

## Research Minute: Finding Committee Minutes and Testimony

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When you're researching a bill, committee minutes and testimony are great resources. To find these records, you'll need to know:

- names of the house and/or senate committees to which the bill was referred, and
- dates the bill was considered by committee or subcommittee in public hearings.

Find this information by searching [Texas Legislature Online \(TLO\)](#) (1989-present) and/or the [Legislative Archive System \(LAS\)](#) (which has committee information from 1973-present). Enter the bill number, making sure to select the correct chamber and session/year. For [HB 1558, 84R](#), the History tab indicates that the bill was assigned to the [House Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence](#) committee and then the [Senate State Affairs](#) committee.

Next, select the Actions tab and scan the list to find "public hearing." HB 1558, 84R was considered in a house committee public hearing on April 14, 2015, and in a senate committee public hearing on May 14, 2015. You can tell which chamber by the "H" or "S" on the far left.

Now, go back and click on those committee links on the History tab. (This part will only work in TLO.) You'll see a list of the committee members for that session, and on the right, a "Meetings" link. Click here to see a list of all of the meetings the committee conducted in that session. Find the hearing date you determined from the action list to access its hearing notice, minutes, and witness list. Since multiple bills often are considered in a single hearing, do a Control-F for your bill number to find the relevant sections. You can also look on the websites for each of the committees ( [House](#), [Senate](#) ), as they sometimes include meeting handouts and transcripts for the current session.

You then can use the committee names and hearing dates to search for the relevant recordings in the [house](#) and [senate](#) video archives (for which links also are available on [TLO](#) and on the "Additional sources" tab in a LAS search). There is a chart in our [legislative intent guide](#) with more information about which dates are available online or on audio tape. Transcripts are rare, but House Video/Audio Services (512-463-0920) or Senate Staff Services (512-463-0430) may have transcripts or know if one exists (perhaps with the committee records) for a certain committee hearing.

Another avenue of committee testimony research is the LRL's [committee minutes project](#), which makes available minutes and related documents for house, senate, and joint committees from the 63rd-74th Legislatures (1973-1995). Some have testimony transcripts--it is always worthwhile to check.

For example, a search in the committee minutes database for the Senate Committee on Finance, 72R (1991) yields 92 days' worth of scanned meeting minutes. Most of the documents summarize the proceedings of the meeting and simply make note when testimony was taken, but the [March 5, 1991](#), minutes includes a transcript.

The committee minutes database includes interim committees, so even if you don't have a particular bill in mind, searching here can be helpful for many legislative history projects.

*Cover image by Flickr user [hyacinth50](#).*