

Testimony/Legislative Conversation Template

TIPS

- Conversations with legislators need to be 2-3 mins if you are in the meeting with other parents. Legislator meetings are only scheduled for 15 mins.
- **Live testimony** needs to be written in such a way that you can take out part of it without losing the story. You will not know how much time you will have to give your testimony until just before you testify.
 - You should practice your testimony and have it deliverable at 1 min and 2 mins. Once you are in the space, you will know which version you can use.
 - Again, practice, practice, practice. Practicing and timing yourself helps you know how much time you have and helps you to feel much more confident and comfortable as you testify. Practicing also helps you to avoid rushing through your testimony.
- The template below will help you to draft your testimony/legislative conversation.

Template for Live/Written Testimony or Legislative Conversations

- INTRO
 - Thank them and state who you are.
 - Thank you, SEN/REP, for listening/reading my testimony today. My name is XXX and I am the parent of XXX at XXX school (or your relation to this issue)
- INTENT/WHAT
 - I am writing/here to ask you to support HB 1591
- YOUR WHY
 - Things to include
 - Include who is in the story and who they are to you.
 - Include feelings/emotions in the story. This is important to draw in your audience. How did you/your student feel in this experience?
 - Why/how does this bill/issue impact you/your family?
 - How has this issue impacted you/your family/community?
 - Review the talking points for the bill. Is there anything that resonates with you?
- WHY NOW?
 - Review the talking points for one that is convincing to you about the need for urgency and put it in your own words.
 - Think about how you would respond if someone asked you why it makes sense to do this now. Take that response and relate it back to your main story.
- WHY YOU?
 - Think about your story, what can a legislator do to resolve the problem you've expressed?
 - Think about your vision for education, where does your legislator fit into that? What words paint a picture of the outcome you are looking for?
 - Think about the challenges they face and the concerns they may have. What could you say to help them stay strong in the face of those different pressures?
- WRAP UP
 - Thank the legislator or committee member for taking time to read and/or consider your testimony.
 - Restate your ask to support the bill/issue you're writing about.
 - *(If submitting a letter)* Sign and date your testimony with your name and your address.

CONTEXT: Brief Overview of our Bill and Priorities

1. Provide funding equity for public school students: Charter schools are not entitled to local property tax levies, creating a **funding gap of between \$1,500 to \$3,000 per student**. Because charter public schools educate a disproportionately high percentage of Global Majority students (i.e., Black, Indigenous, and students of color) and low-income students, this funding gap means **fewer resources for students who need that funding most. This is fundamentally unfair**. In 2019, the legislature was thoughtful in fixing this funding inequity for tribal compact schools. We ask that you now fix that same inequity for charter public school students and families.
HB 1591: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1591&Year=2021&Initiative=false>
2. Extend time frame to open new schools: The current five-year authorizing window closed in April 2021. While the charter law allows for the establishment of up to 40 schools, only 24 schools have been authorized to date. **Families need innovative, equity-driven public schools**, and extending the time frame for establishing new schools allows more time to make that happen. Furthermore, **six Black, Indigenous, and person of color school leadership teams are ready and eager to apply to operate charter schools**, if the time frame is extended.