

# Preserving State Government Digital Information Minnesota Historical Society

## Minnesota Legislative History Information and Instructions

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### Summary

*This document defines legislative history and provides background information as to why legislative histories are useful. Sources of information are identified. Search methods and tools are explained.*

*Disclaimer: This information was current at the time it was written. Information and links may change slightly with the beginning of the new legislative session and updating of legislative websites. This paper is a topical overview and nowise intended to offer legal advice. Consult an attorney for assistance with specific concerns or for advice.*

*Any comments, corrections, or recommendations may be sent to the project team, care of:*

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### Background Information

What is a legislative history?

A legislative history traces a bill through the process of becoming a law. The history tracks the progress and changes made to the bill during the legislative process. Materials are created and documents are edited at each step in the legislative process, and it is these materials that document the changes over time that are used to create the legislative history.

Why do a legislative history?

There are many reasons to compile a legislative history. One reason for creating a legislative history is to research a current law before suggesting amendments. One would want to know if the desired change had previously been considered and if so, why and under what circumstances had it been removed. Another reason is to help establish legislative intent. When a law is written in such a manner that it could be interpreted in more than one way, reviewing documentation leading up to the passing of the bill could help show the original or legislative intent of the creators. However Minnesota is a "journal entry state," which means that the journal is the final authority used by the courts concerning actions of the Legislature and in determining legislative intent."<sup>1</sup> The Minnesota Statutes and Rules of the House and Senate address the issues of legislative intent; specifically Minnesota Statutes 645.16 and 645.17, House Rules 2.15 and 6.24, and Senate Rule 50.9.<sup>2</sup>

What materials are used to create a legislative history?

In general, the materials used to create a legislative history are any resources utilized or created during the legislative process. Each state will have slightly different names for the materials, but the creation process is generally the same.

In Minnesota the materials include the text of all introduced versions of a bill, committee meeting reports, and audio and video recordings. Proper names for these documents in Minnesota include the Minnesota Statutes, Laws of Minnesota/Minnesota Session Laws, House Journals, Senate Journals, House Committee Minutes, Senate Committee Minutes, House Audio/Video files, and Senate Audio/Video files.

Other sources of information include issues of the House's *Session Weekly* or the Senate's *Senate Briefly*. Other outside sources of information may provide additional background information on the process and include newspaper articles, personal papers of related parties, and other related state and federal laws.

*Legislative histories can be created on Federal laws as well. Georgetown Law Library has created a Federal Legislative History Research Tutorial that addresses the overall process, the documents that are created, and research tools. The tutorial can be found*

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<sup>1</sup> Minnesota State Legislature. *Frequently Asked Questions about the Minnesota Legislature: Journals*.

<http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/leg/faqtoc.asp?subject=6> (Accessed January 8, 2009.)

<sup>2</sup> The Statute explains how legislative intent can be used in the state of Minnesota. Rules of the House and Senate also address this issue; specifically in House Rule 2.15:

<http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/cco/rules/permrule/215.htm>; House Rule 6.24

<http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/cco/rules/permrule/624.htm>; and Senate Rule 50.9:

<http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/rules/2007/permsenrules07.pdf>. The text of the Statute 645.16 and 645.17 can be found here: Minnesota Office of the Revisor of Statutes. Minnesota Statutes 645.16 and 645.17.

<https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/statutes/?id=645&view=chapter#stat.645.16>.

online at <http://www.ll.georgetown.edu/tutorials/lh/index.cfm>.

What is the legislative process? How does a bill become a law?

In Minnesota, an idea for a new law is conceived, put into legal form by the Office of the Revisor of Statutes, and then sponsored and introduced into the House or Senate. A committee also discusses the bill and makes a recommendation for the full House or Senate. The bill is also discussed in the opposite legislative body and if there are discrepancies, another committee made up of both House and Senate members work on a resolution to be brought to the floor again. The bill must pass through both the House and Senate before being sent to the governor for final approval. If the governor approves the bill it becomes a law. This process creates the documents used when compiling a legislative history. (For a more detailed description, please review the Minnesota State Legislature web page *How a Bill Becomes a Law* at <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/howbill.asp>. The document titled *Life of a Bill* is a chart documenting the same process and can be found at [http://www.sos.state.mn.us/docs/life\\_of\\_a\\_bill.pdf](http://www.sos.state.mn.us/docs/life_of_a_bill.pdf).)

## The Records Defined

**Minnesota Statutes:** Minnesota Statutes are laws that apply to all citizens and are “a compilation of the general and permanent laws of the state, incorporating new laws, amendments, or repeals of old law.”<sup>3</sup> The Statutes are updated online each year and in print every two years.

**Minnesota Session Laws/Laws of Minnesota:** The acts passed during the legislative session are compiled annually into the Laws of Minnesota which are often called the “session laws”. “Laws of a permanent nature are subsequently incorporated into Minnesota Statutes; those are [called] coded laws. Laws of Minnesota [the session laws] also includes uncoded laws, including appropriations, proposed constitutional amendments, local laws, and effective date sections.”<sup>4</sup> New laws are added to the

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<sup>3</sup> Minnesota Office of the Revisor of Statutes. *Minnesota Statutes*. <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/statutes/?view=info> (Accessed January 6, 2009.)

