

2025 Legislative Session

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# Legislative Toolkit

How to  
Navigate  
Session



WASHINGTON STATE  
**LGBTQ**  
COMMISSION

2025 Legislative Session  
Legislative Toolkit

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# Our Mission

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The Washington State LGBTQ Commission works to improve the state's interface with the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirit, and intersex community, identify the needs of its members, and ensuring that there is an effective means of advocating for LGBTQ equity in all aspects of state government.

# Our Vision

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As public servants committed to advancing equity and fostering liberation for all 2SLGBTQIA+ people, we embrace humility, compassion, diversity, collaboration, respect, and joy in our work. We pledge to honor public involvement, community accessibility, and to listen and proactively center the needs of the most marginalized members of our community.

# Our Statute

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The WA State LGBTQ Commission was established in 2019 by the legislature. We are governed by **RCW 43.114**. To read the statute in its entirety, click [here](#).

# Our Areas of Focus

1

K-12 Education

Healthcare

2

3

2SLGBTQIA+  
Senior Issues

Justice

4

5

Housing

# Legislative Timeline

**\*Please note the House and Senate vote on committee/floor cut-off dates and other deadlines. This document will be updated to reflect the 2025 dates as soon as possible. \***

- **Monday, January 13th, 2025:** First day of 105 day “long” session
- **Session cut-off dates (estimated):**
  - **40 days in:** Policy Committee Cutoff: Last day to read in committee reports in house of origin, except the House fiscal committee and Senate Ways & Means and Transportation committees
  - **47 days in:** Fiscal Committee Cutoff: Last day to read in committee reports from fiscal committees in house of origin
  - **59 days in:** House of Origin Cutoff: Last day to consider bills in the house of origin – 5pm
  - **86 days in:** Fiscal Committee Cutoff – Opposite House: Last day to read in opposite house committee reports from House fiscal committee and Senate Ways & Means and Transportation committees
  - **94 days in:** Opposite House Cutoff: Last day to consider opposite house bills – 5pm
    - Exception: Initiatives, alternatives to initiatives, matters necessary to implement budgets (NTIB), matters that affect state revenue, amendments, differences, and business related to the interim or closing the session are **not** subject to this cutoff
- **Sunday, April 27th, 2025:** Expected last day of session
- **Tuesday, May 20th, 2025:** Last day that Governor must act on a bill
- **Sunday, July 27th, 2025:** 90-day effective date for signed bills

# How a Bill Moves Through the Legislative Process

1. A bill may be **introduced in either the Senate or House of Representatives** by a member. If a bill is introduced in the same form in both houses, they are called companion bills.
2. It is **referred to a committee** for a hearing. The committee studies the bill and may hold **public hearings** on it. It can then **pass, reject, or take no action on the bill**.
3. The committee report on the passed bill is read in open session of the House or Senate, and the bill is then **referred to the Rules Committee**.
4. The Rules Committee can either **place the bill on the second reading calendar** for debate before the entire body, or **take no action**.
5. At the second reading, a bill is subject to **debate and amendment** before being placed on the third reading calendar for **final passage**.
6. After passing one house, the bill goes through the same procedure in the **other house**.
7. If amendments are made in the other house, **the first house must approve the changes**.
8. When the bill is accepted in both houses, it is signed by the respective leaders and **sent to the governor**.
9. The governor **signs** the bill into law or **may veto all or part of it**. If the governor fails to act on the bill, it **may become law without a signature**.

Source: [How a Bill Becomes a Law](http://leg.wa.gov) - leg.wa.gov

# Legislative Outreach

## Why is it important to meet with your legislators?

Washington State Legislators are citizen legislators, meaning many of them have jobs outside of the legislature. No one can be an expert on everything, so legislators rely on people like you to inform them. Even though you might not agree with them on everything, meeting with your legislator is a valuable tool in the legislative process. Leave doors open to continue conversations.

## Why you?

Legislators rely on input from all sorts of people, but the voice that matters most **is yours**. Your representatives and senator are there to represent you, and in order to do that best, they need to hear from you! Whether meeting in-person, calling their office, or sending an email, your voice really can make an impact on the way your legislator chooses to vote on an issue. Outside of a handful of Senators and Representatives, few have direct, lived experience with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Join the LGBTQ Commission as we engage the Legislature on issues that impact our community, both directly and indirectly.

# How to Email Your Legislators

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1. Click [this link](#) to locate your district's legislators. Note that you have two representatives and one senator.
2. Email, call their office, or use [this link](#) to send a message to your legislator. Make sure to send one message to, or call, each of your legislators.
3. Identify yourself as a constituent of their district who would like to share your thoughts on a bill that is before the Legislature. (Remember to note the specific bill number, and clearly state whether you are **pro**, **con**, or **other** (providing information or context on a bill without taking a position one way or the other).

## Example Email Template:

**Subject: [Bill #] - [PRO/CON/OTHER]**

Dear [Your Senator/Representative],

My name is [Name] and I live in the [District #] district and I would like to encourage you to vote [Yes/No] on [Insert Bill X].

[Insert reasoning, experience, or evidence you would like to include along with your position.]

