

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.

You may need 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, you will need them later.

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

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

If your citation leads you to the middle of a session law, page back until you find the above listing. You will also need the bill number. Changes are noted in the forms of italicization for parts added, or the striking through of words omitted.

[3] Search for a Bill Summary prepared by the Legislative Counsel Bureau on their webpage at:

<http://search.leg.state.nv.us/billsum/isyssearchbillsum.html>

If a Bill Summary is available, it will contain copies of a variety of documents, including Histories, Journals, and Committee Minutes. Additional research may not be necessary. Typically, are not 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. You will need the name(s) of the committee(s) to which the bill was referred in both houses of the legislature. You may wish to note if there were amendments to the bill you are researching. If there were, you will need to be cautious when checking the Committee Minutes.

References in the Committee Minutes may be to amendments that do not appear in the final version of the legislation. You may also wish to obtain copies of the different versions of the bill. For reference, you may want to list those dates as well.

[5] Find the *Nevada Legislative Committee Minutes* fiche set that is located in the microfiche room at the rear of the library. 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 be either the beginning of the first fiche or be a separate fiche at the beginning of the set. The index will list bill numbers and dates of discussion or page numbers. You will need all the dates or page numbers you can derive from the Index.

[7] The 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. You will need to view entries for each date you found in the fiche Index.

[8] Once you have completed these steps for one legislative body, you will need to check 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, as the case may be] Bills and Action Thereon" includes page numbers in the Journal. There is also a "Listing of Senate Bills" that indicates where 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 text of bills as they were amended or 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.

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Revised 7-09-2009