

**To Vaccinate or Not to Vaccinate:
The Story of Hamilton, Columbia**

WRITTEN HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

- Due:** 15 people giving testimony: Day of Class
Five committee members: One Week Later
- Length:** 1.5 pages for testimony, with references on separate page
- Format:** Typewritten, double-spaced, 12-point font, one-inch margins

The Columbia General Assembly's Health, Education, and Labor Committee meeting on the human papillomavirus vaccine is about to begin, and now, it is your job to help lead this hearing to its conclusion!

Each individual testifying before the committee will be given three minutes for her or his testimonial and one minute to answer a follow-up question from the five committee members. All committee members, therefore, should be prepared to ask questions of people testifying, though we will have time for only one question per witness. For those offering testimony, you can read or paraphrase the testimony that you prepared as your written assignment for class. When all 15 members have finished testifying, 10 minutes will be reserved for questions from the floor (meaning everyone in class is allowed to ask questions of other witnesses, but still in character).

Twenty roles, found in the Cast of Characters page in the [case narrative](#), have been crafted in preparation for this committee meeting, and each member of the class has been randomly assigned to play a part. Representative Samuel Wilson, the chairperson of the committee, will preside over the hearing and call the session to order.

The assigned readings for Week 5 are crucial to get you up to speed on the topic and on the purpose and process of advocacy. *Be sure you do these readings so you will be well prepared for our live enactment of a legislative hearing in class!*

Assignment for 15 People Testifying: The 15 people assigned to testify before the committee need to prepare a three-minute written testimonial that will be turned in for a grade (1.5 pages, typed, double-spaced, and 12-point font, which corresponds to about three minutes when read aloud, then followed by references on a separate page). As described in the Instructions for Testimony Outline guide that follows this assignment description, the written testimonial text should include an introduction of your randomly assigned fictional character (including name and who you are representing), your position on the issue (for one bill, for the other, for both, or for neither), and the reasons that you or your organization have/has chosen this position. All testimonials must be properly referenced and researched and must be delivered in character during the mock hearing in class in a way that reasonably reflects the character and her/his organization. It can often make for compelling testimony to incorporate an anecdote or an example of creative epidemiology. For instance, instead of saying X number of people die of Y disease every year, the number of deaths can be illustrated graphically as equivalent to a dozen 747 airplanes crashing. The testimony should also be written for the appropriate audience: state representatives with no medical or public health training. **Note that you do not need to mention your references verbally in your testimony unless you feel that will help your**

argument; however, the written testimony you turn in must include proper referencing at the end on the sources (minimum of four sources) you used to craft your character's testimony. Your written testimony paper is due on the day of the mock hearing.

Assignment for Five People on the Committee: For the people assigned to be committee members, you will be expected to ask questions in character of witnesses during the hearing in class. Your written assignment will be as follows: Each committee member will need to write a 1.5 page opinion on what your character thinks the committee should recommend be done with the two bills under consideration. Each committee member may recommend sending both bills, one specific bill, or no bills to the Assembly floor. Your opinion paper needs to include an introduction, your position on the issue, and the reasoning that supports this position. **This opinion should be written from your assigned character's perspective. The paper must be properly researched and referenced (minimum of four outside sources, meaning sources beyond the assigned readings for this session) and must make specific reference to testimony provided to you by the 15 people testifying before your committee in the mock hearing in class. It is not necessary to mention all 15 testimonials, but you must mention the ones that can serve to support your recommendation. Do not plagiarize the testimonials – cite them appropriately. Your written opinion paper will be due one week after the class with the mock hearing.**

Remember, role play can be fun. Draw on your inner thespian and *enjoy!*

Instructions for Testimony Outline

I. Introduction

- Greet and thank the members of the committee: Good morning Chairperson Wilson and members of the Committee. (Note: If your legislator sits on the committee, you may want to greet/acknowledge her/him here). Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.
- Introduce yourself: My name is _____. Tell the committee if you are an expert of some type, professional (give title), credentials, or other points as you wish that make clear your expertise and how this informs your testimony.
- Tell them why you are here: Let the committee know that you are either for House Bill 110-23 and House Bill 110-24, for only House Bill 110-23, for only House Bill 110-24, or neither bill.

II. Here present the problem---this is the most important section---link the problem to the solutions proposed in the legislation

- Tell the committee what your testimony will focus on: Are you speaking specifically about prevention, early detection, health disparities, insurance coverage, etc.?
- Share your personal experience or experience observed in your family life, clinical situations and clinical, legal, advocacy, and/or academic practice.

III. Conclusion

- Tell the committee members why they need to agree with your position on the bill: Let them know how your work or personal experience would be different if the bill were passed.
- Remind the Committee: The time to act is now!
- Thank the committee: Thank the committee members for their time and leadership on this important issue!

General Tips for Testifying

Testifying on a bill in front of a legislative committee is a powerful way to influence the lawmaking process. By testifying, you are raising awareness about your view in an organized, public setting. You also have the opportunity to reach a *group* of legislators at once – in this case, the members of the Columbia General Assembly’s Health, Education, and Labor Committee.

- Normally you should arrive early so you can sign up to testify with one of the committee staff, but since this is a class session, we expect you to be here on time.
- Statements presented to the committee should be well organized and should clearly tell your story or represent your views and personal experiences related to the legislation. You will be given 3 minutes to testify with one minute reserved for questions from the committee. You can read the testimony that you have written for the class homework assignment.
- When testifying, you should have copies of your testimony for the committee: Please upload your written testimony to the class website before class.
- After you have spoken, members of the committee may ask you for clarification or more information. If they ask a question you cannot answer, be honest and say so. Offer to get the information for them -- and, in the future when you give testimony in real life in a statehouse, on Capitol Hill, at the United Nations, or elsewhere, be sure to follow-up with the information you promised in a timely manner.
- The hearing starts at the beginning of the class session. You will be called to testify based on an order that will not be known to the committee members or witnesses until the start of the session.

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