Recording and Submitting Witness Testimony

Modern technology has made capturing and storing civic voice easier than ever before.

Digital Recording Devices:
- Smartphones
- Tablets
- Laptops
- Digital Voice Recorder

Many Speech to Text platforms can transcribe recordings from your Civil Society Field Hearing. Here are some examples.
- OpenAI Whisper (supports many languages)
- oTranscribe (open source and for use on desktops)
- Otter.AI
- Google Cloud
- Cortico Fora
- Canva
- Voice Memo (Iphone)

Conventional methods are fine, too
- Keyboard: Typewriter, desktop or laptop
- Pen or Pencil with paper

Witness statements submission steps:

Testimony submissions must be in digital format so they can be stored electronically. If witnesses use conventional methods like pencil or typewriter, organizers should transcribe the statements –quilting bee style–into a digital format before submitting them.

The organizer of the Civil Society Field Hearing should collect the electronic copies of the witness testimony. In order to make the documents discoverable, make sure the documents include the following metadata:

- Witness name and affiliation if relevant
- Topic of Civil Society Field Hearing
- The date that the Civil Society Field Hearing took place

- The congressional district number code (i.e. AZ02 is Arizona's second district) which you can find at Govtrack.us
- You can use this template

Where should I submit the testimony? Here are some options:
1. Ask your Member of Congress to enter the testimony for the official Congressional Record
2. Create an account at Internet Archive to store the testimony
3. If your Civil Society Field Hearing is about recent presidential actions, cut and paste the testimony into an intake form at the Impact Project
4. Create a Community Data Coop. Does one exist at the public library or community college? Ask your local Federal Depository Library if staff are digitizing regional collections. Collaborate with a local not for profit community organization to build a public data resource. Here is a guide: "How to build a data cooperative" Remember, we are building muscles for self-governance as we create a pipeline to Congress. The key is to structure, maintain and store data safely.

Video of Civil Society Field Hearing, submission steps:

- Go to Internet Archive (https://archive.org/) and create an account.
- Upload your files, video and transcripts. Label with the following: Civil Society Field Hearing, Congressional District number code   (you can find this at Govtrack.us) and Date.

Final Note: Data Collection and Lawmaking

Data collection in lawmaking has accelerated as the House of Representatives has adopted tools like remote hearings and electronic document submission. As a result, Congress is moving toward a more searchable, digital record where structured, machine-readable input is the norm. Civil Society Field Hearings can generate information designed to fit these systems, helping make community-informed decision-making a regular part of how Congress works. Public data organized in data coops and collaboratives is a burgeoning field–ready for experimentation. If you are so inclined, connect to the Public AI movement or research open data initiatives and digital public infrastructure near you.