



# Researching Legislative Intent or Legislative History

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It is extremely difficult, if not impossible to prove legislative intent in Georgia. For those interested in the legislative history of a code section, we recommend the following steps:

1. Use the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA) to determine the specific law(s) involved. At the end of a code section, there is generally a list of the law(s) by year and page number that the code section is based on.\* This list appears in the Annotated version only. The Georgia Archives, many libraries, and all Georgia courthouses have the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA) and it is available online at: <http://www.legis.state.ga.us/>
2. From the reference(s) in OCGA, check the published laws to determine the Act number and Bill number. The published (or session) laws are available at the Georgia Archives, many libraries, and most Georgia courthouses.
3. Once you have the bill number and year, you can check the Engrossed Bill (Record Group 37-1-1). This file may contain various versions and amendments, and sometimes handwritten notes. Engrossed bills are available at the Georgia Archives through 2006.
4. Once you have determined the year and Act and/or Bill number, check the House and Senate Journals for all references to the legislation. It is highly unlikely you will find legislative intent stated, but you will find the name(s) of the committee(s) to which the bill was referred; and, on rare instances, you may find a report of the committee. House and Senate Journals are available at the Georgia Archives, many libraries, and most Georgia courthouses.
5. Once you have determined the committee(s), check the committee minutes for that session of the legislature. Committee minutes generally do not contain details, such as legislative intent. Occasionally, there may be relevant information. Available at the Georgia Archives are House Standing Committee Minutes (RG 37-8-64), 1874-2006 and Senate Standing Committee Minutes (RG 37-8-63), 1888-2000.
6. Sometimes, a committee report can be located in RG 37-8-4 Reports and Investigations and RG 37-8-35 Summary Committee Reports. Special committees may have their own series in RG 37-8.

\*Many, if not most, Code sections have numerous laws cited. For this reason, you must determine the specific law(s) in which you are interested. Year and page number of the published law, or year and bill number (or Act number) is a “Must Have” in order to research its history.

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**THE GEORGIA ARCHIVES**