<sup>4</sup> Minnesota Office of the Revisor of Statutes. *Minnesota Session Laws*. <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/laws/>  
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Minnesota State Legislature website when they are enacted and if “after each session, the new laws are proofread, indexed, and published as a compilation in print and online.”<sup>5</sup>

**Minnesota Rules:** “An administrative rule is a general statement adopted by an agency to make the law it enforces or administers more specific or to govern the agency's organization or procedure. An agency may adopt a rule only after the legislature has enacted a law granting this authority to the agency. An agency rule that is adopted under the rulemaking provisions of Minnesota Statutes, chapter 14, has the force and effect of law. *Rulemaking in Minnesota: A Guide* [found on the Minnesota State Legislature website] explains each step of the rulemaking process in Minnesota.”<sup>6</sup>

**Journals:** Journals are the record of the daily floor proceedings in the House and Senate including the “attendance, bill introductions, committee reports, amendments to bills, and reports of the conference committees. In addition, the Journals are the record of official communications between the two bodies, messages from the governor and protests filed by members.”<sup>7</sup> “The journal is the final authority used by the courts concerning actions of the Legislature and in determining legislative intent.”<sup>8</sup> For more information about the Journals, review the Frequently Asked Questions section on the Minnesota State Legislature web site at: <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/leg/faqtoc.asp?subject=6>.

**Bills or Bill Files:** “A bill is a proposal for a new law, a change in current law, repeal of a current law, or for a constitutional amendment.”<sup>9</sup> Bills are called House Files and Senate Files in the House and Senate respectively. For more information, review the frequently asked questions about bills on the Minnesota Office of the Revisor of Statutes web site at <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/leg/faqtoc.asp?subject=2>.

**Committee Books/Minutes:** Committees in both the House and Senate were created to allow exploration and discussion on specific topics of interest. “It is the job of each committee to hold public hearings on bills, to put each bill into its best form, and to

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<sup>5</sup> Minnesota Office of the Revisor of Statutes. *Minnesota Session Laws*. <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/laws/>

<sup>6</sup> *Rulemaking in Minnesota: A Guide* can be found at <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/rules/?view=info>

Minnesota Office of the Revisor of Statutes. *Minnesota Administrative Rules*.

<https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/rules/?view=info>.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/leg/faqtoc.asp?subject=6>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/leg/faqtoc.asp?subject=6>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/leg/faqtoc.asp?subject=2>

recommend to the full body only those bills that the committee feels merit further consideration. The committee takes testimony from the public, bill sponsors, and experts in the areas the bill affects.”<sup>10</sup> Committees have the option of “amending the bill, combining two or more bills under one file number, sending more detailed or complex bills to a subcommittee for further examination, recommending a bill to pass as introduced, recommending it be passed as amended, sending it to another committee with recommendation to pass, sending it to another committee without recommendation to pass, or killing the bill by voting it down, tabling it, delaying action, ignoring it, or returning it to its author.”<sup>11</sup>

**Committee Files:** Packets created by the committees include agendas and handouts that may or may not be saved as there are no legislative rules governing the disposition of committee files. Records of this nature may be at the Minnesota Historical Society or the Legislative Research Library and filed under the individual committee names.

**Legislative Tapes (Audio and Video Recordings):** Legislative tapes include audio and video recordings of House and Senate floor sessions and committee hearings. The tapes are retained for eight years by the Legislative Reference Library and then by the Minnesota Historical Society for another eight years before being destroyed.

## Location of Records by Type

Where can you find each type of record? What forms are they in? If available, a URL is provided for direct access. More information on accessing digital and paper files follow this section.

**Minnesota Statutes Location:** <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/statutes/>

1997-2008 Statutes are located online on the Minnesota Office of the Revisor of Statutes web page. Older versions are in print and are located in the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library, Minnesota Historical Society Library, Minnesota State Law Library, and in many individual county law libraries.

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<sup>10</sup> Minnesota Office of the Revisor of Statutes. Frequently Asked Questions About the Minnesota Legislature. Committees. <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/leg/faqtoc.asp?subject=5>

<sup>11</sup> Minnesota Office of the Revisor of Statutes. Frequently Asked Questions About the Minnesota Legislature. Committees. <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/leg/faqtoc.asp?subject=5>

**Minnesota Session Laws/Laws of Minnesota Location:**

<https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/laws/>

Legislative Sessions 1 – 86 as well as the 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Territorial Legislatures can be found online at the Minnesota Office of the Revisor of Statutes web page. Laws are updated online as soon as they are passed. The official version of the Session Laws is the printed version produced by the Revisor's Office and found at the Legislative Research Library, Minnesota Historical Society Library, and other repositories of government materials.

**Minnesota Rules Location:** <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/rules/>

Minnesota Rules can be found on the Minnesota Office of the Revisor of Statutes website. The Rules are updated following the addition to the Revisor's rule database on an as-needed basis by chapter. The "official hardbound version of the Minnesota Rules is published every odd-numbered year. Each edition is supplemented twice in even-numbered years with pocketpart supplements."<sup>12</sup> Bound versions can be found in the Legislative Research Library, Minnesota Historical Society Library, and at other repositories of government materials.

**Journals Location:**

Print versions of the Journals for both the House and Senate are available at the Legislative Research Library, Minnesota Historical Society Library, and other repositories of government materials. Electronic copies are available from 1994 to the present for the House and from 1995 to the present for the Senate.

**House Journal:** <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/cc/journals/journal.htm>

The most recent House Journal is listed on the main page of the *Journal of the House* website. The website provides a search tool that allows the user to search the Journals of a specific year or all the online Journals (1994 to the present) by keywords. Using the advanced search tool provides methods for including or removing search terms.

**Senate Journal:** <http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/journals/>

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<sup>12</sup> Minnesota Office of the Revisor of Statutes. *Minnesota Administrative Rules*.

<https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/rules/?view=info>

The most recent Senate legislative session is accessed from the main journal page on the Senate website. The user can choose to view the entire legislative session or the daily journals for the current legislative session. Selecting a date in the legislative session displays the recordings for that day. Journals are available online from 1995 to the present. A keyword search is not available from the Senate Journal homepage.

