

COLORADO'S REMOTE TESTIMONY PILOT PROJECT

Elizabeth Burger, Colorado Legislative Council Staff

Colorado's Landscape



- Denver is the state Capitol
- Most of the population in the state resides on the Front Range
- Annual legislative session runs from January to May

Colorado's Committee Background

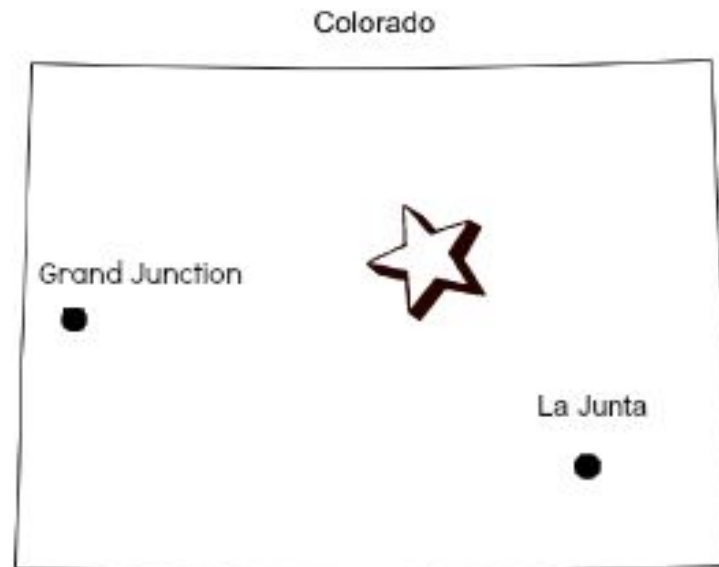
- 19 standing committees that meet 2-3 times per week
- No advance sign up for witnesses to testify
- Chairs may order and limit testimony
- Committee hearings are not televised
- Legislative rules prohibit legislative members from participating in committee hearings through telephone or other electronic means
- Do not have a history of using video conferencing software for other uses

House Bill 14-1303

- Required Legislative Council to establish policies allowing legislative committees to take remote testimony
- Committee hearings do not need to be televised to remote witnesses
- Allowed the Legislative Council Executive Committee to enter into agreements with colleges and universities
- Allocated \$135,000 and one FTE for implementation

2015 Remote Testimony Pilot Program

- Entered into agreements with two colleges for remote testimony: Colorado Mesa University (Grand Junction) and Otero Junior College (La Junta)



Remote Sites

- Staffed by college and university staff
- Must agree to provide meeting space and up to three staff members
- Reimbursed at \$10 per hour for each staff person
- Must broadcast entirety of the bill hearing

Remote Testimony Hours

- Funding allowed for 500 hours of remote testimony
- Each caucus is allocated 125 hours for remote testimony
- Requests for remote testimony must be approved by legislative leadership
- Bills must be designated for remote testimony at least three days in advance

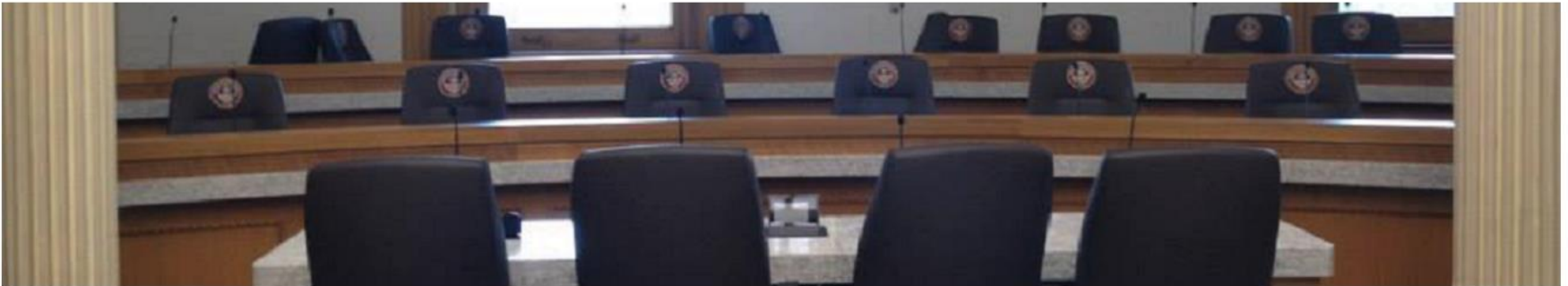
Witness Registration

- Remote witnesses must register on the General Assembly's website
- At least one witness must be registered 24 hours before a scheduled hearing, or the remote site will not open
- Walk-ins are allowed if the remote site is open



www.leg.state.co.us/CLICS/WitnessR.nsf/register.xsp

Colorado Legislature Committee Remote Testimony Sign Up



Witnesses must sign up to testify remotely for committee hearings. The committee chair may limit the time allotted for public testimony. Registering to testify at a remote location does not constitute a guarantee that registrants will be permitted to testify if the committee chair determines that public testimony must be limited. Registrants may also not be able to testify if there are technical issues preventing communication between the remote site and the committee hearing room. At all times, witnesses will be required to maintain proper committee protocol, which includes being acknowledged by the committee chair before speaking and following the rules for testimony established by the committee chair. Registrants who fail to follow the rules for testimony established by the committee chair forfeit their opportunity to testify. Bill hearings are often delayed or rescheduled and there is no guarantee the bill will be heard when originally scheduled.