Thank you,  
[Your Signature]



# Legislative Testimony Overview

## Open Legislature:

Washington State has one of the most open legislatures in the country. A bill has a public hearing before Senate and House committees before being considered on the floor of the House and Senate. In the 2025 session, House and Senate committees will meet using a format which allows for both in-person and remote participation. You have the opportunity to provide written testimony, state your position on a bill, or register to testify either in person or remotely by registering at Committee Sign In. You may also contact your legislator to make your position on a bill known. You can do so by writing a letter, sending an email, calling the legislator's Olympia office, or by calling the Legislative Hotline - 800.562.6000.

## Committee Hearings:

Legislative hearings are conducted informally. The rules are somewhat relaxed but are intended to help preserve decorum and allow respectful, courteous debate. Anyone can testify; you do not need formal training.

## How the Committee Meeting is Conducted:

Be present at the beginning of the hearing. The committee chair will open the hearing on a particular bill. Frequently, opening comments will be made by the bill's sponsor and/or by committee staff. Sometimes, however, the Chair will ask for testimony from proponents and opponents immediately.

The Chair will organize the hearing to ensure:

1. Committee members hear relevant information
2. Interested persons are given the opportunity to express their positions
3. The hearing does not exceed the time available. Most committee hearings are limited to two hours and may have several matters pending. The Chair will attempt to be fair and provide each person an opportunity to testify. It may be necessary, however, to restrict testimony so that everyone is given an opportunity to express their opinions. You may not be called on to testify, however, you may still provide written testimony up to 24 hours after the start of the hearing.

# Testifying in Committee

**Important!** To sign in to testify in committee, submit written testimony, comment on a bill, or state a position without testifying you **MUST** have a Legislative Account. This account will be how you sign in the Committee Sign In interface. [Click here](#) for instructions to set up your Legislative Account.

## BEFORE the Hearing:

- **Prepare Your Remarks.** Time is usually limited, so be brief and direct. Written testimony should not be read at committee hearings. Writing your comments in outline form will be helpful when you speak, and you should summarize your written testimony.
- **Avoid Duplication.** If other people will be offering similar testimony at the hearing, try to coordinate your testimony and avoid duplication. Well organized testimony is the most effective.

## AT the Hearing:

- **Sign In:** Testifiers can sign in electronically for all committees at [Committee Sign In](#), or at the kiosks located around the legislative campus. **The sign-in window closes one hour before the meeting is set to begin.** See page 10 for registration tips.
  - Regardless of whether you sign in to testify remotely or in person, you will receive an individualized link to join the meeting remotely. Do not share your Zoom link for the meeting, and only use as a backup if your plans change. For more detailed instructions on testifying remotely or in person, please visit [Committee Sign In](#).
- **Be punctual:** usually there is only one public hearing at which testimony is taken on a particular bill.
- **Check Materials:** see if proposed amendments or substitute bills are available at the [Committee Schedules](#) page. Click view docs for the meeting you are interested in.
- **Maintain proper committee protocol:** wait to be acknowledged by the committee Chair before speaking; ensure testimony is respectful and professional; and follow rules for testimony established by the Chair (i.e., time restrictions)

**Pro = Supporting Legislation**  
**Con = Opposing Legislation**

**Other = Weigh in without taking a stance.**

# Testifying in Committee Continued

## Providing In Person Testimony:

- If you sign in to testify in person, only use your link to participate remotely as a backup if your circumstances change.
- Approach the testimony table when you are called on to testify. The microphones will already be turned on.

## Providing Remote Testimony:

- Backgrounds that include a campaign sign, a slogan, or any other material that is campaign-related, offensive, or otherwise defamatory will not be permitted. Be aware that failure to follow the rules for testimony established by the Chair may result in forfeiting the opportunity to testify.
- See detailed instructions on how to join a House or Senate meeting once signed in

## Making your Remarks:

1. Begin by introducing yourself to the Chair and committee members and stating your purpose.

**Example:** “Good [morning/afternoon] Chair [Insert Legislators Last Name] and members of the Committee. I am Jane Smith from Spokane. I am here representing myself. I support this bill because....”

2. In your opening remarks, make it clear whether you are representing other citizens or a separate group.

3. Make your remarks brief and clear. Try to not repeat previously made remarks. If the topic is personal, do your best to stay composed while testifying. It can be challenging to publicly share one’s personal experience. Speak from “I” and tell a story of how the issue/bill would impact or improve your life.

**Note:** Be mindful of any personal/private information you share. Any testimony is public record.

4. Be prepared for questions and comments from committee members. These are designed to gain additional information, **but don't answer if you are not sure of the answer.** Tell the members you will send a written answer to the committee, and follow up with committee staff.

