**Steps for Compiling a Legislative History**

**Step 1:** Determine the bill and session (or year) numbers of the legislation that enacted the statutory language.

- There are two possible routes you might take to begin your research, depending on what pieces of information you are beginning with:
  - If you know the subject of the legislation, look up the law using either the print index, the Westlaw index, or if the legislation is from 1995 on, search by subject using the Texas Legislature website: http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Search.aspx
  - If you know the citation to the Code, look at the Legislative History annotations (if in an annotated version of the Code) and the statutory history line.
  - If you know the session law number, look up the session law in the General and Special Laws of Texas for the assigned legislature and chapter number (available via HeinOnline) or use the Legislative Reference Library’s online cross-reference tables: http://www.lrl.state.tx.us/legis/billsearch/lrlhome.cfm

- Note: If a bill’s caption states that a revision, correction, or addition was “nonsubstantive,” it means that the bill was part of Texas’ statutory revision program (where they reclassify and rearrange statutes in a more logical order with no substantive changes to the statute). If this is the case, you will need to review the state’s Prior Laws and research an earlier bill to determine the legislative history.

**Step 2:** Examine the bill file.

- **Bill File:** The official collection of documents that are produced during a bill’s journey through the legislative process.
  - Texas State Archives (pre-1961): https://www.tsl.texas.gov/

**Step 3:** Find the bill history.

- Where to find bill histories:
  - Texas State Archives—print bills from 1st through 62nd (1846-1971) legislatures: https://www.tsl.texas.gov/
  - Legislative Reference Library—print bill histories from the 63rd through the 70th (1973-1987) legislatures: http://www.lrl.state.tx.us/index.cfm
  - Texas Legislature Online—Bill Lookup—71st legislature (1989) to the present: http://www.legis.state.tx.us/BillLookup/BillNumber.aspx

**Step 4:** Listen to tape recordings or view documents from committee hearings and floor debates.

- **House Floor Debates and Committee Hearings**
  - 2001-present: http://www.house.state.tx.us/video-audio/
  - 1973-2001: Audio tapes may be obtained with advanced written request from:
    - John H. Reagan Building, Rm 330
    - 105 W. 15th St.
    - Austin, Texas 78701

- **Senate Floor Debates & Committee Hearings**
  - 1999-present: http://www.senate.state.tx.us/avarchive/
  - Tapes from the last three legislative sessions available in print from: http://www.lrl.state.tx.us/legis/BillSearch/JournalsEtc.cfm?legSession=82-0&bili_TYPEDetail=HB&bili_NUMBERDetail=3252&bili_SuffixDetail=&startRow=1&IDlist=&unClicklist=&number=100

**Step 5:** Consult other relevant documents.

- Legislative history of companion bills: http://www.legis.state.tx.us/BillLookup/BillNumber.aspx
- House and Senate Journals: http://www.lrl.state.tx.us/collections/journals.cfm
- House and Senate Committee Minutes
  - 1997-present: http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/MnuCommittees.aspx
  - House 1973-1995 (Senate to be added): http://www.lrl.state.tx.us/committees/minutesSearch.cfm
- Bill Analyses: http://www.hro.house.state.tx.us/BillAnalysis.aspx
- Legislative Interim Reports: http://www.lrl.state.tx.us/committees/lrlhome.cfm
- Publications by State Agencies and Commissions: http://lrlcatalog.lrl.state.tx.us/