

**War of the Words:**

**Public Comment at Open Meetings**

(aka "How to Navigate the Stifle-Your-Lough School Board Challenge")

Presented by John M. Hardy  
Hardy Cook & Hardy, PC  
Tyler, Texas



1



**Public  
Comment:**

**The Karen Show**

2

**This presentation is NOT about...**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>01</b> <b>First Amendment</b><br/>You can't say that in the middle of a school board meeting!!!</p>                       | <p><b>02</b> <b>Transgenderism</b><br/>Which kid uses which bathroom and locker room?!?</p>   |
| <p><b>03</b> <b>Porn in the Library</b><br/><i>All Lawn Boys Aren't The Bluest Eye</i> is an objectively lousy read anyway.</p> | <p><b>04</b> <b>Football Win-Loss Records</b><br/>This is Texas, so yes, it actually matters to someone attending your meeting.</p> |

3

**...and this presentation is ALL about...**

|   |   |
|---|---|
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4

## Public Comment Basics



### Mandatory

Must a school board hear public comments at every meeting? How many, or for how long?



### Boundaries

How can a school board control the course of public comments at a meeting?



### Challenges

How can a school board respond to matters presented during public comment?

5

## The Very Basics: Texas Open Meetings Act

The public's right to comment at an open meeting arises under the Texas Open Meetings Act.  
TEXAS GOV'T CODE Chapter 551, and specifically, § 551.007.

### **IMPORTANT FREE RESOURCE:**

Get the OAG's Handbook!

[https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/sites/default/files/files/divisions/open-government/openmeetings\\_hb.pdf](https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/sites/default/files/files/divisions/open-government/openmeetings_hb.pdf)



6

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38<sup>th</sup> Annual School Law Conference session

"War of the Words: Public Comment at Open Meetings"