Introduction:

A legislative history is a compilation of the materials generated during the course of creating legislation, such as committee reports, analysis by legislative counsel, debates and histories of actions taken. Legislative history is used for discovering the legislative intent.

Each state has its own way of documenting its legislative process. In Georgia the General Assembly is responsible for passing state legislation. A regular session of the GA General Assembly begins the second Monday of January and continues for 40 days. One aspect in tracing Georgia legislative histories that can be challenging is there is no official record of floor debates, regular committee reports or hearings published. The researcher must review many different resources in order to draw conclusions regarding intent.

Overviews of the Process:

Georgia Legislation Process (New Georgia Encyclopedia)

Handbook for Georgia Legislators – Library North 2; Ref JK4371.G4


Resources:

- Acts and resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia: (1955 – Current) Law Library; Urban Life Building; KFG25: This is where the session laws of a given legislative year are collected. Cited as: Ga. L. (Georgia Laws).

See also: GALILEO’s Georgia Government Publications database for electronic access to Acts and resolutions (1774-1995)

Research hints: (1) The preamble of bills can offer clues to intent. (2) Session laws are the laws that were passed within a legislative session. Session laws include information not included in the codified law, such as special acts. See also: Official Code of Georgia Annotated
- **Atlanta Journal-Constitution**
  Today’s paper: Library North 1, Current Periodicals area shelved by title; paper copies retained until replaced by microfilm (approx. 1 month)

  Atlanta-Journal Constitution: Library North 1, Microfilm area: AN2 .G4 A7262 (2001 – within one month of current)

  Atlanta Journal: Library North 1, Microfilm area: AN2 .G4 A726 (1883-1887, 1889, 1890-1891, 1891-2001)

  Also available via: Lexis-Nexis Academic (1991-current); Proquest Newspapers (1868-1945)

  **Research hint:** Reviews and summaries of debates are sometimes covered in the Metro section of the AJC.

- **GALILEO’s [Georgia Government Documents and Publications](#):** Administrative rules; legislative documents, O.C.G.A., etc. are available.

- **Georgia State University Law Review:** The Fall issue features a legislative review known as the “Peach Sheets.” This quarterly Law Review is published by the students of Georgia State University College of Law. (1984 – current) Law Library, Urban Life Building; G352 .S797 .U589

  The Georgia State Law Review is also available via: Lexis-Nexis Academic and Hein-online

- **Journals of the House & Senate**


  *Journal of the Senate of the State of Georgia* (prior to 1965, availability sporadic): Law Library, Urban Life Building; KFG422 .A82


  **Research hints:** (1) For legislative histories, the House and Senate journals are helpful only in that they include committee actions, amendments, and sponsors. Although the text of amendments is included, the text of the bills is usually not included. (2) The information is organized chronologically by legislative day. It is indexed by subject & bill numbers (in older volumes look for code amendments in the subject index)
• **Lawmakers**: A television program produced by Georgia Public Broadcasting (GPTV). It provides nightly analysis of the day’s legislative sessions. Archived versions of the program are available (2002-present)

• **Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A)**: A compendium of the laws of Georgia, it includes the statutes, citations to the cases connected with each statute, and a history of the session laws connected with each statute.

**Research Hint**: To review how the courts interpret the statute, review the cases that are cited with each statute.

• **State Web Sites**

  **State agency websites** often include information on current legislation impacting an agency.

  **Legislative Update**: (2007 – Current) Distributed by the GA Board of Regents, it is a “Briefing for Faculty & Staff of the University System of Georgia.”

  The **Georgia Legislative Network** (GLN): The GLN has video files of Georgia House committee hearings from 2007 to present. While the General Assembly is in session, GLN offers complete coverage of the proceedings.

  **GA State & local government sites** (e.g. Governor’s office; Supreme Ct of GA)

• **Text of bills**

  **Clerk of the House**: GA (1979 – Present) Older copies of bills must be requested.

  **Georgia Legislative Documents**: One of the resources included in this GALILEO digital archive is the *Acts of the General Assembly of the state of Georgia* (1774-1995). These are the “actual text of the laws and resolutions as they were voted upon by the General Assembly.”

  **Georgia General Assembly** (1995 - Present) Select the year you are interested in and you will see links to both House and Senate legislation.

  **Secretary of the Senate**: GA (1969 – Present) Older copies of bills must be requested.

**Research hint**: Compare versions of bills: A review of the House and Senate versions of a bill can be an indicator of intent.
University Library Special Collections: “The Georgia Government Documentation Project (GGDP) documents the state's political heritage through oral history interviews and collections of associated papers. The GGDP collection includes more than 250 interviews with former governors, legislators, women in politics, African-American political activists and leaders, journalists, and numerous other public figures.”