



Tips For Doing Your Best At Your Public Pardon Hearing

– with special thanks to the four people who have gone through the hearing process (some of them twice) for sharing their experiences and what they learned

Points taken from a one-hour program on July 25, 2022, available here:

<https://vimeo.com/734463348/acfe406b13>

- 1. In one minute or less, what you want the Board to be sure they know about you? Boil it down into 2-3 key bullet points, write them on stickies, and put them on your computer monitor right next to the camera so you can be sure to say them during your hearing.**
- 2. Review your Application in advance. Be sure you know what's in there. In preparing, concentrate on the WORST parts of your story. Be ready to talk about them, and about how the Board can be sure you've changed and won't ever return to doing bad stuff.**
- 3. If there was a victim in your crime, assume the victim will be testifying right after you. Probably won't happen, but if you think it will, it'll help you not to overstate anything.**
- 4. Technology – make sure your wifi is good, no glitches with sound. You cannot afford to FREEZE or for them not to be able to hear clearly what you're saying.**
- 5. Focus on what's behind you in the room – what's on the wall, where you are standing or sitting, lighting, quiet. Make sure dogs and children can't distract or interrupt.**
- 6. Look right into the camera. Put your laptop up on books so it's level with your head, and so they're not looking up at you from your waist.**
- 7. Dress for success – it's a HEARING!! and the most important one you will ever have.**
- 8. Don't be discouraged by what you hear in the cases before yours. Focus on yourself.**
- 9. When your case is close to getting called, TURN OFF THE PUBLIC FEED AND GO ON THE PARTICIPANT CHANNEL. Be there, ready to go, when they connect with you.**
- 10. You'll be nervous – *of course you will!* – so remember to smile. Be confident and look it. You have earned this moment.**
- 11. Be patient -- with the question, the time, and yourself.**
- 12. They will begin by asking you if your will “waive” or “yield” your time. They know your whole file and want to get to their questions. For almost everyone, the best answer is Yes, but if there's something new you really want them to know, say it.**
- 13. In answering questions, be precise, short and to the point. You'll know what they are driving at. Be totally open and honest. Don't let them think you're hiding or dodging anything.**
- 14. Be clear in taking responsibility for your actions. Don't blame others.**
- 15. Be prepared to be asked unfair questions. Assume they know EVERYTHING from your past – credit history, arrests in other states, traffic tickets, driving record, ... it's all fair game for them to ask about. Don't look or sound defensive, upset or angry.**
- 16. Share the changes you have made in your life: give them confidence you won't fall back.**
- 17. If they don't ask you any questions – and there are LOTS of people who don't get asked any questions! – just thank them for giving you the opportunity for a second chance.**