COMPILING TEXAS LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Begin with Step 1 if you are working from a statute and Step 2 if you are working from a bill number.

Step 1 — Locate the bill that added or changed the statutory language.

Locate the legislative history note

Review the appropriate statutory section in Vernon’s Texas Annotated Code. At the end of the statutory section, a legislative history note lists the Acts that added or amended it. See the example below.

**EXAMPLE:**
Texas Tax Code § 311.004.

Locate the language in the session laws

The Acts listed in the legislative history note are published as chapters in the General and Special Laws of Texas (session laws). Each chapter in the session laws contains the enrolled version of a bill enacted during a legislative session.

Review the chapter for the most recent listing in the history note and work backward until you locate the chapter in which the language first appeared.

Find the bill number and session

After locating the appropriate chapter in the session laws, find the bill number listed below the chapter number.

In the following example, S.B. No. 888 is the bill number for Chapter 1137.

Step 2 — Review the bill file and other documents produced during the legislative process.

Examine the bill file

A bill file contains the official documents produced during the legislative process and may include various versions of the bill, bill analyses, fiscal notes, witness lists, and committee reports. (Transcripts of committee hearings or floor debates are not included in the bill files, but may be available as part of the taped proceedings — see Step 3.)
If you have questions that are not addressed in this guide, please visit our website or call or visit us.

The library is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM until 5:00 PM, with extended hours during legislative sessions. Please contact us if we can be of assistance.

Reports issued by legislative interim committees, state agencies, the House Research Organization, the Senate Research Center, and the Sunset Advisory Commission may be useful in identifying legislative intent. Many of these reports are available on the website of the agency issuing the report, and most interim committee reports are available on the library’s website.

The library’s newspaper clipping service is another resource that may provide background material and historical perspective. The clippings service is accessible through public terminals in the library.

To view an original print bill file from the 63rd session to present, schedule an appointment with the legislative library.

**Review Bill Analyses**

Bill analyses may provide useful legislative history information. Since 1973, the House has prepared analyses for the second reading of bills on the House floor. These analyses are published in the Daily Floor Report, but will not reflect any changes made to the bill after second reading. Electronic copies of many of these analyses are available in the library’s Legislative Archive System, on Texas Legislature Online, or on the website of the House Research Organization.

Since 1993, the Senate has prepared bill analyses for Senate bills and for the enrolled version of House bills. Many of these analyses also are available in the Legislative Archive System or on the Senate Research Center’s website.

**Obtain the bill history**

Bill histories list legislative actions taken on bills. Electronic bill histories from the the 71st session through present are available on Texas Legislature Online and from the 63rd through present in the library’s Legislative Archive System. Actions for bills prior to the 63rd session are located in House and Senate Journals.

**Step 3 — Listen to audiotapes of public hearings and floor debates.**

The House and Senate have recorded their public committee hearings and floor debates since 1973. These recordings may be helpful in compiling a bill’s legislative history. To review or request a tape, locate the following in the bill history:

- Names of the House and Senate committees to which the bill was referred
- Dates the committees considered the bill in public hearing
- Dates of second and third readings on the House and Senate floors

Audiotapes may be ordered through the mail or in person:

**House Tapes (1973–Present)**
John H Reagan Bldg  
105 W 15th St Rm 330  
512.463.0920

**Senate Tapes (Past 3 Sessions)**
Sam Houston Bldg  
210 E 14th St Rm 175  
512.463.0430

**Senate Tapes (Prior Sessions)**
State Archives and Library Bldg  
1201 Brazos St Rm 300  
512.463.5455  
(view digitized versions at www.tsl.texas.gov)

**Step 4 — Consult additional legislative documents, such as journals and interim committee reports.**

House and Senate Journals may contain statements of legislative intent. Electronic journal information for the 76th session through present is available on the House website (www.house.texas.gov) and the Senate website (www.senate.texas.gov). Printed journals are available at the legislative library and other libraries around the state, and scanned copies of many journals are available on the library’s website.

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