ADVANCING INTEGRITY

Quick Guide
Texas Legislature

Attire:

- Wear business or business casual attire. You want to be taken seriously, so dress appropriately.
- T-shirts are only recommended if the shirt features your group or issue. This is most effective when you are visiting with a group wearing matching shirts.
- **Wear comfortable shoes.** You will be doing a lot of walking.

Parking:

- The best parking is the Texas Capitol Visitor's Parking Garage at 1201 San Jacinto Blvd. This lot can fill quickly so arrive early to get a spot.
- The second best choice is the Bob Bullock Museum, 4 blocks north of the Capitol, at 1800 Congress Ave.
- There is metered parking around the Capitol and other parking lots with higher prices.

Entrances:

- You can enter the Capitol on all four sides, North, South, East, and West.
- If you park in the Visitor's parking lot you will be entering from the East, so this will be the closest, but may not be the quickest.
- **Please be aware:** Due to construction and other factors, entrance availability varies.
- You will need to pass through security at all entrances. There are metal detectors and your bags will be x-rayed.
- If you are carrying a firearm into the Capitol, you will typically enter through a separate checkpoint, possibly a specific entrance. You will have to provide a License to Carry.

Layout:

- The main building has five levels. You will enter on the First Floor, below you is the Ground Floor, and above you are the Second, Third, and Fourth Floors.
- The Extension, where you will find the majority of offices for legislators and committee hearing rooms, is underground and can be accessed by the elevators and stairs in the north wing of the main building.
- **Please be aware:** If you exit the Capitol from the Extension, you cannot reenter there. You have to go back through security at one of the main entrances.

Food and Drink Options:

- The Capitol Grill is in the Extension, E1.002 It is open to the public Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m to 3:00 p.m. It is cafeteria-style and has grab-and-go options.
- The best option is to bring your own food in resealable packaging and drinks with lids.

What to Bring:

- If you are there to testify, you could be there all day and all night, so plan accordingly.
    - Bring electronics, cords, chargers, and medications.
        - Please be aware: The wifi connectivity in the Capitol is sketchy at best.
    - Pack a sweater or jacket (hearing rooms can be cold)
    - If there is ANY chance of rain, bring an umbrella.

ADVANCING INTEGRITY

Quick Guide
Testify

Registration

General Information:

- You will register FOR, AGAINST, or ON (neutral) a bill.
- Register as "self" and with your organization (ONLY if you have permission to officially represent them).
- You can register to testify and speak, register to testify and submit written testimony, or just register your stance (for/against) the bill.

House:

- Use one of the kiosk stations near the hearing rooms in the Extension Levels (E1 and E2).
- Follow the prompts on the screen.

Senate:

- Start at one of the kiosks outside the Senate Chamber.
    - If the bill is listed with ALL options provided, proceed the same way as the House and follow the prompts.
    - If the bill is NOT listed or the only option is to register, the Committee is using the paper witness card system. Find a card at the back table of the hearing room and/or with the clerk at the front of the room. Complete the card and hand it to the clerk.

In the Hearing

General Information:

- Hurry up and wait! (The Chair determines the bill order, not the agenda.)
- Invited testimony is called first and then the rest are usually called in registration order.
- If it is crowded, you may be directed to an overflow room.
- If you have to leave, make sure someone is there to text/call you if you are up next.
- If it is a small hearing you will be called one at a time and testify at a podium, if it is a larger hearing you may be called four at a time to sit at a table facing the dias.
- Make sure you have read and understand the bill.
- The hearing notice will tell you how many minutes you have (usually 2 or 3). Be prepared to have the time shortened if many have registered. Have shorter versions of your testimony prepared.

Time to Testify:

- Hand your written testimony (number of copies specified in hearing notice) to the clerk as you walk up to testify.
- Always speak clearly into the microphone.
- RESPECT THE TIMER. Make sure you have practiced OUT LOUD with a timer.
- **First line of Testimony:** May name is ___. I am representing (your organization if you have one) and myself, and I am speaking (for/on/against) the bill. Chairman ___ and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today.
- **Last Line of testimony**: I urge you to vote (yes/no) on (bill name). Thank you.
- Legislators typically don't ask questions if you are not invited testimony or you don't frequently testify, but they may. Don't panic. Just answer as best you can.

If you have questions, contact us at info@advancingintegrity.com.