

# The Connecticut General Assembly

## Office of Information Technology Services

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James A. Amann, *House Majority Leader*  
Robert M. Ward, *House Republican Leader*

Date: October 27, 2004  
To: Legislative Process Advisory Committee  
From: Cheryl Smith, ITS  
Cc: Ron Bianca, ITS  
Subject: Technical Issue Responses

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When the Legislative Process Advisory Committee met on October 19, 2004, there were several technical questions that required research by Information Technology Services (ITS). I am pleased to present the answers to these issues. Items refer to the outline number of the October 19, 2004 Working Draft document.

**WORKING DRAFT ITEM I.A.2.:** Public Hearings – Sign up: Allow electronic and telephone sign-up before the day of the hearing.

**ITS RESPONSE:** More research and design necessary. See [Appendix A](#).

**WORKING DRAFT ITEM I.C.4.:** Public Hearings – Speaker order/time predictability:  
Use a computer program to generate a random order list that is part of the public record and cannot be modified.

**ITS RESPONSE:** This would be fairly straight-forward and, if desired, would require design, approval of the design and then development, documentation and training.

**WORKING DRAFT ITEM I.E.1.:** Public Hearings – Testimony: Receive official testimony by e-mail.

**ITS RESPONSE:** More research and design necessary. See [Appendix B](#).

**WORKING DRAFT ITEM I.E.2.:** Public Hearings – Testimony: Scan in written testimony so it is available sooner. (Initially try a possible pilot program with small committee.)

**ITS RESPONSE:** More research and design necessary. See [Appendix B](#).

**WORKING DRAFT ITEM I.E.3.:** Public Hearings – Testimony: Require state agencies to file testimony by e-mail. Allow others to do so.

**ITS RESPONSE:** More research and design necessary. See [Appendix B](#).

**WORKING DRAFT ITEM I.E.13.:** Public Hearings – Testimony: Allow advance sign-up by phone or e-mail and publish the sign-up list the day before the hearing.

**ITS RESPONSE:** More research and design necessary. See [Appendix A](#).

**WORKING DRAFT ITEM I.E.14.:** Public Hearings – Testimony: When people sign up, give them a number and when calling people up to testify call them by number as well as name so others know where the committee is on the list.

**ITS RESPONSE:** This would be fairly straight-forward and, if desired, would require design, approval of the design and then development, documentation and training.

**WORKING DRAFT ITEM VII.A.1.:** Other Issues Regarding Access & Physical Plant – Legislative Website: Add a “frequently asked questions” (FAQ) section (possible interactive feature with LWV answering questions). Consult LWV on the FAQs to list.

**ITS RESPONSE:** This would be fairly straight-forward and, if desired, would require input from LWV, offices and committees. Other legislative web sites also offer "Citizens Guides" which may be a very helpful tool. See Utah for an example (<http://www.le.state.ut.us/lrgc/citizenguide.htm>) . Hawaii created a Special Legislative Access Committee in 1989. they not only offer a "Frequently Asked Questions" page (<http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/site1/info/guide/faq.asp>), but also a Citizens Guide (<http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/site1/info/guide/guide.asp?press1=info&press2=guide>) and they have a "Public Access Room" that has excellent information for citizens (<http://www.state.hi.us/lrb/par/parsrvs.html>).

**WORKING DRAFT ITEM VII.A.2.:** Other Issues Regarding Access & Physical Plant – Legislative Website: Create alternate Spanish and other language web pages.

**ITS RESPONSE:** Tools are already available on the Internet to translate web pages into other languages. For example, <http://babelfish.altavista.com/babelfish/tr> will translate a web page into 12 other languages. Perhaps we could provide a link to that web site as a service for individuals who cannot read English.

**WORKING DRAFT ITEM VII.A.3.:** Other Issues Regarding Access & Physical Plant – Legislative Website: Make the web page more accessible to blind and visually impaired people.

