

“Speaking Up and Speaking Out” by Filing a Witness Slip Resource

(Developed December 2019)

SECTION	PAGES
1: Witness Slip Frequently Asked Questions.....	1 - 2
2: Register & File a Witness.....	3 - 4
3: File a Witness Slip Without Registering.....	4
4: File a Witness Slip Electronically Using a Link.....	5 - 6
4: File a Witness Slip Electronical By Searching for a Bill.....	6

SECTION 1: Witness Slip Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a Witness Slip?

- Pubic record of a person or group’s position on a particular bill
- A slip that is filled out electronically instead of on paper with a pen or pencil
- Can be filed by individuals on behalf of themselves, or on behalf of organizations
- Can be filed for any bill scheduled for a hearing in the Illinois Senate or House Committee

2. Why submit a Witness Slip?

- Witness slips are important because they let lawmakers know where people and organizations stand before they vote on a piece of legislation

3. How Can I File a Witness Slip?

- You can file a witness slip electronically using a computer, tablet, or smart phone

4. When should I file my Witness Slip?

- Your witness slip can be submitted as soon as a committee hearing is posted
- You should file your witness slip a day before the committee but at least one hour before the committee hearing to ensure that it is accounted for and read by the committee
- Witness slips can be submitted up to the end of the day of the committee’s scheduled date

5. Does one Witness Slip follow each hearing for my bill?

- No. You will need to submit a witness slip for each committee hearing posted. For example, your bill may be posted twice within the same week. You will need to submit a witness slip both times, HOWEVER
 - If your bill is heard in a committee hearing that has been rescheduled for a different time that same day, your witness slip will remain connected with that piece of legislation. If the piece of legislation is heard in a committee hearing that has been rescheduled to a different day, you will have to submit a new witness slip for the new posting date

6. Once I have filed a Witness Slip, can I change my mind and delete it?

- No. Even if you change your mind, once you file a Witness Slip, it stays on the record. It can be searched for and found years later.

SECTION 2: Register & File a Witness Slip

The Illinois General Assembly's (ILGA) online dashboard allows users to create and modify witness slips for House and Senate Committees. You can register and create an account, which allows you to:

- Save your user information such as name, address, phone number, email, business and representation, eliminating the need to re-enter the information on each Witness Slip
- Create a witness slip in just a few clicks
- View your witness slips filed for each chamber for the current General Assembly
- Filter and sort by committee name, date/time and legislation number
- Update user information, testimony and positions on filed witness slips
- Log on to the ILGA Dashboard to enter and manage witness slips

You can register an account at my.ilga.gov. You'll need an email address and a password. Email accounts are free from gmail.com, yahoo.com, or a many other providers.

Step 1: Click on the "Register" button located on the left side of the screen.

Step 2: Type a valid email address and password. The password is case-sensitive and needs to be a minimum of 6 characters in length. Type the password again to confirm it. Click in the box next to "I Agree to the ILGA Terms of Agreement" and click "Register". To read the Terms of Agreement, click on the underscored words, which links you to the terms. When "Register" is clicked, a confirmation screen displays.

Step 3: Open the verification email that you receive. Click the second link in order to verify your email address is correct.

Step 4: A Verification Success screen displays once your email is verified. Click the link to log on.

Step 5: Type your email address and password. Click "Log On".

Don't forget to save your password somewhere you can refer to later. You can even bookmark the page so that you have quick access to your account right from your list of favorites.

Step 6: Once you log on, your email address will appear in the top, right corner of the screen. Since this is the first time logging on, enter your Profile Information. Only the Fax field is optional. Click "Create" when you are done.

Step 7: Verify the Profile Details are correct.

Step 8: Now that you are logged in, select either the "House" or "Senate" menu item on the left side of the screen. Three additional menu items appear:

- Members
- Committees
- Committee Hearings

Click "Committee Hearings"

Step 9: View committee hearings posted for today, the week, the month or previous hearings posted by clicking on the appropriate tab. Select the "View Hearing Details" icon on the right to display the committee Hearing Details screen.

Step 10: Once you find your bill and hearing information, click "Create Witness Slip" The Witness Slip will display. Note, since you registered, your information will automatically be filled in, saving you time.

Step 11: Please see pages 5 - 6 for a detailed explanation on how to complete the rest of the Witness Slip.

SECTION 3: Filing a Witness Slip Without Registering For An Account

The other method for entering electronic witness slips on a piece of legislation or on subject matter in committee requires **no** registration or log on by the user. This method is usually used by first time users or users that enter in witness slips very infrequently. Note, it **does not** allow you to edit a slip once it is submitted. Sometimes you will have a link to file an electronic witness slip. Clicking the link will take you directly to the Witness Slip for that particular bill. Other times you may need to search for the bill that you want to file a witness slip for.

SECTION 4: Filing a Witness Slip Electronically Using a Link

Click the link to take you to the Witness Slip. You will be taken to the electronic Witness Slip. See below instructions on how to complete the form.

1. Under I. IDENTIFICATION, fill in the following:
 - a. Name
 - b. Address
 - c. City
 - d. State
 - e. Zip code
 - f. Firm/Business Agency
 - i. This is the organization to which you are connected. Examples may include the name of your self-advocacy group, the name of the agency/organization that supports you, The Illinois Self-Advocacy Alliance, Inc., etc.
 - g. Title
 - i. This is how you identify yourself. Examples may include self-advocate, ambassador, director, etc.
 - h. Email
 - i. Phone number
2. Under II. REPRESENTATION, fill in the following:
 - Persons, Group, Firms represented in this appearance
 - If you are representing yourself and your opinion about the bill, you will write "self"
 - **IMPORTANT: If you are not authorized by an organization, business, or other entity, you cannot speak on their behalf and cannot write in the organization, business, or other entity name.**
3. Under III. POSITION, select your position(s) on the legislative items.
 - a. Click on either "Proponent" or "Opponent"
 - i. **Proponent** means that you like and are for the bill, wanting it to pass
 - ii. **Opponent** means that you don't like or are against the bill, and don't want it to pass

IMPORTANT: Make sure you are correctly checking your position on the bill.

4. Under IV. TESTIMONY, click "Record of Appearance Only"

5. Once you have completed your Witness Slip, click on "Create (Slip)"

Congratulations! You "spoke up and spoke out" by creating a successful electronic Witness Slip! You should also receive an email confirming the submission of your Witness Slip.

SECTION 5: Filing a Witness Slip Electronically By Searching For The Bill

If you do not know the bill number, you can search for the bill by Keyword.

Step 1: Go to www.ilga.gov and find the By Keyword box on the left-hand side of the page.

Step 2: Put in the Keyword that most closely represents the bill that you are searching for. For example, Keywords can include "disability", "minimum wage", "group homes", "sheltered workshop", etc.

- A listing of every active bill that includes the Keyword you entered will be shown.
- To read the entire bill, click on the 1st link of the bill you are interested in to be taken to a screen that shows the entire wording on the bill.
- To check on the status of the bill, click on the 2nd link of the bill you are interested to be taken to a screen that shows the status.
- The bill number is listed at the top of the page

Step 3: To submit a Witness Slip, click on Witness Slips Link and follow Section 4: Filing a Witness Slip Electronically Using a Link steps listed on pages 5 - 6.



www.self-advocacyalliance.org



"Speaking Up and Speaking Out" by Filing a Witness Slip Resource was developed in partnership with the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities (ICDD).
ICDD.Illinois.gov