Please check the [House](#) and [Senate](#) calendars posted on the [General Assembly's website](#) for updates on any calendar changes. For committee changes that occur the day of a committee hearing, please visit the committee's Twitter feed, which can be found on the committee's website, for updates. When the bill is heard, registrants could be called to testify at any point during the bill hearing.

For additional information on testifying before a committee of the Colorado General Assembly, please click [here](#)

Currently no bills are available for remote testimony.

Scheduling Process

- Created a customized website that integrates with our in-house bill management database
- Committee staff add remote testimony bills to website
- Bills are also publicized in the House/Senate calendars
- Automated e-mails are sent to the remote sites

Database

- A back-end database allows committee/IT staff to see information about the witnesses registered


COLORADO LEGISLATURE
REMOTE TESTIMONY

New

Search in View 'vwHearings'

Search for

Registrants	Committee	Dates	Bills	Location	Staffer	Room
	▼ Inactive					
Current	Agriculture, Livestock, & Natural Resources	02/02/2015 01:30:00 PM	HB15-1006	Colorado Mesa University	Meghan O'Connor	HCR 0112
	Agriculture, Natural Resources, & Energy	04/08/2015 10:00:00 AM	SJR15-021	Colorado Mesa University	David Beaujon	SCR 356
Archived	Health & Human Services	03/12/2015 01:30:00 PM	SB15-197	Colorado Mesa University	Elizabeth Haskell	SCR 356
	Health, Insurance, & Environment	04/02/2015 01:30:00 PM	SB15-197	Colorado Mesa University	Amanda King	HCR 0112
Remote Locations	Health, Insurance, & Environment	04/23/2015 01:30:00 PM	HB15-1352	Colorado Mesa University Otero Junior College	Amanda King	HCR 0107
Committee Rooms	Judiciary	02/02/2015 01:30:00 PM	SB15-086 SB15-032	Colorado Mesa University	Conrad Imel	RM 271
Configuration	Judiciary	02/23/2015 01:30:00 PM	SB15-175	Colorado Mesa University	Conrad Imel	RM 271
	Judiciary	03/09/2015 01:30:00 PM	SB15-175	Colorado Mesa University Otero Junior College	Conrad Imel	RM 271
	Public Health Care and Human Services	03/24/2015 01:30:00 PM	HB15-1268	Colorado Mesa University Otero Junior College	Elizabeth Burger	HCR 0107
	State, Veterans, and Military Affairs	02/02/2015 01:30:00 PM	SB15-033	Colorado Mesa University	Julia Jackson	SCR 356
	State, Veterans, and Military Affairs	02/09/2015 01:30:00 PM	HB15-1040 HB15-1099	Colorado Mesa University	Jessika Shipley	RM 271
	State, Veterans, and Military Affairs	02/09/2015 01:30:00 PM	HB15-1040	Colorado Mesa University Otero Junior College	Jessika Shipley	RM 271
	State, Veterans, and Military Affairs	02/09/2015 01:30:00 PM	HB15-1099	Colorado Mesa University Otero Junior College	Jessika Shipley	RM 271
	State, Veterans, and Military Affairs	04/29/2015 01:30:00 PM	SB15-282	Colorado Mesa University	Julia Jackson	SCR 356



Technology and Staffing

- iMeet by PGI videoconferencing software
- Currently have licenses to allow for three simultaneous committee hearings
- In addition to committee staff, IT staff sit in on remote testimony hearing to operate the software and troubleshoot any issues
- Practice has been to test the connection with the remote sites one hour prior to each hearing

Technology and Staffing

- Remote testimony is currently permitted in three committee rooms (will expand to five in the 2016 session)
- Rooms are equipped with wide angle cameras and large screen televisions
- Room's public address system integrates with remote meeting software
- Remote sites use web cameras, have various room set ups

2015 Stats



- Used in 11 hearings (2% of all hearings)
- Colorado Mesa University was the only site used
- 55 total witnesses
- 25 total hours

Troubleshooting

- Minimal technology issues
- Staffing issues at remote site
- Notification and scheduling issues at remote site
- Publicizing availability of remote testimony option
- Legislators becoming aware of its use and potential
- Special circumstances



Next Steps

- Pilot will continue in the 2016 session with three additional remote sites
- Additional committee rooms are being outfitted with screens and cameras
- Report due at the end of the 2016 session evaluating the program

Questions?

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