**ITS RESPONSE:** Web accessibility is an on-going initiative.

**WORKING DRAFT ITEM VII.A.4.:** Other Issues Regarding Access & Physical Plant – Legislative Website: Add a Visitor Information page.

**ITS RESPONSE:** This would be fairly straight-forward and, if desired, would require input from offices, committees and perhaps the League of Women Voters.

**WORKING DRAFT ITEM VII.A.5.:** Other Issues Regarding Access & Physical Plant – Legislative Website: Add an alternative basic search page to the existing Internet search page.

**ITS RESPONSE:** This would be fairly straight-forward and, if desired, would require design, approval of the design and then development, documentation and training. See [Appendix C](#).

**WORKING DRAFT ITEM VII.A.6.:** Other Issues Regarding Access & Physical Plant – Legislative Website: Add a bulletin summary.

**ITS RESPONSE:** This would require more definition, but could be done.

**WORKING DRAFT ITEM VII.A.7.:** Other Issues Regarding Access & Physical Plant – Legislative Website: Add one-click link for each committee to allow someone to e-mail all of a committee's members at once.

**ITS RESPONSE:** Committee members already have email groups. The question would be if they really want this type of access. Technically it is not an issue.

**WORKING DRAFT ITEM VII.G.3.:** Other Issues Regarding Access & Physical Plant – Real-time access in House and Senate lobbies to what is happening in chambers: Place electronic boards in House and Senate lobbies to show the same information as is shown on the top of the voting boards.

**ITS RESPONSE:** This would require more research and contact with International Roll Call or perhaps it would be sufficient to supply something that shows the CTN live feed.

## **Appendix A – Electronic Sign-up for Public Hearings**

The following question was posed through the National Association of Legislative Information Technology (NALIT) listserv:

"We are currently considering options for signing up to speak at public hearings. Our process requires an individual to be present at the Legislative Office Building on the day of the hearing and to sign their name on a sheet of paper. Then for the most part, the order on the paper is the speaking order. Are any states allowing electronic sign-up (via email or web) or phone-in sign-up?"

We received response from four states. The responses are as follows:

### **Arizona**

It is working great. We are going on 3 years now. The public must first sign up at any of the kiosk machines in the house and senate in order to use it online. The speaker has a program and can view the speakers. He/she has the ability to rearrange speakers using their program. They can rearrange them in any order they wish. We have also provided them a button that allows them to auto arrange by those who are oppose and wish to speak in committee. Let me know if you need any additional information.

In our committees, the chairman/chairwoman has the "say so" on who gets to speak first. We have not had any problems with anyone arguing on who gets to speak first. The chairman usually makes everyone sign up if they wish to speak. Some of them will fill out "sign up sheets" if there are problems with the computers but everyone usually signs up to speak on the computers outside the hearing rooms.

The program the chairman uses can immediately see those who are still signing in throughout the entire committee. Once a bill has been heard, the public cannot sign up to speak on a bill or change their comments, etc. They would then need to fill out a form to do that.

### **Kansas**

People wanting to address a committee contact the chair of the committee. In most cases the committee secretary actually does the scheduling. When attending a committee hearing a sheet is pasted around to record attendance. In most cases that sign up sheet does not get recorded with the minutes. In fact, the sheet is rarely accurate. People arrive late or don't sign it even when it is past to them. Occasionally the committee chair will address the audience and inquire whether some one else wants to address the committee. That isn't done every day. In Kansas, the chair has great discretion in how the committee is run. So answering this kind of question has many possible answers depending upon the chair and the circumstances.

### **Nevada**

Nevada is looking at this. Our model would probably follow what Steve West is doing in Arizona. People can sign up to speak at hearings via the Internet or on kiosks available outside each committee room.

### **Ohio**

Ohio does not. Witnesses must physically be present at a committee meeting, fill out a paper witness form, and submit it to the committee chair. The order of speakers is entirely within the discretion of the chair.

