**Tips for Testifying at a DC Council Hearing**

Before you give testimony at a DC Council Hearing, there are some things you should know to help make your testimony as effective as possible. These tips can help you be clear and concise, as well as add power to your appeal to the Council.

**Prepare Your Testimony Before the Hearing.** Divide it into three main sections:

* **Opening**
  + Identify yourself. If you are speaking as a part of an organization, identify the organization and say very briefly what the organization does. You can use DC Advocacy Partners as well as any other groups you are a part of e.g. TASH.
  + If you are a resident, state that you are and tell the Council your ward number
  + Explain why this issue is important to you (briefly, here)
  + State your position on the bill (e.g. “I am in full support of the bill”), at least once at the beginning of your testimony, and once at the end
* **Body** 
  + Give more detail about the problem the bill will solve
  + Expand on how the bill will impact the life of your family member, you, and others
  + Use facts and statistics and cite those sources
* **Closing**
  + Sum up your position again, making sure to state what action you would like them to take on the bill
  + Thank the committee for the opportunity to speak and for their work on the issue
  + Offer to assist with further work on the issue

**General Tips**

* Keep your testimony short – usually testimony is limited to three minutes for individuals and five minutes for organizations
* Written testimony can also be submitted, either by itself or to accompany oral testimony
  + Written testimony can go into greater detail, but must be consistent with your oral testimony
  + Written testimony must also be double-spaced and printed one-sided
    - Bring 15 copies of written testimony for the committee
* Rehearse your testimony
  + Make sure it fits into the allotted time
  + Three minutes is equivalent to 1.5 pages of text (12pt. Times New Roman font, double-spaced)
    - the Chairman will indicate to you when your time has elapsed and tell you to stop
* Stay on topic
  + Time is short, so only talk about issues related to the hearing
* Speak clearly and close to the microphone
* Councilmembers may ask you questions at the end of your testimony. These questions likely will be friendly and will help further your point; others may ask for some clarification. Answer the questions the best you can. If you do not understand the question, feel free to ask for clarification. If you do not know the answer to the question, it is fine to say that you do not know