

Activity: Make a Public Comment (City or County Committee)

Objective: Raise awareness and gain support from active citizens and elected officials serving in a capacity directly related to your issue.

Leader Prep: Identify the list of city or county committees available in your area. If there are committees that directly address the issue girls are advocating for, print or prepare that committee's materials for girls to review.

Supplies:

- Committee agenda
- Proposal for new law
- Petitions or other supportive documents
- Elevator pitch
- Safety ratios for travel
- Permission slips



1. Before you attend the upcoming convening of the committee, you'll need to identify which committee you'll be targeting for action. Committees, councils, boards, task forces, and commissions are all different names for groups of engaged citizens and elected officials that advise legislative bodies on a wide range of policy issues. There can be only a few of these groups in your community or there be tons! These bodies are the best place to begin engaging policymakers because they may be somewhat knowledgeable about your issue and have a strong grasp of how it can be approached by policymakers.
2. To communicate with these groups, you'll first need to obtain a copy of the agenda as well as any documents produced by the group to get a better understanding of their work. Try to answer the following questions about the group based on what information they provide online or at the local municipal building:
 - a. Who are the members of the group?
 - b. What are their primary focus areas? For instance, do they do more advising on community engagement or on budgets or on city planning?
 - c. What did they do at their last meeting? What did they talk about? What did they report to the city council or county board?
3. Now that you have more information about this group, you are ready to draft your comment. Similar to a letter to the editor or your elevator pitch, a public comment is just a couple of key points about your issue. It should only take a couple of minutes to say. Practice several times with friends, your guardian or parent, your troop leader or someone else to help you stay calm and remember what you want to say.
4. Go to the City or County Clerk Office (depending on your committee type) to fill out a speaker card, if one is required. Depending on the formality of the committee and how many speakers they expect to receive, you may be waiting in line at the event or you may be seated and be asked to take a turn.
5. You will need to attend the meeting in person to share your comment. Sometimes, if you have an important conflict, a member of the committee may be able to share your comments if you cannot attend. However, it can be difficult for someone else to put passion and urgency into your prepared comment. Do your best to be there. Remember to wear your Girl Scout uniform and insignia.
6. When you get up to speak, share your name, where you live, and your troop information, if you like. Then, state the comments you've prepared. It's okay to be nervous! Remember to speak clearly and confidently.
7. At the end of your comment, say thank you to the committee for listening.
8. You may stay for the remainder of the meeting, or if you need to leave, you may do so. When you return home, you may share additional information like photos, graphs, media you've produced, your petition or action day, or anything else via email or by mail. Be prompt in these submissions so that if a decision is being made, they have all of the information needed.