### **Bills or Bill Files Location:<sup>13</sup>**

#### **House Files:**

- Prior to 1986; contact the Minnesota Historical Society Library for paper records
- 1957 – 2006; on microfilm at the Legislative Reference Library
- 1995 – Present; content on the Minnesota State Legislative website. Current session bills are also available from the Office of the Chief Clerk.  
[https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/revisor/pages/search\\_status/status\\_search.php?body=House](https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/revisor/pages/search_status/status_search.php?body=House)

#### **Senate Files:**

- Prior to 1957; contact the Minnesota Historical Society Library for paper records
- 1957 – 2006; on microfilm at the Legislative Reference Library and the Minnesota Historical Society Library
- 1995 - Present; content on the Minnesota State Legislative website. Current session bills are also available from the Secretary of the Senate.  
[https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/revisor/pages/search\\_status/status\\_search.php?body=Senate](https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/revisor/pages/search_status/status_search.php?body=Senate)

#### **Companion Bills:**

A bill that is introduced in the House has a companion bill that goes through the Senate. This companion bill is similar or identical to the bill introduced in the

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<sup>13</sup> Minnesota State Legislature. Legislative History Information. <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/leghist/trinven.asp>  
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House. Before a bill can be passed to the governor, both the original and companion bill must be exact copies of each other. Companion bills are introduced into the House if the original legislation started in the Senate.

Charts displaying companion bills can be found in the index of the House and Senate Journals. Charts of more recent bills can be found online as shown below.

- House introduced legislation and Senate companion bills for 2009-2010 are listed here: <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/bills/companions.asp>
- Senate introduced legislation and House companion bills from 2001 to the present are listed here:  
<http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/departments/secretary/sendesk/index/companions/index.php#header>

### **Hot Lists:**

Hot Lists serve as an unofficial listing of more popular bills for the current session and are created by both the House and Senate. The House's Hot List for the current session can be found at:

[http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/bills/hotlist.asp?ls\\_year=86&session\\_number=0](http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/bills/hotlist.asp?ls_year=86&session_number=0)

The current Hot List for the Senate can be found at:

[http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/departments/secretary/info/publications/popular\\_bills.pdf](http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/departments/secretary/info/publications/popular_bills.pdf).

### **Committee Books/Minutes Location:<sup>14</sup>**

#### **House**

- 1883 - 1918 (Judiciary Committee only) Minnesota Historical Society Library
- 1919 - 1998 Minnesota Historical Society Library
- 1999 - 2008 Legislative Reference Library
- 2007 – 2008 Online at  
<http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/comm/committeeminutesls85.asp>
- 2009 – 2010 Online at <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/comm/commemlist.asp>

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<sup>14</sup> Minnesota State Legislature. Legislative History Information. <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/leghist/trinven.asp>  
Minnesota Historical Society / State Archives  
Minnesota Legislative History Information



## Senate

- 1883 - 1910 (Judiciary Committee only) Minnesota Historical Society Library
- 1911 - 1998 Minnesota Historical Society Library
- 1999 - 2008 Legislative Reference Library
- 2007 - 2008 Online at  
[http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/committees/committee\\_list.php?ls=85#header](http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/committees/committee_list.php?ls=85#header)  
Not all committees post minutes online.
- 2009 - 2010 Online at  
[http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/committees/committee\\_list.php?ls=86#header](http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/committees/committee_list.php?ls=86#header)  
Not all committees post minutes online.

## Committee Files Location:

The packets created by committees may or may not be saved as there are no legislative rules governing the handling of such materials. If saved, records of this nature may be at the Minnesota Historical Society or the Legislative Research Library, filed under individual committee names.

## Legislative Tapes (Audio and Video Recordings) Location:

Legislative tapes from 1991 to the present can be found at the Minnesota Historical Society Library, Legislative Reference Library or online.

- 1991-1998 are at the Minnesota Historical Society.
- 1999-2004 are located in the Legislative Reference Library.
- 2004 to the present are online with select coverage.

**House:** <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/audio/default.asp>

The House has complete coverage of audio and video streaming from 2004 to the present and select coverage from 1998-2003 available online.

**Senate:** <http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/media/index.php?ls>

The Senate has complete coverage of audio and video streaming from 2005 to the present and select coverage from 2001-2004 available online.

## Accessing Records Online

After you know what type of information you can find in each resource and you know where to look for the records, how do you find information within them? How do you search the different types of records online? This section will provide some answers as well as offer some helpful hints when using the available online search tools.

**Minnesota Statutes:** <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/statutes/>

The Minnesota Statutes are organized online by general topics which are categorized into chapters. A topic may be covered by one chapter or a range of chapters. To find statutes when looking at the main statutes page (<https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/statutes/>) click on the chapter or range of chapters that cover the topic of interest. This either pulls up titles of individual chapters or sections of the individual chapter selected. If titles of individual chapters are retrieved, clicking on the chapter of interest reveals the individual chapter sections. Once a particular section is retrieved, the history of the statute is listed (and linked) at the bottom of the page, allowing easy access to previous versions of the law. There are also links to the Minnesota Session Laws that helped create the Statute.

Statutes can also be searched by keyword (<https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/search/?search=stat>) or using an index of topics in alphabetical order. Clicking on a letter retrieves a list of topics, choosing a topic retrieves a list of subtopics. (<https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/statutes/?view=index>).

