

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY SEARCH FOR THE NRS

Legislative history research is conducted to determine the legislative intent or meaning of specific statutes. For an exhaustive discussion, see Susan Southwick and James L. Olmstead. "Researching legislative History in Nevada," 54 *Inter Alia*, July/August 1989, F1-F10. If you have never conducted a search or want to know more about its value, the article provides invaluable insight.

This pathfinder describes procedures for conducting Nevada legislative history searches for 1965 to date, the period for which committee minutes are available. Not all information is available on the Internet. A large portion of legislative history research must be conducted in the library using the microfiche.

You may utilize the following materials in your research:

- ◆ *Nevada Revised Statutes*
- ◆ *Statutes of Nevada*
- ◆ *Nevada Senate Final Histories*
- ◆ *Nevada Assembly Final Histories*
- ◆ *Journal of the Senate*
- ◆ *Journal of the Assembly*
- ◆ *Committee Minutes* (microfiche)
- ◆ *Computer with Internet Access*

[1] At the end of each *Nevada Revised Statutes* section you will find in parentheses citations to a year and a page number in *Statutes of Nevada*. Copy these cites to be used later.

(Added to NRS by 1975, 1624; A 1977, 103)

Statutes of Nevada 1975, page 1,624 Statutes of Nevada 1977, page 103

[2] Find the *Statutes of Nevada* for the year and page cited. The *Statutes of Nevada* are located on shelf #2 in the Nevada section of the library. At the beginning of each session law is listed:

- a) Bill number (e.g. A.B. # or S.B. #)
- b) Sponsor of the bill (either persons or a committee)
- c) Summary of the bill
- d) Enactment Date

If a citation leads to the middle of a session law, page back to the beginning to find the above information. Write down the bill number. Changes are noted by *italicized words* for parts added, and omitted words are noted by ~~strike throughs~~.

[3] Search for a Bill Summary prepared by the Legislative Counsel Bureau on their webpage at www.leg.state.nv.us/dbtw-wpd/SimpleSearch.cfm.

If a Bill Summary is available, it will contain a variety of documents, including Histories, Journals, and Committee Minutes. Additional research may not be necessary. Typically, few online legislative histories are available before 1985.

[4] Find the *Nevada Senate Legislative Final History* or the *Nevada Assembly Legislative Final History* for the year in question. This lists all bills in numerical order and all activity on each bill. Note down all dates and the corresponding name(s) of the committee(s) to which the bill was referred in both houses of the legislature. Also take similar notes for all amendments to the bill. References in the Committee Minutes may be to amendments that do not appear in the final version of the legislation. Earlier versions of the bill may add valuable insight to your research.

[5] Find the *Nevada Legislative Committee Minutes* fiche set, located in the copy room. The fiche set is divided into Senate and Assembly, then by year, and then alphabetically by committee name within each year.

[6] The index for the committee minutes will appear on the first fiche of the set. The index will list bill numbers and dates of discussion or page numbers. Make a note of all dates and page numbers to be used from the Index.

[7] Microfiche are arranged by date, with a beginning date in the upper right hand-corner of each fiche. This date refers to the minutes, which begin on that fiche sheet; it does not refer to a continuation of a prior date. You may need to view entries on many dates-several fiches-or just one date. View entries for each date found in the fiche Index.

[8] Once these steps have been completed for one legislative body, check the minutes for the other body. Remember that committee names sometimes are not the same in each house.

[9] On occasion, floor debate on a bill may be helpful. The journals of the Senate and of the Assembly contain a daily record of the activities that take place on the floor of each house of the legislature. At the front of each volume is a table arranged by bill number. This "Listing of Assembly [or Senate] Bills and Action Thereon" includes page numbers in the Journal. There is also a "Listing of Senate Bills" that indicates when a Senate bill was discussed on the floor of the Assembly. The references after the bill number are to pages within the journal.

Should you wish to see the text of bills as they were amended or the text of bills that did not become law, a complete set is available at the Nevada State Library and Archives and at the Nevada Supreme Court Law Library in Carson City, Nevada.

If you are conducting research from any other starting point, or are having problems, please ask for assistance at the Reference Desk. The Legal Research Division of the Legislative Counsel Bureau can be very helpful in locating documents and information that are not available online. They can be reached at 1-775-684-6830 or found on the Internet at www.leg.state.nv.us/lcb/research/index.cfm.