

Challenging the New Corporate Campaign to Misuse the Constitution in a Public Meeting or Hearing

For use when speaking in support of proposed legislation, regulation, ordinance or resolution at a public meeting or hearing.

Introduction: Start with who you are and why you are speaking.

For example: I'm _____, and I'm here to voice my support for _____ because as a mother I'm concerned about the effects that _____ is having on children. This proposal will protect the children of our community from _____.

1. Focus on the objective and rationale for the proposal:

- + Explain the harms the proposal will protect the public from.
- + Describe specific examples of how these harms have affected you, your community, or other similar communities. (If you have not been directly affected, but you know someone who has, do your best to arrange for them to attend and speak, too).
- + Describe the costs that this harm is imposing on the community and estimates of how those costs may grow if left unchecked.

2. Point to the authority/obligation that allows/requires the body you're addressing to protect residents/citizens/vulnerable populations from this harm:

- + Cite to the law, regulation, executive order, ordinance, whatever it is that gives the body you are addressing the authority to protect the public, and if there are particularly important or compelling phrases in that document, quote them.
- + Explain how the proposal is within that authority/obligation.
- + Explain how the proposal protects the public.

3. Challenge the New Corporate Campaign to Misuse the Constitution

- + Name the company or companies (or trade associations) that are trying to hide behind a cynical legal strategy to avoid responsibility for the dangers of their product/action/strategy.
- + Call out the specific protection being claimed (e.g. "free speech," "equal protection," or "discrimination") by the company.
- + If you think it would help, bring copies of this report to explain that this is part of a growing trend by corporations that elected officials should stand up to. (PDF copies can be printed off the web site)
- + Reiterate, this proposal is about protecting the community from x, this is not a threat to ["free speech," "equal protection," etc.]

Conclusion: As your constituent, I expect you to use your authority to meet your obligations to protect the public. Don't let corporate interests pressure you with their attempts to distort the Constitution to put profits before public safety.

Contaminating the Courts: How Corporations Are Misusing the Constitution to Attack the Environment

www.greenpeace.org/usa/reports/contaminating-the-courts/

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