For more information, the Minnesota Office of the Revisor of Statutes has a detailed page defining the Statutes, describing the organization of the Statutes, and providing more background information. (<https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/statutes/?view=info>)

**Minnesota Session Laws/Laws of Minnesota:** <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/laws/>

Online, the Session Laws are organized by legislative session and year. Selecting a year returns a list of the legislative sessions held within that time period, including both the regular and special sessions. Choosing a session retrieves a list of chapters. Each chapter

is an enrolled bill passed during that legislative session. The chapters are ordered by the date of the legislature's last vote before being presented to the governor.<sup>15</sup> Selecting a chapter pulls up an individual law that shows additions, deletions and other modifications to previous legislation or a newly created law. The effective date is shown at the bottom as well as the date and time it was signed by the governor.

Session Laws can also be searched by keyword or phrase at:

<https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/search/?search=stat>. Or by using a subject index at:  
<https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/laws/?view=index&year=2008&type=0>.

More information on Laws can be found at:

<https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/laws/?view=info>

## **Minnesota Rules:**

“Rules are usually grouped under the agency that administers them. Some agencies are assigned one chapter in Minnesota Rules; others have many chapters. The chapters appear in alphabetical order by agency or department name. You can also find a Rule by looking at the numerical arrangement of chapters. Within each chapter the Rules are arranged in a decimal numbering system. In a part number, the four digits to the left of the decimal point match the chapter number [of the Rules]. The four digits to the right of the decimal point assign a unique number to each Rule in the chapter. No part number is smaller than .0001 or larger than .9999. You can get a specific Rule if you know the part number assigned to it.”<sup>16</sup>

Locating Rules by Name: <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/rules/>

The agencies are listed in alphabetical order (ignoring words such as ‘board’ or ‘department’) with a link to corresponding chapter number/s. Clicking on the range of chapter numbers for a particular agency pulls up a list of individual chapters each covering a different topic for the agency. Selecting a chapter displays a list of ‘parts’ or sections of the chapter, each with their own heading. Each part of the chapter is an individual rule and clicking on a part pulls up the Rule and its statutory authority, history, and date posted. Clicking on the links under statutory authority pulls up the associated statute.

Locating Rules by Chapter Number: <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/rules/?view=list>

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<sup>15</sup> [http://www.mnhs.org/preserve/records/elegislature/docs\\_pdfs/Eleg\\_FinalReport\\_MN.pdf](http://www.mnhs.org/preserve/records/elegislature/docs_pdfs/Eleg_FinalReport_MN.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Minnesota Office of the Revisor of Statutes. Minnesota Administrative Rules.

<https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/rules/?view=info>

Chapter numbers are listed on the left in numerical order followed by the corresponding title and then agency. Both the chapter and agency are hyperlinked. Clicking on the agency will bring you to a list as described above. Clicking on an individual chapter brings you to the display listing the parts of the chapter as explained above. Each part of the chapter is an individual rule and clicking on a part pulls up the Rule and its statutory authority, history, and date posted. Clicking on the links under statutory authority pulls up the associated statute.

## **Journals:**

**House and Senate:** <http://search.state.mn.us/leg/journals/>

The Minnesota State Legislature website allows users to perform a keyword search or advanced search of both the House and Senate Journals individually.

**House:** <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/cco/journals/journal.htm>

The House Journals from 1994 to the present are available on the Minnesota House of Representatives website. The Journals of the current session list each day individually and offer viewing in HTML or PDF. Previous sessions are listed by year. Clicking on a session year brings up a list of individual session days with links to the Journal in HTML or PDF. A link at the top of the page brings you to the general search page for both House and Senate Journals as discussed above. Another link allows you to go to a specific page in the selected journal if the page number is known.

**Senate:** <http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/journals/index.php>

The Senate Journals from 1996 to the present are available on the Minnesota Senate website. Sessions are listed by year and divided in a manner that allows you to view the Journals of an entire biennium, a specific session within the biennium, or even an individual day within a session. Selecting a specific or the complete Journal listing brings you to the same type of menu, a list of links to each legislative day during the selected session. Selecting a day within the list pulls up the daily Journal for that day. All files are in PDF format. The main page that lists available Journals also allows the user to find a specific page in the current biennium. The link to the general search page of both House and Senate Journals as listed in the description for House Journals is not found on the Senate web page.

**Bills or Bill Files:** <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/trackbil.asp>

For general information on how to find a bill, follow current legislation, or determine the status of a bill, utilize the resources and review the information found on the Minnesota State Legislature website as listed above. This resource provides links to bill status, daily business, weekly schedules, journals, bill summaries, and resolutions of both the House and Senate.

**House Files:**

[https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/revisor/pages/search\\_status/status\\_search.php?body=House](https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/revisor/pages/search_status/status_search.php?body=House)

To find a bill introduced by the House (or Senate), use the search tool above. Bills can be located by searching by bill number, keyword, bill authors, specific topic, committee, actions taken, or statute citations. This tool only searches one legislative session at a time which is selected by the user at the top of the screen. The 79-86<sup>th</sup> legislative sessions (1995/1996-2009/2010) are available for searching. Once a search is performed, a results screen is displayed including a summary of results at the top of the page. A table includes information on the ‘Status’, ‘Bill Text’, ‘Summary’, ‘Long Description’, ‘Chief Author’, and ‘Short Description’. Each field can be clicked on with the exception of ‘Author’ and ‘Short Description’. Under ‘Status’ the bill’s number is listed, clicking on a bill number brings you to the status and actions taken on the bill. Bill text and supplemental information can also be found on this page. Returning to the search results, the link under ‘Bill Text’ pulls up the bill text and any engrossments. The ‘Summary’ retrieves a summary of the bill text (currently not working) and the ‘Long Description’ retrieves a long description of the bill if one was written.

