

Legislative History Project Memo
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I began this project by speaking with the counsel to the Judiciary Committee (my supervisor, Mike Avitzur) and explaining about the project. He suggested I look into Senate Bill 2212, An Act Relative to Harassment Prevention Orders. Mike already had a lot of information on hand that might be useful for someone studying the legislative history of the bill. This information included a bill summary prepared by Senator Chandler's office (Senator Chandler had sponsored the bill), a huge informational booklet prepared by Mintz-Levin on why the bill was necessary, some other informational brochures and the bill text as enacted. He also put me in touch with the staff member who had worked on the bill in Senator Chandler's office. Originally the staff member arranged for me to meet with Senator Chandler to discuss the passage of the bill but her schedule was too full. According to my conversation with the staff member however, most of the information the Senator and I would have discussed was in the Mintz-Levin packet.

Next, I pulled all of the information I could find off of malegislature.gov in the bills and session laws sections, including the basic bill history and the text (as enacted). I traced the bill back through the different bill numbers and discovered that the bill had existed in several different versions. The idea was originally proposed in 2005 as SB1002. Then, in the next session, Senator Chandler took over the bill and it became SB 1611. SB1611 was redrafted and became SB2185, at which point the text of SB2212 was substituted for SB2185. Then, the text of HB 4443 was engrossed in SB2212, and SB2212 with the text of what had been HB4443 was enacted into law. I think this was the most challenging part of the project, tracking down what happened to the bill at each stage. InstaTrac was a very useful tool for this stage, and I used

InstaTrac after finishing up with the malegislature.gov website, at the suggestion of the State House librarian.

I also searched through State House News for House and Senate Journal references, news references, and media format references to the bill in its different forms. This part was also rather challenging as the search tools on SHNS are rather difficult and counterintuitive. From SHNS I found several news blurbs and two video clips. I was unsure how to take the video clips from the site, but I noted in the documents where there were video clips. Lastly I looked through Westlaw, though there was not a lot of information available.

As Mike knew I was working on this project, he sent me a link to a recent article on this law. The law just recently went into effect, and apparently courts have seen a flood of people trying to take advantage of the new law as a tool to get revenge on their neighbors. I have included the article in the packet.

For each source, if it was not available in PDF, I copied and pasted the entire page into a word document. I also highlighted the relevant portions and included the direct link to each page (except for things from instaTrac) in the header of the word document. For documents from InstaTrac, I noted where they came from.

This project was interesting and enjoyable. I think it really helped that my supervisor was able to point me in the direction of a bill where there was a lot of legislative history. I also thought that Mr. Donweber's presentation was particularly helpful as without his help I do not think I would have known where to start.