

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.

[Added by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 191, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Amended by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch.1137, § 17, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.]

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.

EXAMPLE:

Chapter 1137

S.B. No. 888

AN ACT

relating to ad valorem tax abatement

You also may obtain the bill number by conducting a chapter number search in the library’s Legislative Archive System (www.lrl.texas.gov).

Make note of the session and year listed in the legislative history note, for example, “Acts 1989, 71st Leg.” The table below also provides recent legislative sessions and years.

SESSION	YEAR	SESSION	YEAR	SESSION	YEAR
87th	2021	78th	2003	69th	1985
86th	2019	77th	2001	68th	1983
85th	2017	76th	1999	67th	1981
84th	2015	75th	1997	66th	1979
83rd	2013	74th	1995	65th	1977
82nd	2011	73rd	1993	64th	1975
81st	2009	72nd	1991	63rd	1973
80th	2007	71st	1989	62nd	1971
79th	2005	70th	1987	61st	1969

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. The committee report is the official release of a bill from committee, and is not a narrative report.

SESSION	FORMAT	LOCATION
73rd–Present	Electronic	Texas Legislature Online (https://capiol.texas.gov)
33rd–44th and 46th–79th	Electronic	Legislative Archive System (https://lrl.texas.gov)
1st–Present	Print	Legislative Reference Library (512.463.1252)

To view an original print bill file 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 — Review audio or video recordings of public hearings and floor debates.

The House and Senate have recorded their public committee hearings and floor debates since 1973. 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

Audio and video recordings may be ordered through the mail or in person:

House Tapes (1973–Present)

House Video/Audio Service
105 W 15th St Rm 330
512.463.0920

Senate Tapes (Past 3 Sessions)

Senate Staff Services
210 E 14th St Rm 175
512.463.0430

Senate Tapes (Prior Sessions)

Legislative Reference Library
512.463.1252

Due to preservation concerns, access to original tapes is not available. Visit www.tsl.texas.gov to access digitized recordings.

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

House and Senate Journals may contain statements of legislative intent. Printed journals are available at the

legislative library and electronic copies of journals are accessible from the library's website.

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. Interim committee reports are available on the library's website.

Transcripts of committee hearings or floor debates are not routinely created and are rare. Occasionally, transcripts may be available through House Video/Audio Services or Senate Staff Services. For Senate transcripts, check the digitized tape collection for a "T" or "TR" marker.

The library's newspaper clipping service is another resource that may provide background material and historical perspective. The clippings service is available in the library.

If you have questions that are not addressed in this guide, please visit our website or call or visit us.

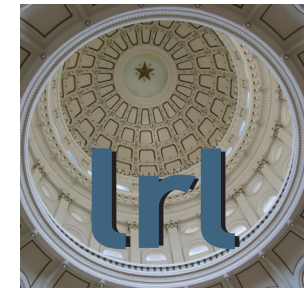
The library is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM until 5:00 PM, with extended hours during legislative sessions.

L Legislative Reference Library

PO Box 12488 • Austin TX 78711-2488
State Capitol Building • Room 2N.3 • 1100 N Congress Ave • Austin TX 78701
512.463.1252 phone • www.lrl.texas.gov • lrl.service@lrl.texas.gov

Compiling

Texas Legislative History



Legislative Reference Library

PO Box 12488 • Austin TX 78711-2488
State Capitol Building • 1100 N Congress Ave Rm 2N.3
512.463.1252 phone • 512.475.4626 fax
www.lrl.texas.gov • lrl.service@lrl.texas.gov