How to Testify at the Texas Legislature

Updated July 2026

When can I testify?

In the legislative process, a bill is first assigned to a committee and the committee holds a public hearing. Members of the public may sign up to testify on the bill during the hearing, and legislators take these testimonies into account when they vote on whether the bill should move forward in the legislative process.

How to register to testify

Registration will open an hour before the committee hearing starts. The earlier you register, the earlier you will be called to testify.

You must be on Capitol grounds in order to register to testify. You can park at the Capitol Visitors Parking Garage (first two hours are free, then $1 for every half hour, with $12 max per day) or find street parking.

For House bills, you can create a profile on the House Witness Registration portal beforehand to save time.

You can see a video of how to register here: https://house.texas.gov/videos/22660

Once you arrive at the Capitol, you can log into the Capitol wifi with your laptop or tablet (the online portal will not work on a cell phone). If you don't have a laptop or tablet, there are kiosks inside you can use.

Go to the House or Senate Witness Registration Page:

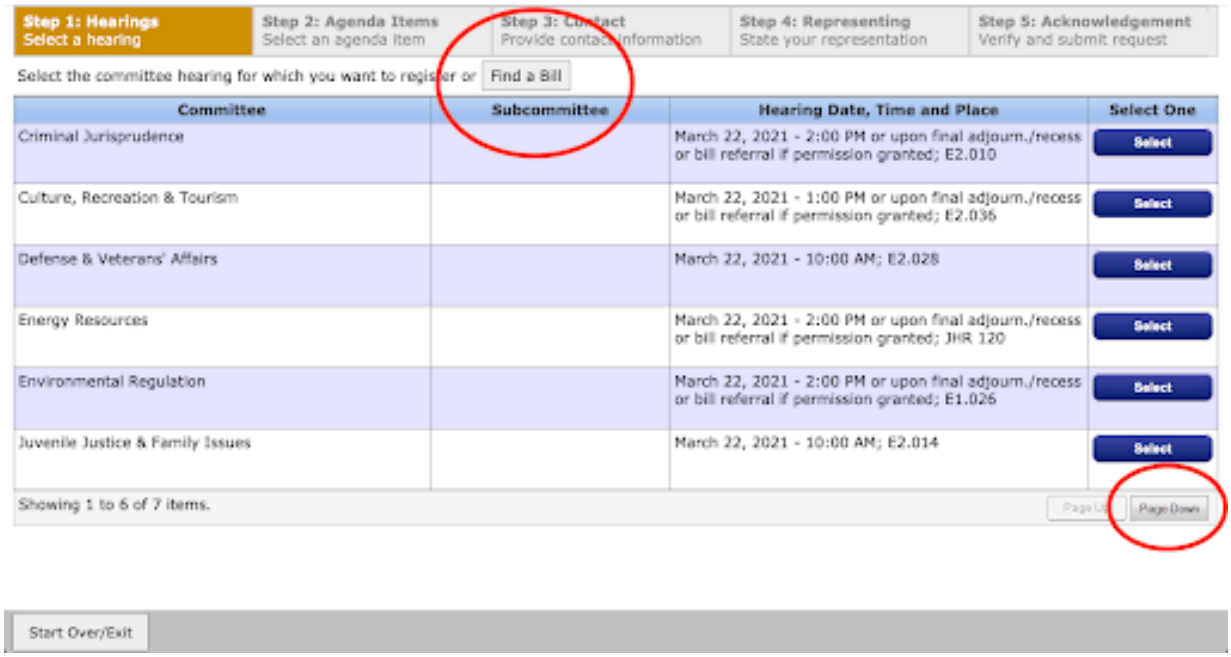
a. For House bills (HB ##): http://hwrs.house.state.tx.us/

