

## **GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING WRITTEN TESTIMONY TO A LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE FOR THE STATE OF MAINE FOR A HEARING**

### **Individual Written Testimony - Email Submittal:**

Email written testimony may be sent to [Cassie.Nixon@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:Cassie.Nixon@legislature.maine.gov). You may also mail to each committee member individually (see <http://legislature.maine.gov/committee/#Committees/SLG> for member e-mails), to make sure they get it.

### **Individual Written Testimony - Hardcopy Submittal:**

Type your testimony (one page preferred). **Make 20 copies**. Mail to: Committee on State and Government, c/o Legislative Information, 100 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333, [\(207\) 287- 1327](tel:2072871327).

## **FORMAL GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING ORAL AND WRITTEN TESTIMONY TO THE COMMITTEE AT A HEARING** (*I've heard lots of informal testimony though*)

At the hearing each speaker may have no more than three minutes, so it's best to come prepared with a shortened version of your written testimony or notes to speak from. (Three minutes goes by much faster than you think; it's a good idea to do a timed practice reading at home so you can pare it down if needed. Less is more.)

- Your opening greeting should be to: "Senator Rodney Whittemore and Representative Roland Martin, Chairs and Members of the State and Government Committee."
- The first sentence should be "Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee." Or something similar.
- The second sentence should state your name and town.
- The third sentence should clearly state whether you are in favor of or opposed to the specific bill. "I support HP 956 because..." Then give your specific points as briefly as possible.
- Your last sentence should again thank them for their consideration and respectfully ask their support of HP 956
- Provide 20 copies of your written testimony to the Committee Clerk before you testify. Try to get the hearing room early and give your copies to the clerk, who may put them in the committee members' folders at their desks. (there is also a procedure for submitting a "**petition**", with multiple signatures)

### **Talking points for HP596:**

"Testimony" sounds a bit intimidating, but it doesn't have to come from professional or technical expertise. What's desired is to go beyond "support this legislation" and to give reasons and personal experiences to explain why the legislators should take the action requested of them.

The basic points for the "We The People Maine" legislation\* are:

- we want to get money out of politics
- we want to stop corporations from claiming Constitutional rights meant for people
- there are many citizens from all political persuasions who agree that the *Citizens United* decision should be overturned
- Congress has not responded to requests from 16 states for an amendment, so we are trying an alternate route (an Article V Constitutional convention calling for an amendment to the US Constitution that would say that "corporations are not people" and "money is not speech") , provided by the US Constitution, to get an amendment proposed

There will be people speaking to all of these points, and you don't need to include them all. You could just give your own reasons and any personal example of what you have seen as adverse effects of the *Citizens United* decision or the extent of popular demand for an amendment agreement on the need for an amendment that would overturn the decision. (Many of our petition circulators commented on how people from all across the political spectrum were eager to sign - these personal observations could be given as testimony.)

### **More detail and background information:**

***Overturning money as speech and corporate personhood:*** Supreme Court decisions dating back 100 years give corporations rights as persons, which they have used to claim freedom of speech and other Constitutional rights meant for people. The *Citizens United* decision extended these rights and made it common knowledge that corporations are

considered as people and money is to be considered to be speech and therefore its spending on political campaigns may not be restricted. Polls show that 80% of Americans oppose the *Citizens United* decision.

- A Supreme Court decision can only be overturned by a Constitutional amendment, which must be written either by Congress or by a Constitutional convention made up of delegates from each state. Congress has shown a lack of will to write such an amendment, so the alternative is to attempt a Constitutional convention.

### ***Calling for a Constitutional convention***

- A request from the legislatures of 2/3 of the states (34 states) is required in order for Congress to call a Constitutional convention. Four states (Vermont, California, Illinois, and New Jersey) have now passed this request, calling for amendments to address concerns regarding *Citizens United*.

- Any amendment must be ratified by 3/4 of the states (38 states).

- The Maine state legislature has already passed a resolution asking Congress to write such an amendment. Congress has failed to make any more than token progress. A call for a Constitutional convention is the only way that Maine can act to move the amendment forward.

### ***Widespread support for overturning the Citizens United decision –***

- Petition circulators found voters supporting the move for such an amendment regardless of political party.

- We The People Maine collected over 35,000 signatures of voters in favor of an amendment to say that “Corporations are not people” and “Money is not speech”