



CONNECTICUT LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

What is legislative history and what documents does it include?

Legislative history consists of the materials which document a bill's progress through the legislature. Courts often use this information to determine what the legislature intended in passing a particular law or to interpret the meaning of specific language used in a particular statute.

There are 3 basic parts to a legislative history in Connecticut:

- floor debate in the Connecticut General Assembly House of Representatives
- floor debate in the Connecticut General Assembly Senate
- testimony at committee public hearings

What legislative history resources can you find at this library?

Proceedings of the Connecticut General Assembly

Joint Standing Committee Hearings

Microfiche - Microform Room Cabinet 15

Coverage: 1983 to the present

Transcripts of General Assembly House and Senate proceedings as well as transcripts of committee public hearings. Proceedings are arranged by year; hearings are arranged first by year and then alphabetically by committee.

Connecticut Legislative History Cards

Reference - KFC 3640.C66

Coverage: 1980 to the present

An index to the microfiche described above, these cards provide the exact transcript page numbers relevant to a particular bill. The cards are arranged numerically by bill number; a conversion table providing the bill number for each public act passed in a particular year is located in the front of each volume. Beginning in 1998, the cards are arranged numerically by public act number. An online index covering 1995 to the present is also available at <http://www.cslib.org/leghis.asp>.

How do you research Connecticut legislative history in this library?

- 1) Find the Public Act number for the law you are researching. Public Act numbers can be found in the Connecticut General Statutes, following the text of each statute section.
- 2) For laws passed before 1998, you must locate the corresponding bill number. Use the “Public Act to Bill Number” conversion tables located in the front of each volume of the Connecticut Legislative History Cards. (Beginning in 1998, the cards are arranged by Public Act number, so this step is not necessary.)
- 3) Go to the legislative history card for your bill. This will indicate the exact page numbers where your bill is referenced in the microfiche.
- 4) Consult the microfiche for the pages where your bill is discussed. House and Senate Proceedings are arranged by year; hearings are arranged first by year and then alphabetically by committee.

What legislative history resources can you find at the Connecticut State Library?

The Connecticut State Library has complete transcripts of Connecticut General Assembly Proceedings dating back to 1953, and partial transcripts dating back to 1945. They also have transcripts of committee hearings from the early 1900's to the present.

The Connecticut State Library also collects the following materials related to the legislative process:

- copies of bills in various stages (proposed, committee, substitute, file copies, amendments)
- Office of Legislative Research background and research reports and bill summaries
- Office of Fiscal Analysis fiscal impact statements
- roll call votes
- legislative bulletins, journals, calendars, and list of bills
- special commission reports

The Law and Legislative Reference Unit can be reached at 860-757-6590.

What legislative history documents are available online?

Transcripts of General Assembly proceedings and committee public hearings from 1988 to the present are available on the Connecticut General Assembly web page at <http://search.cga.state.ct.us/>. For step-by-step instructions on how to search for legislative history material using this web page, go to <http://www.jud.ct.gov/lawlib/Notebooks/HowTo/CompileLegislativeHistories/cgaleghist.htm>.

The “Connecticut Legislative History” database in Westlaw also includes house transcripts, senate transcripts, and committee hearings from 1997 to the present.