

# Researching State Legislative History

## The Documents

Session Laws, availability

- Law Library
- Official Legislative Web Sites (e.g., [http://www.in.gov/legislative/ic\\_ia/](http://www.in.gov/legislative/ic_ia/))
- HeinOnline (Session Laws Library)

Bill number

- Indexed in legislative journals

Statements of intent

- House or Senate Journals

Committee Records

- Reports, debate, hearing transcripts and testimony

Audio or Video Records of Legislative Debates and Committee Hearings

- Debate, hearings and work sessions

## Free Online Resources for Documents

### State's Legislative Body Websites

- Free access to all full text bills from current legislative session
  - E.g., <http://www.in.gov/apps/lisa/session/billwatch/billinfo>
- Searchable by keyword or bill number
- PDF or text
- Retrospective coverage varies
  - E.g., <http://www.in.gov/legislative/2414.htm>

### CQ StateTrack (<http://cqstatetrack.com/index.html>)

- Free nationwide bill search
- Full text or phrase searching
- State legislatures' current session
- Links to official state web sites

## Free Online Resources and Guides

State Legislative History Research Guides on the Web

<http://www.law.indiana.edu/lawlibrary/research/guides/statelegislative/index.shtml>

Cornell LII: Law by source: State (<http://www.law.cornell.edu/states/listing.html>)

- (Select jurisdiction, then click links under "Constitution and Legislation")

Law Librarians' Society of Washington, D.C.: State Legislatures, State Laws and State Regulations

(<http://www.llsdc.org/state-leg/>)

National Conference of State Legislatures (<http://www.ncsl.org/?tabid=17173>)

- (Select state(s), then under "One Content Area" choose "Bills" or "Legislators")

State and Local Government on the Net: State Legislatures (<http://www.statelocalgov.net/50states-legislature.cfm>)

- (Choose from multiple legislative sites by state)

## Print Resources

*State Legislative Sourcebook*, Government Research Service, 2011 ed.  
Reference JK2495 .S689 2011

*Guide to State Legislation, Legislative History and Administrative Materials* by William H. Manz, 2008 ed.  
Reference KF1 .F57 2008

## Commercial Databases

[HeinOnline](#) > Spinelli's Law Librarian's Reference Shelf > AALL GD-SIS State Bibliographies

### Westlaw – State Legislative History Databases

- Access three ways:
  - The tabbed “Legislative History – State” page
  - From the Westlaw directory by clicking “U.S. State Materials” and then clicking “Legislative Histories.”
  - Type the database identifier (e.g., **ct-lh**) at any Westlaw page that has a “Search for a database” text box
- **A state may have up to five different types of legislative documents available, including:**
  - legislative journals (e.g., VA-LH-JRNLS)
  - messages from the state governor (e.g., WA-LH-MSG)
  - status reports and chronological history of bills (e.g., WI-LH-REP)
  - transcripts of hearings and debates (e.g., CT-LH-TMY)
  - voting records (e.g., NY-LH-VOTES)
- **The following database are also available for states:**
  - Bill text and bill tracking databases (e.g., CT-BILLTXT, CT-BILLTRK-OLD)
  - Session law databases (e.g., CT-LEGIS, CT-LEGIS-OLD)

### Lexis – Legislative Bill History Files

- Legal > Legislation & Politics - U.S. & U.K. > U.S. States > Legislative Bill History
  - Legislative history documents include: Bill Analyses, Governor's Messages, Committee Reports, Fiscal Messages, Summary Amendments, and other types

### [LexisNexis State Capital](#)

- Allows individual, multiple or all-state keyword searching and template-based retrieval of bills and tracking reports by year and bill number citation

## Secondary sources

Law journals, bar publications, newspapers (legal and general), blogs

## Final Considerations

- Duplicative legislation
- Amendments and omnibus bills
- Legislation across time