**Senate Files:**

[https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/revisor/pages/search\\_status/status\\_search.php?body=Senate](https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/revisor/pages/search_status/status_search.php?body=Senate)

See instructions under House Files above.

**Committee Books/Minutes:**

**House Committee Meeting Minutes:**

2009-2010: <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/comm/commemlist.asp>

2007-2008: <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/comm/committeeminutesls85.asp>

2005-2006: <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/comm/committeeminutesls84.asp>

The link for the current legislative session retrieves a page listing the standing committees, the committee chair, and contact information. Links to meeting minutes will be posted on this page as they become available. The links to the previous legislative sessions (2005/2006 and 2007/2008) pull up pages that list the standing committees of the House without information about the committee chair or members. Clicking on a committee pulls up a listing of meeting minutes listed in reverse chronological order by meeting number and calendar date. Selecting an individual meeting displaying the meeting minutes for that day.

Podcasts are also available for download of House Committee meetings at <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/rss/committees.asp>.

### **Senate Committee Meeting Minutes:**

2009-2010:

[http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/committees/committee\\_list.php?ls=86#header](http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/committees/committee_list.php?ls=86#header)

2007-2008:

[http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/committees/committee\\_list.php?ls=85#header](http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/committees/committee_list.php?ls=85#header)

The links above both retrieve the same information for their respective legislative session. The committees are listed in alphabetical order and include information on and/or links to the committee chair, contact information, members, staff, updates, upcoming meetings, schedules, jurisdiction, audio and video, select committee amendments, legislation, and related issues. Clicking on the committee name pulls up a page on the individual committee that provides details on the committee. Meeting minutes, if available, are located here. Not all committees in the Senate post their minutes. Links to specific legislation the committee is working on are also displayed. In addition, audio and video files of the committee meetings/hearings are linked from this page under 'Audio and Video'.

**Committee Files:** not available online

## Legislative Tapes (Audio and Video Recordings):

**House:** <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/audio/default.asp>

The audio and video archive page for the House provides access to all available audio and video broadcasts from the House since 1998. Audio and video of available House floor sessions, committee meetings, press conferences, information videos, session issues, special events and seminars can be found on this page. Select coverage begins in 1998, with full coverage beginning in 2004. A link to current and live video broadcasting is also found on this page. A quick search of the current legislative session can be performed by keyword or bill number.<sup>17</sup> Podcasts are also available for download of House Committee meetings.

Each record type, whether it is the Floor Sessions, House Committee recordings, Press Conferences, or Special Events, has slight differences in how to access the material but all involve selecting the legislative session of interest, choosing topic or committee or day, choosing audio or video and listening/watching the result. Generally, information on the topics is provided before clicking on the audio or video; with a title or summary statement. Windows Media Player is required to view the video files.

**Senate:** <http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/media/>

The audio and video archive page for the Senate provides access to all available audio and video broadcasts from the House since 2001 and includes links to floor sessions, committee hearings, press conferences, special events, capitol reports, and a few other recorded items.

Audio and video files are listed separately by year under each record type. After selecting an audio or video file for a particular year, a page is displayed that shows your selection, and also provides access to audio and video files for the year for all record types, not just the one selected. The topic, or record type, of choice is highlighted white and file choices are listed below. The audio or video can then be selected from the list and played. The Senate web page uses both the Real Media and Windows Media formats for video. To do more research with the audio and video files for the same year, select a new topic from the chart, the

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<sup>17</sup> As of January 14, 2009 the 2007-2008 session was still posted.

square it is in will change from blue to white and the list of options below will reflect the changes. If you would like to research a different year you will have to go back to the main media page listed above.

### **Additional Digital Files:**

**Session Weekly:** <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/sessionweekly/>

“*Session Weekly* is a nonpartisan publication of Minnesota House of Representatives Public Information Services. During the 2007-2008 legislative session, each issue reports daily House action between Thursdays of each week.”<sup>18</sup> Issues from the current legislative session and last legislative session can be accessed from the link above. Links to stories in the most recent HTML issues are at the top of the page. Links to the full publication for the current week and older are found below and can be viewed in PDF or HTML. Issues from 2007 and older are available in PDF only and are linked from this page as well.

**Senate Briefly:** <http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/briefly/>

“Senate Briefly is a summary of Senate committee and floor actions taken throughout the week. The publication provides nonpartisan coverage of bills, committee debate and floor debate. Senate Briefly provides information about legislative activities to Minnesota citizens and is an excellent, informative tool for people interested in following the legislative process.”<sup>19</sup> Links to weeks of the current legislative session are found directly on the page above. To access previous years, select the year of interest from a drop-down menu on this page. The weekly issues will then be displayed and available in PDF and HTML.

### **Accessing Paper Records**

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<sup>18</sup> Minnesota House of Representatives. Session Weekly. <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/sessionweekly/>

<sup>19</sup> Minnesota Senate. Senate Briefly. <http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/briefly/>



When creating a legislative history, not all research can be done online. Paper files, generally older records, may need to be accessed. The location and existence of these files depends on the retention schedule and long-term use value of the records themselves.

### **Minnesota Statutes:**

Printed and bound copies of the Minnesota Statutes can be found at the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library, Minnesota Historical Society Library, Minnesota State Law Library, and in many other repositories. They are considered the official version of the Statutes. “Minnesota Statutes is published every two years, in the even-numbered year. A print supplement is issued in odd-numbered years to show changes made during that legislative session.”<sup>20</sup>

Each bound book of the Minnesota Statutes includes a Table of Contents that shows the layout for the year. A Table of Chapters is also listed along with a listing of the general topics of each chapter. Volume 1 generally includes background information and historical documents as well as individual statutes.