### Appendix B – Electronic Submission of Public Hearing Testimony

The following question was posed through the National Association of Legislative Information Technology (NALIT) listserv:

" I'm interested to hear if any states are taking electronic copies of Public Hearing Testimony and / or scanning paper copies. Are you storing testimony for archival purposes, allowing it to be searched, attaching it to legislation, etc."

In addition to the responses we received, we also researched each legislative site for states that did not respond. Here are the results:

	<b>State</b>	<b>Testimony</b>
1.	Alabama	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
2.	Alaska	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
3.	Arizona	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
4.	Arkansas	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
5.	California	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
6.	Colorado	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
7.	Connecticut	Paper. Please submit nn copies of written testimony to the XXX Committee, Room nnn, two hours prior to the hearing. (or similar instructions)
8.	Delaware	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
9.	Florida	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
10.	Georgia	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
11.	Hawaii	No response. Researched web site. Found the following: testimony e-mail : testimony@capitol.hawaii.gov  Please include at top of page: committee name; bill/resolution number and title; the date; the time and place of hearing; and number of copies needed (as listed on the hearing notice). If submitting testimony via email, please do not also submit through other avenues.
12.	Idaho	No response. Researched their web site. From the home page go to Publications and there is a link to Committee Testimony.
13.	Illinois	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
14.	Indiana	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
15.	Iowa	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
16.	Kansas	Responded: Our committee minutes are created by the committee secretary on a word processor. An electronic copy is published to the web site once the minutes are adopted by a committee vote. The electronic copy of the minutes does not have the attachments

		<p>submitted by conferees. At the end of the legislative session, the committee secretary creates a printed book of all the committee minutes. This book does have the attachments submitted by conferees. This book is kept on file for research purposes. The book is also filmed onto microfilm and indexed for archive and research purposes. We have a project plan to convert the microfilm to digital and index with out doc management system. The plan will begin next year and span several years to complete all the backlog.</p> <p>Last session, for the first time, we experimented with two committees. The House Health and Senate Utilities committees. These committees established new rules for the experiment. They requested all conferees submit their testimony including attachments 24 hours in advance in an electronic format. This testimony was then indexed into our Doc Management System under a security profile that allowed only committee members and committee staff to view it. The objective was to see if this burdened conferees and would legislators use the advance time to prepare. Everyone with access to the advance material had to sign an ethics agreement to use the privilege. The results were very favorable. We also found that conferees were not opposed to this system and most had no trouble complying. For these two committees, we ended up with digital copies of the attachments as well. If a conferee could not submit digital testimony, we would accept typed testimony and scan it for them if submitted 24 hours in advance. We found most conferees didn't need this service. However, we felt we had to offer it so those few without technology would no be shut out of the process.</p>
17.	Kentucky	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
18.	Louisiana	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious. One thing that they did have is a link to sign up for email notification for upcoming committee meetings.
19.	Maine	No response. Researched web site. From home page went to site guide, then advance notice of public hearings and there is a Guide to Participating in Public Hearings. Nothing submitted electronically, tells them how many copies to bring and it also tells them where they can copy their testimony.
20.	Maryland	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
21.	Massachusetts	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
22.	Michigan	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
23.	Minnesota	No response. Researched web site. On home page General Information, FAQ, Citizen participation there is a section on how to testify. Nothing submitted electronically, bring paper copies.
24.	Mississippi	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.

