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**Testifying for the Joint Finance Committee**

We will each have two minutes to make an impact at budget sessions that will be held at as-yet-unknown locations around the state on as-yet-unknown dates. This gives us a small amount of time to practice crafting our important personal narratives on why we need to invest some of our historic state budget surplus into issue areas we care about.

Practice beforehand. It’s all about elevating your story and community needs while asking for what you want. Speak clearly and look at the legislators as much as possible. Thank them at the end. You’re not alone. We’re all with you. Be confident.

Here’s a quick formula you might follow.

**Introduce yourself:**

* Be friendly and sincere. You may have to work with them again.
* Identify your employer if that is relevant to the issue, for example, “I am a teacher and I’m concerned about adequate funding for our schools.”
* Identify a group you represent if relevant, “I represent XXX and I’m concerned about [this issue we work on].”
* Identify where you live, “I’m a proud lifelong resident of Racine.”

**Tell your story:**

* Bring your written testimony with you.
* What are you concerned about? Why does this matter to you?
* What was your personal experience or the experience of a close connection?
* How will the legislators’ decision impact your life or community?
* Avoid cursing, slang, or lots of acronyms.

**Ending Your Testimony:**

* “I hope you will help us keep commercial tobacco products out of the hands of young people.”
* "I hope you will help us create a future in Wisconsin where people don't suffer from many negative health effects that go with smoking and vaping”
* Be prepared to answer questions; however, if you don’t know the answer, offer to promptly circle back with them. It’s always better to say, “I’ll have to look into that and get back to you,” then to make up something.

**After the meeting:**

* Send a thank you note reaffirming your points and their commitment or feedback.
* Debrief with your team:
  + Did you make your points?
  + Do you need to follow up?

**Use this sheet to plot your 2-minute testimony.**

**Introduction: Who are you? Where are you from, and who do you represent?**

**What is your personal story or relationship to the issue? Why does the issue matter to your community?**

**What commitment or action do you want from the Joint Finance Committee or other elected body?**