When looking for a particular statute, one must know the year, chapter, and section number. “Minnesota Statutes are divided into chapters, but a reference to Minnesota Statutes will usually be to a section number. For example, chapter 335 of the statutes will be divided into sections, perhaps beginning with 335.01. The proper citation for this would be "Minnesota Statutes, section 335.01" or "Minnesota Statutes 1990, section 335.01.” The numbers at the end of a section represent the history of that particular section. For example, [1959 c 67 s 3; 1963 c 861 s 10; 1974 c 370 s20] means that the section was new in 1959 and was contained in the Laws of Minnesota 1959, chapter 67, section 3. It was amended in Laws 1963, chapter 861, section 10, and amended again in Laws 1974, chapter 370, section 20. If you look up those chapters of those particular Session Laws, you will find what changes were made.”<sup>21</sup>

### **Session Laws/Laws of Minnesota:**

Printed every year, these books are the official version of the Laws of Minnesota. The volumes are organized by chapters. Each chapter represents an individual law. The laws are assigned a chapter number based on the order in which they were last reviewed before sending them to the governor for approval. The original House or Senate file number follows the Chapter number. Various tables offer information about amended or repealed

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/statutes/?view=info>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/statutes/?view=info>

laws, enacted or vetoed files, and special laws. An index provides a topical reference to laws enacted in that legislative session. Major topics have smaller subdivisions that reference the chapter, article, and section of the laws. To find a law, it is helpful to know the chapter, article and session number as one can turn to the appropriate chapter, then article and then section. If the chapter, article, and section are unknown, use the index to determine what laws apply to a particular topic of interest.

## **Rules:**

The printed copy of Minnesota Rules is the government's official record of Rule information. Each book or volume in the series includes a Table of Contents, Numeric Table of Chapter Titles, and an Alphabetic Table of Chapter Titles. These listings serve as guides when looking for Rules on a particular topic. In addition, Volume 1 includes a User's Guide, and the last volume in the series includes a Table of Amendments, a Statutory Authority Table, and an Index.

The 'User's Guide' in Volume 1 provides background information on the Rules of Minnesota, helpful hints on how to find a rule within the book, and an explanation on how the rules are organized. The 'Index' in the last volume includes another 'User Guide' that explains how to use the Index itself. Topical subject headings are used in the Index to assist the user in finding information about a particular topic. In the Index, the chapter and section numbers are provided for each topic as a reference to where to look for more information. Listed at the top of each page in the Rule books you will find the page number and chapter title, chapter number, and chapter section for the chapter being discussed on the page.

## **Journals:**

"The daily journals, compiled by the Chief Clerk of the House and the Secretary of the Senate for their respective bodies, are the official records of legislative proceedings. The state constitution requires that the journal contain a record of all roll call votes. The journals record attendance, bill introductions, committee reports, amendments to bills, and reports of conference committees. In addition, it is the record of official communications between the two bodies, messages from the governor and protests filed by members."<sup>22</sup>

### **House Journals:**

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<sup>22</sup> Minnesota State Legislature. Frequently Asked Questions About the Minnesota Legislature: Journals.

<http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/leg/faqtoc.asp?subject=6>

The Journals include an entry for each day in the legislative session. Each entry in the House Journal includes, but is not limited to, the Calendar Date, Legislative Session Day, Introductions and Roll Call, Petitions and Communications, Introduction and First Reading of House Bills, Committee Reports, Messages from the Senate, First Reading of Senate Bills, Motions and Resolutions, and Announcements.

To help navigate and find information contained within the Journals, indexes are printed at the end of the legislative session to assist users with finding bills of interest. The Index for the House Journals includes a ‘Topical Index of House and Senate Bills’, ‘Numerical Index of House Bills’, ‘Numerical Index of Senate Bills Transmitted to the House’, ‘Chapters and Bill Form Resolutions’ index, ‘Authors’ Index of House Bills’, ‘Motions, Resolutions, Reports, Parliamentary Actions and Miscellaneous Actions’ index, and ‘Companion Numbers as recorded by the House’ index.

The Numerical Index of House Bills includes information on the author and title of the bill, and references the page numbers to find when a bill had its First Reading and Reference, Second Reading, Third Reading – Passage/Re-passage, Returned from Senate, Other Proceedings, and was Approved by Governor. This particular Index will prove most useful in finding the original bills, however because they are in numerical order a particular bill might not be easy to find. By using the other indexes, such as the Author Index or Topical Index, will allow the user to find the numbers of specific bills of interest. One can then look up these bill numbers in the Numerical Index of House Bills to find additional information and page numbers for the specific bill they are looking for. To assist in navigation within the Journal itself, page numbers, legislative session day, and calendar date are listed on the top of each page. The Bills of the House Index also informs the reader of substitutions, amendments, and committee reports related to each bill as appropriate.

### **Senate Journals:**

The Journals include an entry for each day in the legislative session. Each entry in the Senate Journal includes, but is not limited to, the Calendar Date, Legislative Session Day, Call of the Senate, Official Communications, Messages from the House, Concurrence and Re-passage, First Reading of House Bills, Introduction and First Reading of Senate Bills, Motions and Resolutions, and Special Orders. Bill text and amendments are included in the Journal.

To help navigate and find information contained within the Journals, indexes are printed at the end of the legislative session to assist users with finding bills of interest. The indexes for the Senate Journals include ‘Bills of the Senate’ index, ‘Senate Record of House Bills’ index, ‘Senate Record of Companion Bills’ index, ‘Senate Record of Chapter Number’ index, ‘Senate Bills by Author’ index, and a ‘Topical Index of Senate and House Bills’.

