

# DC COUNCIL HEARINGS

*A legislative hearing is an opportunity for government to hear what the public thinks about a bill proposal. What happens in one?*



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## First, the Council opens the hearing.



- Chairman Mendelson will start the meeting and explain why he decided to hold a hearing on this bill.
- Councilmember Lewis George and other councilmembers can also give short speeches welcoming everyone and explaining why this bill is important to them.

## Next, witnesses are called.



- Witnesses will be called in the order they appear on the agenda. The agenda will be sent to you the day before the hearing.
- If you're there in person, the Chairman will call you up 4 at a time to sit at the witness table.
- When it is your turn to talk, you can push the button on the mic to turn it on. Red means on!
- If you're joining on Zoom, when you get called up you'll get promoted to a presenter and be able to turn on your camera and mic.

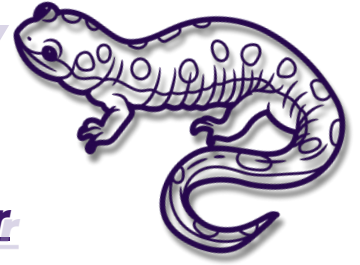
## Then, you testify!



- You'll read your testimony (you have up to 3 minutes, but we recommend keeping it to 1 minute)
- Councilmembers might ask you questions about your testimony. Here are examples of questions they might ask:
  - How did you get the idea of an official state amphibian for DC?
  - Why do you think the red-backed salamander should represent DC and not another amphibian like the bull frog?
  - What do you like most about red-backed salamanders?
- When the councilmembers are done asking questions you can leave the table or turn off your camera and mic on Zoom
- If you're in the room watching others testify, make sure to stay quiet so that the Council can hear what they're saying
- You're not allowed to bring big signs or posters into the Council building



# GIVING TESTIMONY



Testifying in a hearing is a direct way to tell councilmembers what you think about a bill. Here are the steps to follow when you give your testimony:



## **Step 1: Introduce yourself and say where you go to school!**

*Share a little bit about yourself! Answers to these questions help councilmembers learn more about you and why you are advocating for this bill.*



## **Step 2: Give 2 or 3 reasons why you think the red-backed salamander should be the official amphibian of DC!**

*Explain to the councilmembers why they should vote for this bill, and what would make the red-backed salamander a good symbol of DC and the people who live here.*



## **Step 3: Explain why this bill is important to you!**

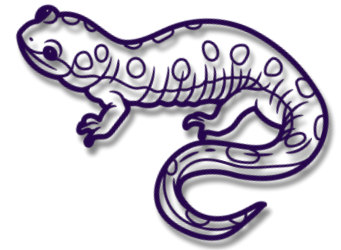
*Tell the Council what the red-backed salamander being DC's official amphibian would mean for you and your classmates.*



## **Step 4: Thank the Councilmembers for listening and ask them to vote for the bill!**

*Make sure to thank the councilmembers for listening to your testimony! If you'd like, you can also wear stickers or t-shirts showing your support or pass out flyers to people in attendance.*

# OTHER RESOURCES



**We can't wait to welcome you to the Council! Here are some final tips and resources to have on hand:**



## **Signing up to testify**

- You must register to testify before 5pm on Monday, 9/16. The link to register is [lims.dccouncil.gov/Hearings/hearings/491](https://lims.dccouncil.gov/Hearings/hearings/491)
- If you need interpreters or accommodations, email [cow@dccouncil.gov](mailto:cow@dccouncil.gov) with your request by Tuesday, 9/10.
- If you don't want to testify in person or over Zoom, you can always just submit written testimony on the hearing page.



## **Getting to the hearing**

- The building address is 1350 Pennsylvania Ave NW.
- You can take the Red, Orange, or Blue Line to Metro Center, take the bus, or drive. There is no public parking at the building.
- You'll have to go through a metal detector and put backpacks and other belongings through the x-ray machine.
- Once inside, follow the signs to Room 412 where the hearing will be held.



## **Watching the hearing online**

- Anyone can watch the hearing live at [dccouncil.gov/hearings](https://dccouncil.gov/hearings)
- The recording of the hearing will also be posted on the Council website within a few days.



## **Reach out with questions!**

- We are here as a resource for any questions you have about the testimony process or the logistics of the hearing.
- Reach out to Ben Rosenfeld ([brosenfeld@dccouncil.gov](mailto:brosenfeld@dccouncil.gov)) or Emily Cassometus ([etatro@dccouncil.gov](mailto:etatro@dccouncil.gov)) with any questions.