ALASKA STATE COURT LAW LIBRARY

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ALASKA LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

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

BASIS http://www.akleg.gov/basis/Home/BillsandLaws
Bills, session laws, House and Senate journals, committee minutes: 1993 – current

Infobases http://www.akleg.gov/basis/folio.asp

Bills	1983 – previous session
Session Laws	1981 – previous session
House and Senate Journals	1987 – previous session
Committee Minutes	1982 – previous session
Superseded *Alaska Statutes*	1993 – previous session

BASIS is the superior database, so for legislative history from 1993 to present, use BASIS. Use Infobases for legislative history from 1982 to 1992 and for prior versions of the *Alaska Statutes* back to 1993.

For legislative history from 1959 to 1982, skip to the section on **Legislative History in Print** on page 4.

For legislative history before 1959, contact law library staff.

SEARCHING ON BASIS

http://www.akleg.gov/basis/Home/BillsandLaws

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, scroll down the list of links to Past Legislatures (Archives) and choose the link to the desired legislature.

a. 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, and click "search" to view the bill history.

b. If you know the session law but don't know the bill number, choose the appropriate Session Laws link, listed under Laws.

Each legislative session spans two calendar years. To access session laws for your selected legislative session, follow the "Session Laws and Resolves" link for the desired year. You will then see the full

list of session laws and resolves from that year. You can access the PDF of the session law, when available, or click directly on the link to view the bill history page.

2. **From the bill history page, 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 to the row of tabs. The first tab, labeled "Actions," should be open. The information listed 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 each day.

   Click the "Display Committee Actions" button to view committee hearings, minutes, and schedules. Additional committee materials are available in the "Minutes and Audio" and "Documents" tabs.

3. **Choose other tabs for more options.**

   The "Full Text" tab, available starting in 1993, 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 in first appeared in a certain committee's substitute, for example, you can focus on the minutes from that committee.

   The "Fiscal Notes" tab, available starting in 1999, contains the estimated costs to state agencies if a proposed bill were to become law.

   The "Amendments" tab, available starting in 2003, contains links to amendments that were proposed or adopted into the next version of the bill. PDF versions of the amendment may have slight variations from the Journal entry. The Journal should be considered the authoritative version.

   The "Minutes and Audio" tab, available starting in 1993 for minutes and 2005 for audio, provides links to all publicly available committee minutes and audio recordings.

   The "Documents" tab, available starting in 2009, provides links to documents uploaded by committee aides for hearings. Additional committee materials may be in the committee bill files, available from the Legislative Reference Library.

4. **Look for companion bills.**

   The "Similar Subject Match" and "Exact Subject Match" links at the bottom of each bill history page will show any similar or companion bills that exist.

   You can also click the subject links at the bottom of the page to view all other bills introduced under that heading during the chosen legislative session.

5. **Search *Gavel Alaska* for additional audio recordings.**
   http://akleg.gov/index.php#tab5

   Live audio of floor sessions and committee meetings is available starting in 2002. The recordings are from public television coverage of the legislature, *Gavel Alaska*, and are not official recordings. The audio may be incomplete or contain material added by the commentators. Links to *Gavel Alaska* are on the legislature's homepage, under the tab labeled "Live Now."

SEARCHING ON INFOBASES

http://www.akleg.gov/basis/folio.asp

1. Select your Infobase (e.g. 1981 – Previous Year Session Laws).

Infobases include session laws, bill text, journals, committee minutes, and prior versions of the *Alaska Statutes*. 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:

CS**HB 113**	(House Bill 113)
HCSCS**SB 290**	(Senate Bill 290)

A list of abbreviations is available at http://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/abbracro.pdf.

2. To search for a bill or document:

a. Browse materials by using the menu.

If there is a grey plus sign (+) to the left of a link, click the 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.

Use the 'Next' and 'Previous' icons on the left side of the screen to move between pages of your selected document. Use the 'Next Hit' and 'Prev. Hit' icons, also on the left side of the page, to navigate between documents.

b. 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, e.g. "HB 231" or "SB 146." You may also get results by excluding the space, so try both query options to ensure that no materials have been overlooked.

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.

Click on the Contents icon  to view the results of your search.

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

From the documents page, you can navigate between results by using the 'Next Hit' and 'Prev. Hit' buttons or clicking the Contents icon again to return to the Table of Contents.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY IN PRINT

1. **Start with an Alaska Statute. Note the section number, chapter, and date of the Alaska Session Law at the end of the text of the statute:**

   (§1 ch 78 SLA 1983) – 1983 Session Laws of Alaska, Chapter 78, Section 1

2. **Find the session law in *Session Laws of Alaska* and get the bill number.**

   The session laws from 1913 to the current session are available at the Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau Law Libraries in print and electronically. All session laws are available from HeinOnline, accessible from any court or law library computer.