The Bills of the Senate Index includes information on the bill title and author and references the page numbers to find when a bill has its First Reading and Reference, Second Reading, Other Proceedings, Third Reading, Subsequent Proceedings, Returned from House, was Approved. This particular Index will prove most useful in finding bills as discussed in the Senate, however, because they are in numerical order, a particular bill might not be easy to find. Using the other indexes, such as the Senate Bill by Author Index or Topical Index of Senate and House Bills will allow the user to find the bill numbers of specific bills of interest. One can look up these bill numbers in the Bills of the Senate Index to find additional information and page numbers for the specific bill they are looking for. To assist in navigation within the Journal itself, page numbers, legislative session day, and calendar date are listed on the top of each page. The Bills of the Senate Index also informs the reader of substitutions, amendments, and committee reports related to each bill as appropriate.

### **Bill Files:**

The Minnesota Historical Society Library has an inventory of items collected by the Minnesota State Archives. Bill Files, Committee Books/Minutes, and Committee Files are included in these records. Items are organized by the creating organization, whether that is the House of Representatives, the Senate, a committee, or an individual person. There are two ways to determine what records the Library has. The first is to research the collections online, the second to visit the Library.

To search for available files online use the Library catalog at:

[http://mnhs.mnpals.net/F?RN=385555034&func=file&file\\_name=basic](http://mnhs.mnpals.net/F?RN=385555034&func=file&file_name=basic)

The basic search function allows users to search by author, subject, or call number as well as by keyword in each of those fields or throughout the record. A search can be narrowed down to a particular set of records by selecting a record group under MHS Catalog Options. When conducting a legislative history, selecting “State Government Records” from this drop-

down will narrow the search results to only applicable state government records. After entering a search term, the results page is displayed and includes the Author (creator), Title, Year, and Location of the files. Clicking on an individual title returns a description of the records found in the particular collection. Information listed under “Finding Aids” will tell you where to find more information about the record group. Select records in the Library catalog have links to folder lists that provide more specific information about the record group. If an online version of the folder list is not available, one would need to call or visit the Library for this information.<sup>23</sup>

To search for available files at the Library:

Use the State Archives Inventory Notebooks (or Finding Aids) housed in three-ring binders at the Minnesota Historical Society Library to find records of interest. The finding aids are alphabetical by record creator and provide detailed information on the types of files available for each creator. Records, such as bill files, committee books, committee files, and journals, from both the House and Senate are located in these finding aids. Review the finding aids to determine what records are of interest and request to view the materials at the Library. The wait time for items depends on how busy the Library is, but is generally takes less than a half an hour.

**Committee Books/Minutes:** see Bill Files above

**Committee Files:** see Bill Files above

**Legislative Tapes:**

The legislative tapes, including recordings for floor sessions and committee hearings of both the House and Senate from 1991-1998, are located at the Minnesota Historical Society Library. Tapes from 1999-2004 are located at the Legislative Reference Library and recordings from 2005 to the present are

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<sup>23</sup> If you click on the information after “Location/Available” you are presented with a screen that makes it look like you can place the items on hold. Currently the only way to place items on hold at the Minnesota Historical Society Library is to email or call the Library. Items are held for seven days.

available online. To find tapes located at the Minnesota Historical Society Library, you will need to use the inventory that lists the names of the committees and the date of recording. The tapes are organized by legislative year, then alphabetically by committee and sub-committee, and then by date. The easiest way to determine which tape you are looking for is to first use the committee meeting minutes to find the date of the committee meeting that covered the topic of interest then go back and find the correct date on the inventory of the legislative tapes. This will narrow down the number of tapes you will need to request and listen to. A request for the tapes can be made at the Minnesota Historical Society Library and retrieval generally takes less than a half an hour.

To access the tapes that are located at the Legislative Reference Library it is useful to know the bill numbers and the names of the committees that discussed the bills of interest. If this information is provided, Legislative Reference Library staff can determine the hearing dates and pull the appropriate tapes. If this information is not known, library staff assists patrons with how to find the information and then they are able to pull the tapes of interest for the patrons.

### **Additional Paper Resources**

Depending on the subject of your research, other paper resources may be of interest. For example, if the topic has grabbed the attention of the general public, newspaper articles may have been written about the topic and might be useful to search for additional information. The Minnesota Historical Society Library has thousands of newspapers from around the state on microfilm. It may be helpful to look at newspapers published around the time the bills were introduced or discussed heavily in public.

In addition to the records of the House and Senate, the State Archives and the Minnesota Historical Society Library has records of all the governors and other selected state political leaders. While looking at committee files you may notice names that reoccur. Looking at the official and personal papers of these individuals may give you insight into your research topic. Library staff can assist you in finding these records or you can search the Minnesota Historical Society's online catalog before visiting the library. See the instructions under Bill Files for more information.

### **General Search Tools/Methods on the Office of the Revisor of Statutes Web Page**

**Keyword Search:** You can also search Minnesota Statutes, Minnesota Laws, and Minnesota Rules collectively or individually by keyword at:

<https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/search/?search=all&stat=1&laws=1&rule=1>. Further instructions and explanations can be found at: <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/help/statexpl.asp>.

**Retrieve by Number:** If you know the chapter or session number of a statute, law or rule you can enter it in the “Retrieve by Number” section on the Office of Revisor of Statutes web page.

Instructions and the search tool can be found at <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/instructions.php>.

