

Public Hearing Testimony Guide and Template

OPPOSE S.B. 980

Committee on HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT Public Hearing
in Legislative Office Building or by zoom.

The public hearing can be viewed via **YouTube Live** or may be on **CT-N**.

Bill we OPPOSE:

S.B. 980 - AN ACT IMPROVING SAFETY ON THE CAMPUSES OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER
EDUCATION

https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/cgabillstatus/cgabillstatus.asp?selBillType=Bill&bill_num=SB00980&which_year=2025

Testify IN PERSON or on Zoom:

- **You MUST SIGN UP TO TESTIFY via Zoom.** Individuals who wish to testify in person or via Zoom must register using the [On-line Testimony Registration Form](#). **Registration will close on Thursday, March 6th at 3:00pm.**
- Speaker order of approved registrants will be listed in a randomized order and posted on the **Higher Education & Employment Advancement Committee website** at 6pm on March 6th.
- Hearings can last for several hours and depending on the subject matter, there can be a long wait.
- If you do not have internet access, you may provide testimony via telephone. To register to testify by phone, call the Phone Registrant Line at 860-240-0480 to leave your contact information.
- Please submit written testimony using the [On-line Testimony Submission Form](#). Spoken testimony should clearly state your name and related bill number. Speakers will be limited to three minutes of testimony. The Committee encourages witnesses to submit a written statement and to condense oral testimony to a summary of that statement. All public hearing testimony, written and spoken, is public information. As such, it will be made available on the CGA website and indexed by internet search engines.

Testifying Virtually: Turn on your camera and unmute

- Join the zoom a few people ahead of you using the link in your email invitation or from your calendar event.
- When you initially join the zoom, it will be a webinar format. **When it is almost your turn, the Committee clerk will make you a “panelist” and you must accept the request.**
- When it is your turn, make sure to turn on your camera and unmute

Tips for testifying:

- You may begin with acknowledging the chairs of the committee "Senator_____, Representative_____" "and members of the committee."
- Introduce yourself very distinctly so the transcriber can understand, and mention your town and the number and title of the bill(s) you'll be speaking on. Indicate right away whether you support the bill, oppose it, or are offering suggestions to improve it.
- Then explain your reasoning. Keep your remarks short; 3 minutes max and/or 1 page. When you finish, remain on screen for a moment, in case committee members want to ask questions.
Focus on YOUR story or why the subject personally impacts you, your family, community, etc.

Submitting Written Testimony If you cannot attend that day, you can still submit written testimony via the [On-line Testimony Submission Form](#). **Written testimony may be anonymous.** However, all public hearing testimony, written and spoken, is public information. As such, it will be made available on the CGA website and indexed by internet search engines.

Testimony Template:

Dear members of the Higher Education & Employment Advancement Committee,

My name is [Insert Your Name Here], I am from [city or town]. I am [mention your organization or group affiliation, or other appropriate and relevant information]

I am testifying in **opposition** to S.B. 980 *AN ACT IMPROVING SAFETY ON THE CAMPUSES OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION*. The proposed bill would have a negative impact on the problem it claims to address. Rather than protect students, faculty, and community members from hate or harassment, this bill would threaten students, faculty, and community members being targeted by far right extremists by subjecting them to heightened surveillance.

[This is where you tell your story. Here are some prompts to consider:

- Students & Faculty: What is your experience of campus life? Have you experienced doxxing, harassment, or negative consequences of surveillance? How has your university responded to incidents? Why would increasing police presence be harmful to your campus community?
- Jewish Community Members: Why do you support student movements? What could be done differently to address real cases of antisemitism? Why do you feel like this bill is in bad faith?
- Muslim Community Members: Why do you feel like the bill is in bad faith? Have you been subjected to state surveillance? How does increased police presence negatively impact you?

Be advised: All testimony is public record. Written testimony may be submitted anonymously. However, do not include any information that you wouldn't want to be public.

[Talking Points: Pick 2-3 points that resonate with you and write them in your own words. Please make an effort to fact check any additional information you include.]

- Our state leadership claims to be standing up to the Trump administration and project 2025. But this bill is quite literally echoing Project 2025. The Trump administration and Project 2025 have outlined their intentions to surveil students under the guise of anti-discrimination protections. By including police and security presence, this bill directly serves that agenda.
- On January 29, Trump signed a blatantly authoritarian Executive Order that lays the groundwork for a wave of deportations of non-citizen student activists, in retaliation for exercising their right to freedom of speech, under the guise of “fighting antisemitism.” This bill would put non-citizen students at risk by exposing them to surveillance.
- The far-right Christian nationalist group The Heritage Foundation put out Project Esther (a name insulting to Jewish community members), a documented plan to

target activists on the left under the guise of combating antisemitism. This bill plays directly into that plan.

- Universities have already been caught surveilling students in what is a disturbing invasion of privacy. This bill would only contribute to this problem.
- This bill would unjustly subject student and faculty organizers and activists to harassment and violence by exacerbating existing tensions of campuses through police presence.
- This is a bad faith attempt at addressing Islamophobia that doesn't reflect any consultation with members of the community.
- This is a bad faith attempt at addressing antisemitism as it fails to address the concerns of Jewish community members who have been subjected to hate and harassment as a result of their participation in or support for student protests.

Thank you for your time. I urge you to vote no on S.B. 980 as it puts students, faculty, and campus communities at risk by exposing them to surveillance and over policing. Our students and our communities deserve better.

Sincerely,
[YOUR NAME]