b. For Senate bills (SB ##): http://swrs.senate.state.tx.us/

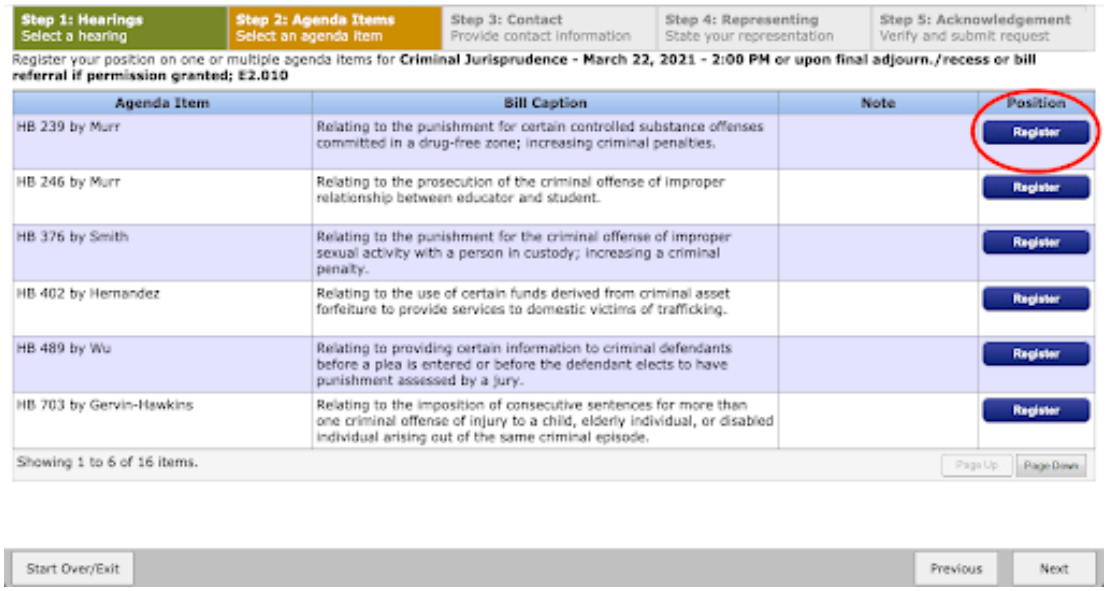
1. You will see the screen below. (This is a screenshot from the House website. The Senate website will look similar.) Click the "Begin" button at the bottom of the page.



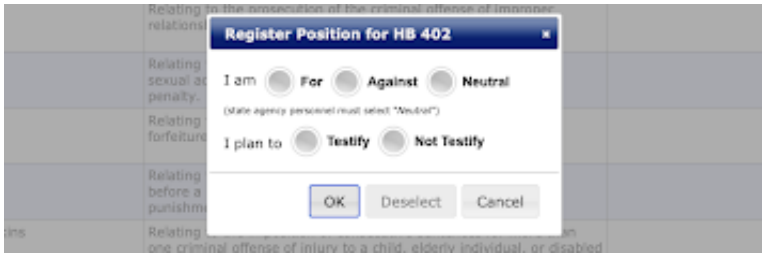
2. From the list of items, select the meeting you're looking for or click "Find a Bill."



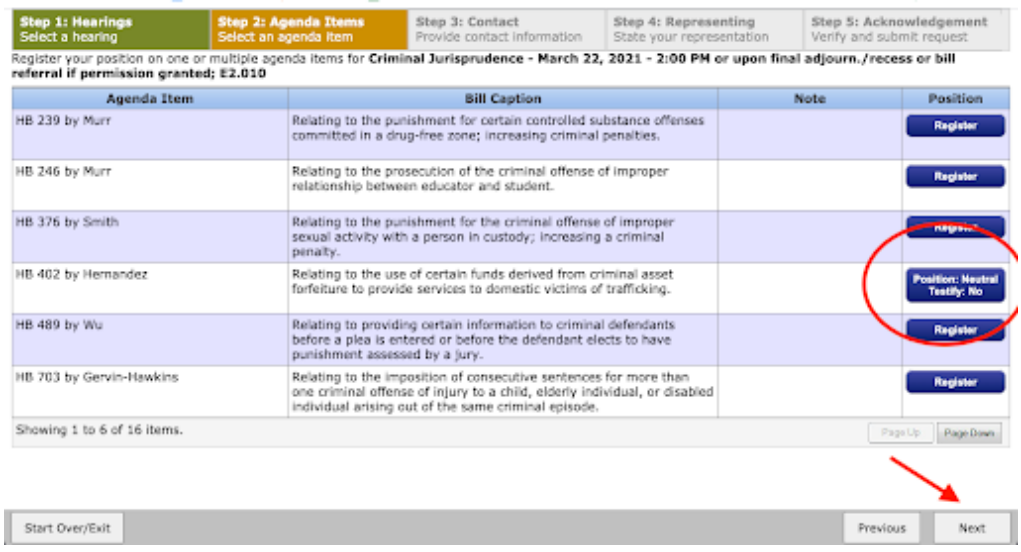
3. Click “Register” next to the bill you want to register your position on.



4. On the pop-up window, select whether you are “For” (in support of) or “Against” (opposed to) the bill and select “Testify.”



5. You will see your stance in the blue button next to the bill you registered for. Select “Next” to continue.



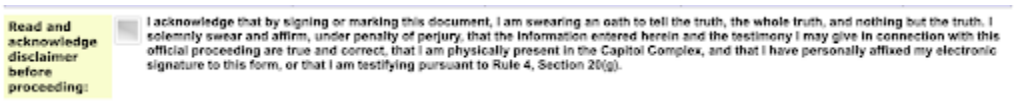
6. Enter your contact information. At the bottom you have the option to save this information for future registrations to complete this process more quickly in the future.



7. Enter your representation and occupation. When asked if you are an authorized representative of a group or organization, select “No” unless you have explicit permission to register on behalf of an organization. Even if you are there with fellow PTA members, you are speaking for yourself and should select “No.”



