

Purpose

The purpose of legislative history research is to determine what the legislators intended for a bill to accomplish in order for the courts to interpret the statute. In addition, legislative history research tracks committee member's involvement and voting records and the progression of legislation through amendments.

The best source for Idaho legislative history material is the Idaho Legislative Library located in the Idaho State Capitol building in Boise, Idaho. The Legislative Library has the most comprehensive collection of legislative materials in the state, including online guides for finding legislative history.

Legislative Reference Library
Idaho State Capitol
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720-0054
208-334-4822
Kristin Ford, Legislative Librarian
library@lso.idaho.gov
<http://legislature.idaho.gov/research/referencelibrary.htm>

Legislative History Process

1. Identify statute citation in current or prior Idaho Code.
 - A. Online
 1. From 1987-current Westlaw
 2. Current year Lexis

1887: Revised Statutes of Idaho (cited as R.S. and Rev. St.)
 1901: Idaho Codes Annotated
 1909: Revised Codes of Idaho (cited as R.C.)
 1918: Idaho Compiled Laws (cited as C.L.).
 Preliminary edition of 1919 codification, not enacted into positive law.
 1919: Idaho Compiled Statutes (cited as C.S.)
 1932: Idaho Code Annotated; notes similar provisions in other states.
 1943: Idaho Laws Annotated

2. Identify relevant language in statute.
 Narrow research by identifying the relevant language in the statute. If the language is not found in the current statute, consult previous codes and session laws to determine when the language was in effect.
3. Obtain session law year, chapter and section in statutory history at end of statute.
 The final sentence in the small print at the end of the statute is the statutory history. The history provides (1) the year the law was passed (2) year(s) of amendments, if any (3) session law chapter (4) section of chapter (5) page number.
4. From session laws obtain the House or Senate bill number.
 Find the House or Senate bill number below the chapter number in the session laws.
 - A. Online
 1. From territorial laws in 1863-current HeinOnline (Session Laws Library)
 2. From 2009 <http://legislature.idaho.gov/priorsessions.htm>
 3. From 1990 Westlaw ID-LEGIS-OLD; current ID-LEGIS
 4. From 1989 Lexis Advance Legislative Service
 - B. Print
 1. 1863-1889 Law Library Rare Books
 2. 1890-current Law Library Reference
5. Find names of committees who sponsored bill in House and Senate.
 (see Procedural History, below).
 - A. Online access to procedural history and bill tracking
 1. 1998-current <http://legislature.idaho.gov/priorsessions.htm>
 2. from 2005 Westlaw ID-BILLTRK-OLD
 3. 2006-current; limited coverage 2002-2005 and 2008; Lexis Idaho Legislative Bill History
 - B. Print: The Final Edition, Weekly Bill Status (formerly the Daily Data)
 1. 2002-2005 Law Library Cage KFI6.D3
 2. 1970-current Idaho Legislative Library and Idaho State Law Library
 - C. Print: House and Senate Journals (check table for pages bill discussed)
 1. 1933-

2. 1881-current Legislative Library; 1890-current Idaho State Law Library

6. Review committee minutes and related materials.

Committee meetings are recorded for use in creating the official committee minutes. After the minutes are made the audio is taped over. Thus, there is no verbatim transcription or recording of the Idaho legislature's committee hearings. Minutes of the hearings have been preserved for the Senate committees since 1970 and for some House committees since 1960. Minutes are available:

A. Online: from 2003 at <http://legislature.idaho.gov/priorsessions.htm>

B. Print: Legislative Reference Library (see contact information above).

2. Bill passed from 1990 Westlaw ID-LEGIS-OLD; current ID-LEGIS
 3. All bills (includes those not passed) from 2005 Westlaw ID-BILLTXT-OLD
 4. Current Lexis IDBILL (bill and tracking); IDTEXT (full-text bills)
- B. Print
1. 1937-1949 (incomplete) and 1973-2004 Law Library Cage KFI6.H6
 2. From 1901 UI Main Library Special Collections
4. Procedural History
(see under Find names of committees who sponsored bill in House and Senate).
- A. The Weekly Bill Status, formerly the Daily Data is a weekly publication arranged in chronological order by bill number listing all legislative actions on bills, resolutions, proclamations, and memorials. The Final Edition of the publications

Other Resources

- A. The Idaho Law Review's "Legislative Review" examines major legislation passed during the prior session of the legislature. The Idaho Law Review also publishes articles about particular legislation or proposed legislation.
- B. The Advocate, the Idaho Bar Association monthly publication, publishes articles about legislation sponsored by or of interest to the bar.
- C. The Idaho Statesman, a newspaper published in Idaho's capital city, publishes articles explaining legislation with quotations from the sponsors or proponents. The Statesman has been cited as an aid to understanding the intent of legislation.