**Bill Search and Status:** Search for House of Representative or Senate Bills by bill number, keyword, author, topic, committee, action, or statute citation. Side by side comparisons are also available for conference committee bills. <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/legis.asp>

**Statutes Index:** Organization of current Statutes by topic in alphabetical order. Clicking on a letter retrieves a list of topics, choosing a topic retrieves a list of subtopics, which will lead to an individual Statute. This method assists in searching as the user does not need to develop keywords for themselves. <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/statutes/?view=index>

**Session Law Index:** Organization of current Session Laws by topic in alphabetical order. Clicking on a letter retrieves a list of topics, choosing a topic retrieves a list of subtopics, which will lead to an individual Session Law. This method assists in searching as the user does not need to develop keywords for themselves.

<https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/laws/?view=index&year=2008&type=0>

**MyBill:** To keep up to date on current happenings sign up for MyBill, a RSS feed that provides personalized bill tracking of current legislation. Track by bill number, subject, or author.

<http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/leg/billslogin.asp>

## **Additional Resources**

### **Legislative History:**

Minnesota Legislative History Step by Step for records at the Legislative Research Library: <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/leghist/histstep.asp>

Legislative History Guide for Records at the Minnesota Historical Society:  
<http://www.mnhs.org/library/tips/legislative/index.htm>

Each of the following also has links to resources used in creating legislative histories:

Minnesota House of Representatives: <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/>

Minnesota Senate: <http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/>

Joint Departments and Commissions:  
<http://www.commissions.leg.state.mn.us/depts.htm>

### **Keep Up to Date on Legislative Sessions:**

- Meeting Schedules, Television and Webcast Schedules, and House and Senate Order of Business (agendas). <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/sched.asp>
- Mailing Lists for House or Senate activities and committee activities or the Minnesota Legislative website news list. <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/publicat.asp>

**Topics of Interest of Minnesotans:** <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/issues/issues.asp>

Compiled by the staff at the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library, these topics are of interest in Minnesota for the legislators and general public. Legislators may find useful information here from which to introduce a new bill. If the topic has already been covered in the legislature, a Legislative History of the topic is included.

### **Additional Publications of the Minnesota Legislature:**

<http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/publicat.asp>

A link to legislative publications about individual sessions, bill summaries, act summaries, and journals created by both the House and Senate. This also includes



reports by the House Research Department, Legislative Auditor, Legislative Reference Library, Senate Counsel and Research Report, and Senate Counsel Treatises.

**Minnesota State Documents:** <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/mndocs/mndocs.asp>

This resource provides a description of what state documents consists of, where to find them, helpful hints and future plans.

**Governor's Log:** <http://www.governor.state.mn.us/priorities/legislation/2008/index.htm>

A link to legislation from 2003-2008 as introduced to the governor. A description of the bill, House and Senate File numbers, and action by the governor are displayed in (generally) reverse chronological order in chart form. PDF files of veto messages are below the chart.

**Conference Committee Reports and Unofficial Engrossments of the Minnesota Legislature:**  
<https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/revisor/pages/forms/getccrue.php>

A search tool that allows the user to search for conference committee reports and unofficial engrossments by session year, session number and file number. A file number of the House or Senate must be known.

**Revenue Analysis of House and Senate Bills:**  
[http://www.taxes.state.mn.us/legal\\_policy/revenue\\_analysis/revenue\\_analyses.shtml](http://www.taxes.state.mn.us/legal_policy/revenue_analysis/revenue_analyses.shtml)

Cost analysis and estimates for House and Senate bills that relate to taxes from the Minnesota Department of Revenue. These “estimate the effect of the proposals on state revenue and spending.”<sup>24</sup>

### **Chapters and Resolutions, a list:**

[http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/bills/chapters.asp?ls\\_year=85&session\\_number=0](http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/bills/chapters.asp?ls_year=85&session_number=0)

[http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/bills/chapters.asp?ls\\_year=85&session\\_number=1](http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/bills/chapters.asp?ls_year=85&session_number=1)

These links retrieve a list of all bills passed and sent to the Governor, including dates when they are signed or vetoed during the 2007-2008 regular and special sessions.

**General Information on Legislative Session:** <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/0708sess.asp>

This web address is for the 2007-2008 session and links to House and Senate Bills, House and Senate Journals, Unofficial Engrossments, Video recordings, Session Laws, Bill Summaries, Act Summaries, Revenue Analysis, Session Weekly (a House publication), Briefly (a Senate publication), New Laws (prepared by House Public Information Services) and Vetoes.

### **Outside Resources**

- Link to other states’ legislation: <http://www.ncsl.org/public/leglinks.cfm>
- Minnesota Legislative Manual: (Blue Book):  
<http://www.sos.state.mn.us/home/index.asp?page=639>

“The blue book or *Minnesota Legislative Manual* is published by the Secretary of State's Office. It includes detailed information about the three branches of government, constitutional officers, and election statistics for certain offices over the state's history, as well as detailed information from the most recent election. The book also contains the state constitution and a history of proposed constitutional amendments.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Minnesota Revenue. Revenue Analysis for 2009-2010 Legislative Session for House Files.

[http://www.taxes.state.mn.us/legal\\_policy/revenue\\_analysis/2009\\_2010/house\\_files/0910\\_house\\_files.shtml](http://www.taxes.state.mn.us/legal_policy/revenue_analysis/2009_2010/house_files/0910_house_files.shtml)

<sup>25</sup> Minnesota State Legislature. Frequently Asked Questions about the Minnesota Legislature: Citizen Participation.

<http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/leg/faqtoc.asp?subject=20>

- The University of Minnesota Law School: <http://local.law.umn.edu/library/pathfinders-directory.html>. List of research guides for finding legal information on various topics.

- Georgetown Law Library: <http://www.ll.georgetown.edu/states/minnesota.cfm>

Links to research guides, statutes and legislation, regulations and agencies, cases and courts, local government, state bar journal, general information about the state of Minnesota. Updated 9/2008. Links verified 6/2008.