

# Advocacy 104: Gathering for Public Witness

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*A gathering for public witness can be large and complex or small and simple. It could involve thousands or a group of three or more. It could be something that you plan or something that you join. A small group can make a big impact at an event like a budget hearing. So even though you may not have done anything like this before, we urge you to consider this as one more thing your group can do.*

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## Public witness may be:

- **A silent vigil held in the area where lawmakers gather.**
  - **A noisy rally held in a public place.**
  - **A witness to a cause at a public hearing.** Consider having your church support requests of homeless shelters for funding from your city or county at a budget hearing.
  - **It could be as simple as a short ceremony in front of your church on Sunday remembering homeless people who have died in the past month.**
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## Suggestion to make your gathering more successful:

- Plan at least a couple of weeks in advance to get the largest group possible.
- If signs are allowed make some, banners are even better.
- Have your group wear clothes of the same color, matching t-shirts, hats or large buttons so that you will be easily identified as members of a group who are present for a particular cause.
- If it is a hearing, have someone sign up to speak for your group. Speakers should take the time to prepare for the most effective use of their 3-5 minutes. Someone should arrive at the hearing before all the slots are taken.
- If you are creating a public event, limit the number of speakers and the time each speaker has to speak, about 5-10 minutes. When it comes to speaking usually less is more.
- Public gatherings are most successful when there is an action (e.g. a march, ritual, gathering of symbols such as crosses for each homeless person who has died in the past year, or a gathering of letters for the representative).
- Invite the media. Contact local television and radio stations and newspapers and let them know the time and place and reason for your event. Even a small event can have a big impact in the media.
- Have fun whenever appropriate.



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