bill hearing. The order is subject to the availability of sponsors, the number of witnesses and any high-profile witnesses signed up to testify.
- All witnesses will testify via the Zoom link provided and must have their cameras on for their testimony.
- Witnesses cannot designate someone else to take their slot.
- Witnesses must sign into Zoom with an **identifiable username** i.e. first name and last name. If Committee staff are unable to identify a user, they will not be admitted into the Zoom hearing room due to safety concerns.
- Witnesses that are testifying on the first bill should log into Zoom fifteen (15) minutes prior to the scheduled bill hearing start time.
- All other witnesses must follow along the hearings via YouTube to know when the bill they are testifying on is going to be called by the Chair and should log into Zoom when the bill before their bill is called.
- Committee staff will admit witnesses into the Zoom hearing room right before the Chair is planning to call the bill they are testifying on.
- The Committee asks for witnesses' patience as they wait in the Zoom waiting room.
- Once admitted to the hearing room, witnesses should exit out of YouTube (to prevent feedback) and should remain muted until recognized by the Chair.
- If a witness fails to log into Zoom by the time the bill they are testifying is called, they will lose their timeslot.
- The format of member questions posed to witnesses will be at the Chair's discretion.
- All witnesses should stay logged into the Zoom meeting until the Q&A session concludes and the Chair calls the next bill.
- Once the Chair calls the next bill, witnesses should exit the Zoom meeting or they will be logged out by Committee staff.

**Bill Hearing Timeline for Witness Sign up and Written Testimony Submission for bill hearings scheduled through February 11, 2022**

<b><u>Monday Hearing</u></b>	<b><u>Tuesday Hearing</u></b>	<b><u>Wednesday Hearing</u></b>	<b><u>Thursday Hearing</u></b>	<b><u>Friday Hearing</u></b>
Thursday from 10AM - 3PM	Friday from 10AM - 3PM	Monday from 10AM - 3PM	Tuesday from 10AM - 3PM	Wednesday from 10AM - 3PM

**Oral Testimony Sign up and Written Testimony Submission for bill hearings scheduled beginning on February 14, 2022.**

- Oral Testimony sign up and written testimony submission will begin the day before the bill hearing at 4:00 p.m. and continue until the morning of the hearing at 10:00 a.m.
- The Committee strongly suggests that all witnesses sign up and submit written testimony on their home computer. Any individual that needs to come to the Committee to sign up and submit written testimony MUST make an appointment and MUST bring a flash drive with the witness testimony along with a hard copy of the written testimony. All flash drives will be scanned by Committee staff for viruses prior to allowing an individual to upload testimony.
- Bill sponsors must email the Committee Manager, Sandy Popp, the sponsor witness form one (1) business day in advance by 10:00 am. Sponsors witnesses are limited to three witnesses. As a reminder, sponsor witnesses MUST also sign up to testify via MyMGA.
- Any special requests for bill order must be made by the sponsor of the bill and must be submitted to the Committee Manager, Sandy Popp, one (1) business day in advance of the hearing date.
- Audio visual presentations will only be allowed from the bill sponsor and must be provided one (1) business days in advance of the hearing date.
- Committee staff will do their best to update the order of the bill hearings in the MGA hearing schedule by 12:00 pm on the day of the hearing.
- The Chairman will also announce a tentative bill order at the beginning of each hearing. The order is subject to the availability of sponsors, the number of witnesses and any high-profile witnesses signed up to testify.
- Audience seating in committee rooms will be accessible to the public but spaced to provide physical distance between seats.
- The Committee room doors will be unlocked and open approximately 10 minutes prior to the beginning of the bill hearings, and after secured by Security.
- Any individual that congregates by the Committee room doors prior to 15 minutes before the bill hearings are scheduled to begin will be asked to relocate until such time.
- We ask that staff and members of the public allow those who have signed up to testify to sit in the audience in the committee room and, if necessary, leave the committee room when finished testifying if there are no seats available in the audience.

***House Bills***

In general, the Committee does not hold hearings on House Bills that have been cross-filed in the Senate. Additionally, when the Committee schedules a House Bill for a public hearing, the Committee will accept

oral testimony from the bill's sponsor only UNLESS there is opposition. If there is opposition, the Committee will hold a limited bill hearing.

### **III. Committee Briefings**

- Please note, the information above pertains to bill hearings. For oral and written testimony procedures for Committee briefings, please reach out directly to the Committee at 410.841.3623.

### **IV. Voting**

- The Committee voting schedule is at the discretion of the Chair and will depend on the workload of the Committee.
- When feasible, voting sessions and voting lists will be available in the MGA hearing schedule 24 hours in advance of a voting session.
- When possible, the outcome of a voting session will be published in the MGA hearing schedule after a voting session.
- Committee members will vote in person. Prior to February 11, 2022 all voting sessions will be streamed live via YouTube.

### **V. Committee Bill Files**

- The public can request an electronic copy of a public bill file by emailing the Committee Manager at [sandra.popp@mlis.state.md.us](mailto:sandra.popp@mlis.state.md.us).
- Written testimony and the oral witness list will be available the day after the bill is heard in Committee. Any additional materials will be available after the bill passes third reader on the Senate floor.
- Written testimony will also be available through the MGA website when the bill is on the Senate floor for third reader.
- For bills that do not pass out of a committee, written testimony will be available on the website after the legislative session.
- For prior year bill files, please contact the Department of Legislative Services Library at 410-946-5400.