

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY PROJECT

H. 3807: An Act establishing expanded gaming in the commonwealth

Ch. 194 of the Acts of 2011

187th General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

The following summarizes the materials obtained as legislative history for H. 3807, An Act establishing expanded gaming in the commonwealth. This bill significantly changed Massachusetts law to permit three resort-style casinos and one slot parlor to develop across the Commonwealth. The accompanying spreadsheet details each document in chronological order.

To source this material, I turned to the office of the State Senator for whom I worked this semester (as her former committee, Economic Development and Emerging Technologies, was actively involved in the early stages and research of the bill); the Massachusetts legislature's website; State House News Service, the State Library, and Twitter. The bill underwent multiple drafts throughout the year, the most important being H. 3697, H. 3702, H. 3711, and finally H. 3807.

From the legislature's website, I sourced all of the bills initially proposed in January 2011 and their bill histories, as well as the hearing testimony on these bills on May 4, 2011. This video is available on the legislature's website but I was unable to directly download the sourced video. I indicated its location via link in my spreadsheet. I also located the text and history for all other bills throughout enactment. At each turning point in the legislative process, I downloaded the relevant House or Senate Journals. I also checked this information against Westlaw's databases.

From the State House News Service, I downloaded all press releases throughout enactment from interested groups and legislators. This led me to Rep. Sannicandro's live tweeting of the House Debates on September 14th, also included.

From Senator Spilka's office, I obtained written testimony from all interested parties from the May 4, 2011 hearing, as well as the Rule 11A document noting what aspects of the bill were conferenced. Senator Spilka's office was hesitant to release documents from its files because the legislation remains controversial, and it wanted to be careful regarding what was released into public domain. In addition, work-product protected most of its files.

I began my search for the bill's legislative package at the State Library. The State Library informed me that they would not have a legislative package from such a recent bill, but I could call the State Archives. I called a woman named Martha at the State Archives and she told me the bill was too recent for the archives to have information. She suggested that I check the Publications and Regulations Office at One Ashburton Place. There, I found two whole boxes of materials from the bill's legislative history. Most of the materials were ones that I had already located in my search, and because copying was thirty cents per page, I did not duplicate documents that I had already obtained. I took photographs of both boxes, and copied anything in the boxes that were not the type of materials I could find online. Those photographs and scans are in their own folder on this CD. I was very surprised by how much legislative work is still done by hand in Massachusetts.

This bill overall generated an enormous amount of research in the Massachusetts legislature and outside press over the course of its drafting and debate. The suggested time allotment for the Legislative History Project prevents coverage of all of these aspects. If I had more time, I would have also checked with both the House and Senate Ways and Means

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Committees, the House and Senate Rules Committees, and the offices of each of the legislators that drafted initial bills referred to the Economic Development and Emerging Technologies Committees. I also would have incorporated more State House News Service press. These smaller pieces might be useful for another clinic student to obtain during an internship at the State House.