



Alaska State Court Law Library

Reference desk (Anchorage) ▪ 907-264-0585

Toll-free within Alaska ▪ 888-282-2082

Reference desk email ▪ library@courts.state.ak.us

Library website ▪ www.courts.alaska.gov

ALASKA LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Some Alaska legislative history materials are available online, on the Alaska Legislature's website. The website includes two main databases, BASIS and Infobases. These databases include:

BASIS

<http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/start.asp>

Bills, session laws, House and Senate journals and committee minutes: 1993 – current

Folio Infobases

<http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/folio.asp>

Bills	1983 – current	Committee minutes	1982 – current
House and Senate journals	1987 – current	Session laws	1981 – current

BASIS is the superior database, so for legislative history from 1993 to present, use BASIS. Use Infobases for full-text versions of session laws from 1981 to 2002, and for other legislative history from 1982 to 1993. For legislative history before 1982, contact the Anchorage Law Library.

Searching on BASIS:

<http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/start.asp>

1993 - current

Bills

House and Senate journals

Committee minutes

Session laws

1. Start with the correct legislative session.

The opening screen for BASIS is a search page for the current legislative session. To search an earlier legislative session, select it from the list on the bottom right of the opening screen, under Archive.

2. If you know the session law but don't know the bill number, choose the appropriate year from Session Laws in the right column.

Full-text session laws are available on BASIS starting in 2003. Starting in 2003, you can access the PDF of the session law, or click directly on the link for the bill. For earlier years, though the text of the session law is not available, you can click on the link for the bill to continue.

3. *If you know the bill number, type it into the Search box at the top of the page.*

Your bill number includes the designation for House or Senate bill, and the bill number. Type this number into the Search box, e.g. hb215 or sb150. Click Display to view the bill's history.

4. *Use the links to follow your bill through the House and Senate journals and view committee material.*

Scroll down below the title of your bill and the group of grey buttons to the Bill History Index. This list includes all floor actions on your bill, with live links to the House and Senate journal pages. The journals provide a summary of each day's legislative action. Click on the links for page numbers to see what action was taken on your bill on each day.

Click on the long, grey button marked Display Committee Action with Bill History. You'll see that the same bill history appears, with the same links to journal pages. In addition, there will be new links marked Text, which link to committee minutes and other documents. The committee material appears here in chronological order, so you can trace your bill as it moved through the legislature and through various committees.

5. *Click the other grey buttons for more options.*

The "Minutes" button provides links to all committee minutes. These are the same minutes that appear as Text in the index below – in the index, they're in chronological order; here, they're grouped together. Audio links to committee material start in 2005.

The "Full Text" button, available starting in 1995, provides links to every version of the bill as it passed through the legislature. This can be helpful if you're researching a specific section or phrase. If you determine that the language you are interested first appeared in a certain committee's substitute, for example, you can focus on the minutes from that committee.

The "Documents" button, available starting in 2009, provides links to committee bill files.

6. *Search Gavel to Gavel for additional audio recordings.*

Live audio of floor sessions and committee meetings is available starting in 2002. The recordings are from public television coverage of the legislature, *Gavel to Gavel*, and are not official recordings. The audio may be incomplete or contain material added by the commentators. The link to Gavel to Gavel is on the opening screen of BASIS, on the right under Tools. On the next screen, select Audio Archive from the menu on the left.

Searching on Infobases:

<http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/folio.asp>

Bills 1983+
House and Senate Journals 1987+
Committee Minutes 1982+
Session Laws 1981+

1. **Select your Infobase (e.g., 1981 – 2005 Session Laws).**

Infobases include session laws, bill text, journals, and committee minutes. To find the bill number, start with the session laws for that year. The bill number is the third line listed at the top of the session law, called Source. The bill number sometimes includes additional abbreviations. Read the last two letters before the number to determine if the bill is from the House or Senate:

CSHB 113 [House Bill 113]
HCSCSB 290 [Senate Bill 290]

2. **If you know what you're looking for, use the menu contents rather than a query search.**

If there is a grey plus sign (+) to the left of a link, click this plus instead of the link itself. This will expand the menu detail. Continue expanding until you find the document you are looking for. When you find the right document, click directly on the link to view it.

The blue ovals at the bottom and top left of the screen are the Next and Previous icons. Use these buttons to move backwards and forwards within the menu contents.

For example, to find a bill number, choose the session laws for the correct year. Click on the plus sign next to the correct year. Click directly on the chapter to view the session law. Find the bill number under Source.

3. **To search for a bill or document, click on the Query button and enter your search terms.**

When searching journals or committee minutes, use the house or senate bill number as your search term. Be sure to use quotes and put a space before the bill number: "HB 231" or "SB 146"

Other search operators include:

Operator	Explanation	Example
AND	both terms must appear	tort AND reform
OR	at least one term must appear	tort OR reform
@#	w/in # words, in any order	civil @3 rule
/#	w/in # words, first word must appear before second	ad /2 litem
" "	phrases, words which must appear in a particular order	"hb 354"

Check the **Headings w/Hits** box and click the search button. Once search has run, do not click on the box displaying number of records retrieved. Instead, click on the **Contents** icon, the blue oval furthest to the right, with the picture that looks like an outline.

The **Contents** screen will tell you how many hits appear in each heading. Click on the plus (+) and minus (-) symbols to expand or collapse menu detail, ranging from the very broad House or Senate, to years, specific committees in each chamber, and specific dates those committees met. Plus (+) indicates more detail is available, minus (-) indicates you have reached the maximum level of detail.

- House + 87 + 88 - Senate + 87 + 88	- House - 87 + HCRA	- House - 87 - HCRA - 87/01/21
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After viewing your document, click the Contents icon again to return to the Table of Contents.

Other resources:

Legislative Information Office (Anchorage)
716 W. 4th Avenue, Suite 200
(907) 259-0111

Legislative Reference Library (Juneau)
(907) 465-3808

State Archives (Juneau)
(907) 465-2270

Alaska State Library (Juneau)
(907) 465-2921

Alaska Legislature website: <http://w3.legis.state.ak.us/index.php>

The legislature's home page includes links to Infobases and to BASIS (Bills & Laws)

For an additional explanation of Alaska legislative history, see Guide to Alaska Legislative History Materials, Legislative Reference Library (revised December 2009). In Anchorage, it is located in Volume 1 of the Index to Alaska Legislature microfiche shelved around the corner from the Session Laws in the Reading Room and above Cabinet F on the West Mezzanine.