5. Restrict yourself to your testimony. Abstain from other overt demonstrations such as clapping, cheering, booing, etc.

# Testifying in Committee Continued

## How to Register to Testify:

1. Create/Sign In to your Legislative Account.
2. Select Legislative Chamber (i.e., House, Senate, Joint)
3. Select the committee's name and meeting date and time, then select the bill for which you would like to testify.
4. **Testimony registration will close 1 hour before the start time of the hearing.** Anyone who does not register before this deadline will be unable to testify before the committee.
5. **To testify in person:** Select "I would like to testify in person during the hearing." Ensure your registration information is accurate. After submitting your registration, it may not be possible to make changes. It will be a part of the legislative record and used by TVW for online and television graphics. **Note:** Despite registering to testify in person, you will automatically be sent a Zoom link for the meeting. Please plan to testify in person as you indicated upon registering, but you may use the link as a backup if your plans change.
6. **To testify remotely:** Select "I would like to testify remotely." Ensure your registration information is accurate. After submitting your registration, it may not be possible to make changes. It will be a part of the legislative record and used by TVW for online and television graphics

## Additional Verbal Testimony Information:

- Registration opens when a bill is scheduled for public hearing. Registration closes one hour before the meeting is scheduled to begin.
- Every registrant will automatically receive a Zoom link to the meeting. Each link is unique to the registrant. Registrants are prohibited from sharing links.
  - Those who signed up to testify in person should plan to do so, and only use their link as backup.
- Remote participants may participate via Zoom or phone. See instructions on how to connect to the meeting.

## Additional Verbal Testimony Information Continued:

- **Be advised: Registering to testify does not guarantee you a chance to speak or speak at specific times. Time constraints, technical issues, changes to committee schedules, etc. could affect your ability to testify.**
- Remote participants will be connected to the Zoom Webinar meeting in attendee view until called to speak.
- The committee Chair may limit public testimony (for example, one minute per testifier) due to time constraints. Be prepared to testify at any point during the hearing. It is also possible you will not be recognized to testify.
- Maintain proper committee protocol, which includes waiting to be acknowledged by the committee Chair before speaking, ensuring testimony is respectful and professional, and following rules for testimony established by the Chair.
  - In person testifiers may not bring signs into the hearing rooms and must adhere to the occupancy guidelines assigned to hearing rooms.
  - Remote testifiers may include the name of their organization in the background of video feeds, but backgrounds that include a campaign sign, a slogan, or any other material that is campaign-related, offensive, or otherwise defamatory will not be permitted.
- **Committee and technical staff are unable to assist with any individual connection, Zoom link, or other technical issue you may experience. Please see instructions documents for tips on how to address any common link or other technical issues.**
- **Anyone who fails to follow the rules for testimony established by the committee Chair forfeits their opportunity to testify.**

## Submitting Written Testimony

**In the House:** You may submit written testimony up to 24 hours after the start of the hearing, or you may email your written testimony directly to all committee members. Be sure to include the bill number and your position on the bill.

**In the Senate:** You may submit written testimony up to 24 hours after the start of the hearing, or you may email your written testimony directly to committee members. Be sure to include the bill number and your position on the bill. Another option is to email your written testimony to committee staff, as an alternative or in addition to submitting testimony to committee members.

# Submitting Written Testimony Continued

**Your District's Legislators:** Please refer to "How to comment on a bill" for instructions on submitting bill comments directly to members in your district.

**A list of Committee Chairs can be found here. (Update with link when available)\***

## How to Submit Written Testimony for Committee Hearings:

1. Sign into your Legislative Account.
2. Select the Legislative Chamber.
3. Select the committee's name and meeting date and time, then select the bill for which you would like to submit written testimony.
4. Select "I would like to Submit Written Testimony." **Written testimony will close 24 hours after the start time of the hearing.**
5. Provide your written comments in the form. Your comments will be made available to legislative members and staff of the committee and will be included in the legislative record for bill and meeting archival purposes but will not be used as part of testimony summary materials on the bill report.

## Stating your Position Without Testifying

**This approach is taken to notate your position on a bill in the archived legislative record. You will indicate you support (Pro) or oppose (Con) the bill.**

1. Sign into your Legislative Account.
2. Select the Legislative Chamber.
3. Select the committee's name and meeting date and time, then select the bill for which you would like to submit written testimony.
4. Select "I would like my position noted for the legislative record." **Registration will close 1 hour before the start time of the hearing.**
5. Ensure your registration information is accurate. Your registered position will be made available to legislative members and staff of the committee and will be included in the legislative record for bill and meeting archival purposes but will not be used as part of testimony summary materials on the bill report.

# Quick Links & Helpful Guides

## Legislature Links

- Legislature Website - [leg.wa.gov](https://leg.wa.gov)
- [Contact your Legislator or Sign Up for Committee Hearing](#)
- [Find my Legislators](#)
- [Search for a bill](#)
- [Committee Meeting Schedules and Documents](#)
- 2025 Session Cutoff Calendar (TBA)
- [Legislative Information Center](#)
- [Legislative Member Roster \(including LAs\)](#)
- [Glossary of Legislative Terms](#)
- [Overview of the Legislative Process](#)
- [TVW - Watch Floor Sessions & Committee Hearings Live](#)

## Commission Links

- Commission Website - [LGBTQ.wa.gov](https://LGBTQ.wa.gov)
- [RCW 43.114](#).

## Navigating Capitol Campus

- [Capitol Campus Map](#)
- [Campus Parking Guide](#)