   The session laws for a particular year are organized chronologically by chapter. In the example above, you'd find the 1983 volume of the *Session Laws* and turn to Chapter 78. The bill number is at the top left of the first page of the session law. 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:

CS**HB 113**	(House Bill 113)
HCSCS**SB 290**	(Senate Bill 290)

   A list of abbreviations is available online at http://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/abbracro.pdf.

3. **The law library has some previously compiled legislative histories.**

   Next, you must research the history of the bill to look for signs of legislative intent. The Anchorage Law Library has compiled legislative histories of select bills. Check with library staff for a list of compiled histories. Additional compiled histories may also be available at the Legislative Reference Library in Juneau.

4. **Look up the bill number in the House and Senate journal indexes.**

If your bill does not already have a compiled history, the next step is to trace the bill's history in the House and Senate journals. To find the right journal pages, first go to the journal indexes. These list every page of the House and Senate journals that mentions the bill.

Pre-1976 bills: Indexes are at the end of the last volume of each House or Senate journal. References are to the journal pages on which the bill is mentioned.

1976+ bills: Indexes are in separate volumes labeled *Bill History* and provide a brief bill description, dates of action, bill sponsors, committee names, and journal page number references.

Starting in 1975, the *Final Status of Bills* tells you whether there were companion bills. Look in the subject index of the *Final Status of Bills* to see whether bills covering the same or similar subjects were introduced in prior sessions. The most recent edition is shelved near the session laws.

5. Check the House and Senate journals.

The House and Senate journals provide a summary of each day's legislative activity. Check each journal entry listed in the index to see what action was taken. Make a note of each committee the bill passed through.

6. Check the committee minutes.

Committee minutes summarize committee action and range from brief outlines to near-verbatim transcriptions.

Minutes from 1965-1982 are available on microfiche at the Anchorage Law Library. Court employees can contact library staff for digitized copies of committee minutes. Other patrons should contact the Legislative Reference Library for digitized copies. Minutes from 1982 through the current session are available electronically from BASIS or Infobases.

7. Check the committee files.

The Legislative Reference Library compiles a record of material created or collected by legislative committees during deliberations. Committee files include bill drafts, correspondence, sectional analyses, research material, and testimony.

Committee files from 1965 through 2008 are available on microfiche at the Anchorage Law Library. Court employees can contact library staff for digitized copies of committee bill files. Other patrons should contact the Legislative Reference Library for digitized copies.

8. Audio and video tapes are available.

Committee tapes provide an audio record of committee meetings. Starting in 2005, digital committee recordings are available on BASIS.

House and Senate floor tapes provide an audio record of legislative floor debates and hearings.

The Anchorage Law Library maintains a small collection of committee and floor tapes. Court employees should contact library staff to check whether digitized recordings are available. Audio and video recordings are also available from the Alaska State Archives and Legislative Reference Library in Juneau.

OTHER RESOURCES

Legislative Information Office – The LIOs maintain a library of current legislative and executive branch reports, publications, and other documents of public interest, including the official printed and annotated copies of the Alaska Statutes and Administrative Code and the Session Laws. The full list of LIO locations can be found at https://akleg.gov/lios.php.

Anchorage Office: 1500 W. Benson Blvd.
Anchorage, AK 99503
(907) 269-0111

Fairbanks Office: 1292 Sadler Way, Suite 308
Fairbanks, AK 99701
(907) 452-4448

Juneau Office: State Capitol
Terry Miller Building, Suite 111
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 465-4648

Legislative Reference Library – The Reference Library contains materials related to Alaska law and legislation (including committee files, minutes, and reports).
https://akleg.gov/laa/library.php
Legislative Affairs Agency, Terry Miller Building, Suite 102
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 465-3808
legislative.library@akleg.gov

State Archives – The State Archives preserves permanently valuable government records that document Alaska's history and makes these records available to its clients in a secure, professional and responsible manner.
https://archives.alaska.gov
Andrew P. Kashevaroff Building
395 Whittier Street
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 465-2270

Alaska State Library – The State Library coordinates library services throughout the state and serves as the information resource for the state government and the Legislature.
Andrew P. Kashevaroff Building
395 Whittier Street
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 465-2920

For an additional explanation of Alaska legislative history, see the Guide to Alaska Legislative History Materials provided by the Legislative Reference Library (revised April 2013).