



RTCNYC Tool 9.1.2

Preparing Testimony for Right to Counsel Hearings

As you work to pass Right to Counsel legislation, providing testimony at legislative hearings (at the local or state level) can be critical in building your case to lawmakers. This is also a great platform for helping tenants tell their stories in their own words. This worksheet will help craft your testimony in an organized way that draws on key points that are often most salient for lawmakers: 1) the need for tenant representation; 2) costs and benefits; 3) consequences of not passing the legislation, as well as to humanize the real cost of evictions. Testimony should be brief and to the point, and you should check on time limits for giving testimony.

1. Hello, my name is _____ and I'm with [Insert organization name].

2. Say where you live how long you have lived there:

3. Say who lives with you:

4. Briefly talk about your experience with your landlord in (housing) court:

- a. If you did have a lawyer, what was your experience in court like?
 - b. If you didn't have a lawyer, what was your experience in court like?
 - i. How do you think your experience would have been different if you had an attorney?
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You can also mention:

- a. Almost all landlords have attorneys.
 - b. Eviction is the #1 reason why people go into the shelter system.
 - c. Right to Counsel will pay for itself and save the city more than **[\$x/year]**.
 - d. Tenants often don't complain about public health issues like heat, hot water, leaking gas, vermin, etc., because of fear of retaliation and fear of eviction---RTC would change that.
 - e. Any harassment or intimidation you have experienced.
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5. **Closing:** Thank you for your time. We think you have all the facts to decide to pass and fund **[Insert Bill name/number]** We expect it to be passed by the end of the year! We can't wait anymore.
