Guidance for Testifying on Maine Civil Legal Services

March 21, 2023

The goal of civil legal aid is to provide legal help to everyone who needs it but is unable to afford it. An additional investment last year is helping legal aid providers maintain operations and fill detrimental funding gaps, but the allocation is not sufficient to meet the current and growing needs of Maine's residents and court system.

Maine needs to invest more in access to civil legal aid.
LD 564, An Act to Improve Access to Civil Legal Services, will help bridge the justice gap.

Below we have provided a template for testimony as well as a step-by-step on how to sign up to testify or to submit written testimony.

Template for testimony:

> Good morning Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is **(your name)** and I live in **(your town)**. *[If you are testifying on behalf of an organization, state that here along with your organizational mission].*
>
> I am testifying in support of LD 564, An Act to Improve Access to Civil Legal Services and am asking the Legislature to increase funding for civil legal aid in Maine. LD 564 will move us toward meeting the increasing demand for help with civil legal issues. *[Share why civil legal aid is important from your perspective. **Make it personal.** Testimony is most compelling when it's personal and from the heart. Why is civil legal aid important to you? Take a look at the Talking Points to see what might resonate for you. You can also find a fact sheet on LD 564 here. For more information see FAQ on LD 564.]*
>
> *[Keep it brief. Your written testimony can be as short or as long as you'd like, but a page is a good target. Oral testimony should be no more than 3 minutes in length.]*
>
> *You can use the Talking Points for ideas*
>
> *[Succinctly summarize your points]*. Thank you.

Step-by-Step to testify at the public hearing and/or to submit written testimony:

Please note: you can also testify in-person, which does not require that you register in advance.

Click here to testify by Zoom or submit written testimony (you do not have to use this link to testify in-person).

1. Click the circle to the left of "**Public Hearing**."
2. Scroll down. Click the "Select One" box at the bottom of the page and select "**Judiciary**" from the list.
3. Scroll down. Click the "Select one" box next to "**Choose date**:" and select "**March 21 2023 1:30 PM**" from the list.
4. Scroll down. Under "**Choose a bill**:" click the circle to the left of "**LD 564"**
5. If you would like to present your testimony on zoom during the public hearing, click the check box to the left of "I would like to present my testimony live." (Written testimony is not required in order to testify live but it is ideal if you can submit written testimony AND testify live.)
6. **If you sign up to testify live**, you will receive an email with a link to the public hearing after you sign up. Use this link to join the public hearing at 1:30 pm on March 21. You will be placed in a waiting room while you watch the hearing and when it is your turn to testify the Chairs will call your name and bring you on camera to testify. Please keep your live testimony to no longer than 3 minutes long.
7. **To submit your written testimony** (you can do this if you plan to testify live or not) Click "Choose file" to upload your testimony or paste the text in the large box beneath "...enter testimony below." Read the Submission and Signup Guidelines
8. Enter your information in the boxes at the bottom of the page.
9. Click the box to the left of "I'm not a robot."
10. Click "Submit/Register" at the bottom.
11. **You're done, great job! Thank you for supporting civil legal aid in Maine!**