

# HB 2840 Update: Public Testimony at Open Meetings

# House Bill 2840

- Section 551.007 of the Texas Government Code
  - Members of the public have the right to speak about agenda items before or during the governing body's consideration of the agenda item
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# Comments Regarding Items on the Agenda

- Public Testimony allowed before or during the discussion of the items
  - Reserve Public Hearing comments for the Public Hearing
  - Governing body can respond to comments regarding agenda items
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# City Council Chambers is a limited public forum

- Speakers must be allowed the same amount of time per item
- Non-English speakers with translation must be allowed twice the amount of time per item

# Speaker Content

- Speaking time can not be limited or increased based on the content of the comments
- Comments, including criticism of the governing body, cannot be prohibited unless the comments are otherwise unlawful (i.e. defamation / slander)

# Non-Agenda Items

- Governing body may not engage in discussion of non-agenda comments
- Governing body can respond with statement of fact or policy, refer to staff, or suggest an agenda item for a future meeting

# Sample for Items on the Agenda

**CALL TO ORDER**

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**INFORMATION SHARING**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS (For Non-Public Hearing Agenda Items)**

*If you wish to address the City Council on a posted item on this agenda, please fill out a "Request to Speak" card and present it to the City Secretary before the meeting. Pursuant to Section 551.007 of the Texas Government Code, any person wishing to address the City Council for items listed as public hearings will be recognized when the public hearing is opened. Speakers wishing to address the City Council regarding any non-public hearing item on this agenda shall have a time limit of three (3) minutes per speaker, per agenda item. The Mayor may reduce the speaker time limit uniformly to accommodate the number of speakers or improve meeting efficiency.*

# Sample for Non-Agenda Items

## **CITIZEN COMMENTS ON MATTERS NOT ON AGENDA**

*If you wish to address the City Council on a matter not posted on this agenda, please fill out a "Request to Speak" card and present it to the City Secretary before the meeting. Speakers shall have a time limit of three (3) minutes. This meeting segment is limited to thirty (30) minutes.*



# Questions?