

NORTH DAKOTA LEGISLATIVE HISTORY RESEARCH – QUICK GUIDE

Legislative history research refers to using documents and/or audio recordings produced during the bill or resolution process to attempt to determine the North Dakota State Legislature’s intent, or to clarify vague or ambiguous language.

Commonly, legislative history is bill or resolution versions, and committee hearing minutes and testimony.

Basic Steps:

1. Find the North Dakota Session Laws for the statute.

2. Use Session Laws to identify the bill(s) or resolution(s) by the year of the legislative session and the House or Senate bill number.

3. Using the year of the legislative session and the bill or resolution number, locate the legislative history, which may be available online, in print, on microfiche, or audio recordings.

First, Find the North Dakota Session Laws for the Statute:

The first step in legislative history research for the North Dakota Constitution and North Dakota statutes is to find the session laws and/or dates of enactment and amendment for the specific section.

The North Dakota Century Code at ndlegis.gov doesn’t include session law information. You need to use an alternate source.

Westlaw Precision:

See the “Credits” section directly following the text of the statute.

Lexis Nexis Plus:

See the “History” section directly following the text of the statute.

Lexis Nexis Print Version:

See the “Source” section directly following the text of the statute.

Session Law Numbering:

Enactment and amendments to N.D.C.C. § 27-03-05

S.L. 1890, ch. 170, § 7; S.L. 1923, ch. 194, § 1; S.L. 1947, ch. 228, § 1; S.L. 1971, ch. 297, § 3; S.L. 1973, ch. 93, § 2; S.L. 1995, ch. 2, § 10; S.L. 2003, ch. 265, § 1; S.L. 2007, ch. 273, § 1, eff. Aug. 1, 2007.

- **S.L.** = Session Laws of North Dakota. Session Laws are published after each regular and special legislative session and contain the laws enacted or amended that session.
- **Year** = Year of the North Dakota legislative session when the law was enacted or amended.
- **ch. ###** = Chapter Category. Every bill introduced in a legislative session is placed in a numbered chapter category that generally fits the subject matter.
- **§ #** = Section. Every chapter category is divided into sections. Each section contains the text of the law or amendments to an existing law. Section numbering begins at 1.

Second, Locate the Bill or Resolution Year and Number:

Go to the session law(s) to find the bill or resolution number in the heading of the session law chapter.

Westlaw Precision & Lexis Nexis Plus:

Click on the link to the session law. Not all session laws are available in Westlaw or Lexis Nexis.

ndlegis.gov/legislative-histories/session-laws:

Almost all of North Dakota's session laws from territorial days through the present.

HeinOnline:

All of North Dakota's session laws from territorial days through 2023.

Law Library Print Collection:

All of North Dakota's session laws from territorial days through 2023.

Bill or Resolution Numbering (S.L. 2007, ch. 273, § 1):

CHAPTER 273

HOUSE BILL NO. 1083
(Appropriations Committee)
(At the request of the Supreme Court)

SUPREME COURT CLERK FEES

AN ACT to amend and reenact section 27-03-05 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to fees charged and collected by the clerk of the supreme court.

- **HB or SB** = HB is a House bill or resolution; SB is a Senate bill or resolution.
- **####** = Bill or resolution number. House bills begin with 1001, concurrent resolutions begin with 3001, memorial resolutions begin with 7001; Senate bills begin with 2001, resolutions begin with 4001, memorial resolutions begin with 8001

Third, Using the Bill or Resolution Year and Number, Locate the Legislative History:

Committee Minutes & Testimony: records of the House and Senate committees during the legislative session.

- 1999-2023: ndlegis.gov/research-center/history
- 1959-2009: microfiche (contact Law Library for assistance at lawlib@ndcourts.gov)
 - Before 1977, bills are organized by committee name. Go to the House or Senate Journals **first** to get the committee name
- **NO** committee documents available before 1959
- Audio recordings:
 - 1977-2005: State Archives – history.nd.gov/archives/manuscripts/inventory/30879.html
 - Some 2009; 2011-Present: Digitized recordings, call or email Legislative Council

Interim Committee Minutes & Testimony: records of the legislature's interim committees in the two-year period between legislative sessions.

- 1997-2024: ndlegis.gov/assembly/session-interim by year of legislative assembly
- 1943-2009: microfiche (contact Law Library for assistance at lawlib@ndcourts.gov)
- Audio recordings:
 - Some 2009; 2011-Present: Digitized recordings, call or email Legislative Council
 - State Archives **may** have tapes, call (701) 328-2091 or email archives@nd.gov

House & Senate Journals: records of the action of the House and Senate floors, information on which committee(s) heard bills and when a bill was referred to a committee. Records reports of conference committees and other actions on the bill. The journals are the only floor debate publications.

- 1862-2023: ndlegis.gov/research-center/journals by year of legislative assembly
- Territorial days to Present: Law Library print collection (lawlib@ndcourts.gov)