8. Click the box for the acknowledgement form, and you have officially registered!



How long does it take to testify?

Testifying at a public hearing at the Texas legislature is usually a full-day commitment. At the hearing, invited speakers will testify first, so public testimony does not typically start until the afternoon. Depending on the number of people who registered to testify, public testimony can last well into the evening, especially for high-profile bills.

Be sure to bring water, snacks, your phone/laptop charger, and anything else you might need for a long day. There is a restaurant called the Capitol Grill, open from 7 a.m.-5 p.m., if you want to get a meal.

If you are not able to remain at the Capitol all day, you can register in the morning and then monitor the livestream of the hearing to see when they begin public testimony. At that point you can drive back to the Capitol to listen for your name, but there is a risk that you will miss your chance. It is great to have a group of people you are testifying with who can monitor the hearing and send updates to those who have to leave.

If you have to leave before your name is called, you can give 20 printed copies of your testimony to the committee clerk and it will be shared with the committee.

What happens when my name is called?

You may be in the actual hearing room or in an overflow room if the hearing room is full when your name is called. You will walk to the front of the hearing room and sit at a table with 2-3 other people who are also testifying. The committee chair will call your name to speak. You will state your name and begin your testimony. You have two minutes to speak, and then a beep will let you know your time is up.

You may bring up a piece of paper or a phone or laptop to read your testimony from. You are not expected to memorize it.

After everyone on your panel testifies, the committee may ask follow-up questions. However, if you are a parent testifying on your experience with AISD, you do not need to be prepared to answer highly technical questions about public education; you just need to say why the bill matters to you and how it would affect your community.

It may seem daunting to testify at a public hearing, but remember that it is legislators' job to hear from the public, and it is an essential component to the legislative process. Focus on being succinct and direct, but also sincere and authentic.

Most legislators are not inside public schools every day, teaching children, volunteering in the classroom, going to PTA meetings, or interacting with students on a regular basis. They need to hear from folks who are on the ground to get a realistic picture of the current state of public education. They need to hear from the people who would be dealing with the real world effects of the decisions they make in the Capitol.

What should I say during my testimony?

- I**ntroduce yourself**—your name, where you are from, what role you play in your community

- **State your stance on the bill**—Are you against or in support?

- **Tell your story**—Sharing your personal experience is highly effective. Talk about why the bill matters to you and how it would affect your own children, school, colleagues,

district, etc. Give anecdotes that illustrate why it's important for legislators to support or reject this bill.

- **Provide data**—If you have particularly compelling data to share, you can include that and indicate the source it came from.

- **Ask the legislators to take action**—urge them to vote no or yes on the bill.

- **Thank the committee for their time.**

You should thoroughly rehearse your testimony beforehand and make sure it's under two minutes long.

Sample Testimony

Hello, my name is Jean Jones. I'm a mom to two young children in public school, a 2nd-grader and a rising kindergartener, and I want to express my concern that the proposed substitute for House Bill 2 reduces the Basic Allotment increase from $395 to just $55 per student. That is not enough to meet rising costs and meet students' needs.

Schools in Texas are struggling, and we need to secure resources for them in this current legislative session. At our neighborhood public school, I have seen how our PTA has to fundraise constantly to meet student needs and support teachers. My son's classroom is one of many portables on our campus, and in some of those portables it was so humid that students' papers were literally wet. The PTA had to use funds to purchase dehumidifiers for all the teachers; we could not get the money from the district.

Students at our school also had to play on a "field" for years that was just dirt and gravel, and so many kids, including my son, got really injured, with huge and deep scrapes from the gravel. Eventually the district stepped in to install grass, but only after years of advocating and trying to raise the money ourselves.

Our PTA will have to raise even more money next year in order to help pay the salaries of a part-time project specialist, part-time counselor, and content interventionist. PTAs should not have to do that, and I was shocked when my son started school and I found out that this was the reality of public education in Texas.

Our PTA also purchases art and music supplies, books for the library, PE equipment, and funds playground and landscaping improvements. The PTA has been looking into purchasing shade sails for some of the portable classrooms, because the doorknobs get so hot the kids burn themselves on them.

My son's school is lucky. We are in a high-income neighborhood and have parents who are able to contribute a lot of money so that our school can meet basic student and teacher needs and

provide enrichment opportunities and community events that make our school a wonderful place. But in a public school, parents should not have to carry so much of this burden. Our government should do that with our tax dollars.

Many schools are not as lucky as us, and they should not have to suffer just because their PTA cannot raise enough money to purchase basic items. The district should be able to do that, but they can't, because public education is drastically underfunded in this state.

Our children are the future of Texas, and the vast majority of them attend a public school and will continue to do so even after the implementation of vouchers. They deserve a high-quality education as they are the future workers and innovators in our state.

I appreciate your hard work this session on public education. Please finish the job. Increase the Basic Allotment, and give our schools the tools they need to support strong student outcomes.