25.	Missouri	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
26.	Montana	No response. Researched web site. From home page under About the Legislature go to FAQ, then committee procedure and there they have how to testify. Nothing submitted electronically, bring paper copies.
27.	Nebraska	Responded. Nearly every bill introduced in the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature has a public hearing. This public testimony is recorded and transcribed. Currently our transcribers are working on a main-frame type system and records are turned in to the Clerk's office in a paper format and then microfilmed for permanent storage. Testimony can be copied from the microfilm for use by the public or for internal use.
28.	Nevada	Responded. In Nevada, we scan all exhibits and link to them from the minutes. We will accept electronic versions. At times, we even get electronic copies of PowerPoint presentations and link to them from the Agendas so people can follow along during the hearing.
29.	New Hampshire	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
30.	New Jersey	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
31.	New Mexico	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
32.	New York	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
33.	North Carolina	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
34.	North Dakota	No response. Researched web site. From Home Page under Information Center go to General Information and they have a link there How to Testify. Nothing Electronic, they don't have to bring written testimony; they can if they wish to.
35.	Ohio	Responded. At this point, not in Ohio. We neither keep electronic records of committee proceeding nor do we scan in to any database submitted copies of testimony by witnesses. That has been talked about as a next step for the Ohio Enhanced Legislative Application System but is on a slow track for now due to budget constraints and other factors.
36.	Oklahoma	No response. Researched web site. From home page go to information, then FAQ, then How to Get the most out of Committee Meeting. There is a section on how to testify, again they need to bring paper copies of testimony.
37.	Oregon	No response. Researched web site. On home page link to Citizen Guide and from there link How to Testify in front of committee. Nothing electronic they need to bring paper copies of testimony.
38.	Pennsylvania	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
39.	Rhode Island	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
40.	South Carolina	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.

41.	South Dakota	Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
42.	Tennessee	Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
43.	Texas	No response. Researched web site. On home page link called Legislative Process, then committee process which is no help in how to testify.
44.	Utah	No response. Researched web site. On the home page link to Citizen Guide and from there you get how to testify. They also have them bring paper copies of testimony.
45.	Vermont	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
46.	Virginia	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
47.	Washington	No response. Researched web site. On the home page they have a link Participating in the Process. There you can find info on how to testify, nothing is electronic they need to bring paper copies of testimony one for each member of the committee.
48.	West Virginia	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
49.	Wisconsin	No response. Researched web site. Nothing obvious.
50.	Wyoming	<p>No response. Researched web site. On each committee page is the following:</p> <p>NOTE: Any written materials presented to the Committee are also requested to be submitted to the Committee on diskette in WordPerfect, Microsoft Word and ASCII format. The text of all materials submitted on diskette will be included in the minutes of the Committee which are available on the Legislative Web Site (<a href="http://LEGISWEB.STATE.WY.US">HTTP://LEGISWEB.STATE.WY.US</a>). All materials submitted in written form will still be part of the Committee's official minutes on file at LSO.</p>

## Appendix C – Basic Legislative Document Search

**Basic Legislative Document Search**

**Text:**   [Advanced Search](#)

**Number:**  [What numbers can I search for?](#)  
(optional)

**Year:**  For example: 1999-2001,2004 or leave blank for all years.

	<b>Bills</b>	<b>Laws and Related Documents</b>	<b>Other Legislative Documents</b>
<b>Document types to search for:</b> (leave blank for all databases)	Amendments, Called (1988 - 2004) Amendments, Uncalled (1998 - 2004) Bill Analyses (1990 - 2004) Bill Status (1991 - 2004) Bill Text (1988 - 2004) Fiscal Notes (1988 - 2004) Votes, Committee (1999 - 2004)	Constitutions (2003) Public and Special Acts (1988 - 2004) Public Act Summaries (1990 - 2004) Statutes (as of 1/1/03) Public and Special Acts (since 1/1/03)	Bulletins (1988 - 2004) Calendars (1988 - 2004) Committee Agendas (2000 - 2004) Committee Hearing Transcripts (1988 - 2004) Committee Joint Favorable Reports (2000 - 2004) Committee Minutes (2000 - 2004) Committee Public Hearing Agendas (2000 - 2004) Journals (1988 - 2004) List of Bills (1993 - 2004) Program Review Studies (1998 - 2004) Research Reports (1994 - 2004) Rules and Precedents (2003) Transcripts, House and Senate (1988 - 2004)

**Order By:**  **Sort Order:**

[Advanced Search](#)

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