

Compiling the Legislative History

Bill Histories

First, I searched the bill history of House Bill 4309, which is the number the saltwater fishing license bill was finalized under, on www.mass.gov/legis. The bill history showed that both the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means had reviewed the bill, and thus would be good places to go for information. The bill showed as presented by Charles Murphy, but as he is the Chair of House Ways and Means, I could get any information from him from the committee. The history had the yeas and nays for the House, and the number to search for the vote as well. The history also showed that 4309 was a new draft for House Bill 4224, so then I searched that bill history. The history also shows that House Bill 4309 as signed into law is actually the text of Senate Bill 2200.

House Bill 4224 was presented by William M. Straus, and was a new draft of House Bill 797, thus two more places to look for information. This bill was reported from the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural resources and Agriculture, so I checked the link to the committee to find where to go and ask for testimony and other documents.

The history of House Bill 797 gave the details of when the public hearing was set for (7/9/2009 at 10 am in Hearing Room B2), thus giving me more details to use in asking the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural resources and Agriculture for the testimony. This version of the fishing bill was presented by Matthew C. Patrick, thus providing me with another possible source for information on the bill.

I then searched the history of Senate Bill 2200, and found no new details. I then ran several searches in the “Search the Bill Histories” section to ensure there were no other bills that pertained to saltwater fishing licenses that were somehow left out of the bill histories, or not precisely related but might be pertinent. I then used the website to find the locations of the committees, Representatives and Senators I was going to approach to gather information.

When there were no more bills to trace, I compiled all the histories into one complete timeline, consolidating the events under a given day, instead of listing them all out with a date next to them. I also separated the days events into House or Senate actions. I then filled in the events with information I gathered from other sources (see below).

Bill Texts

After I had the complete bill history, I searched for all of the bill texts on the Massachusetts Legislature website.

Journals

The timeline I condensed gave me good starting places to search the House and Senate Journals. I went through each day mentioned in the histories and looked through the journals for pertinent quotations, or further explanations of what transpired, and added those to the chronology. Here, I also looked up the House voting record. I also looked up the House Rules to find the rule that was suspended during House proceedings. I then checked the “Live Webcast” link to look for video. I found some footage of the formal sessions in which the fishing licenses came up, but they cannot be downloaded and are only available streaming from the Internet.

State House News

I then searched the state house news archives for any pertinent information. I found some news blurbs on the bill, as well as more information as to the House and Senate proceedings, including quotations that were not in the Journals.

Committees and Legislators

I went around to the offices of the Committees and Representatives and Senators who were sponsors or reviewed the bill. I started with the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture. I spoke with Ben Perlman, the legal counsel for the committee and Representative Straus, the Chair. He provided me with the

testimony they had on file, and sent me emails with background information. I then went to Representative Patrick's office, but his research/legislative aide was sick and had not been nor would be back for a while. The secretary offered me not other help. I then went to the House Ways and Means and Representative Murphy's office. They did not have any documents as they do not conduct hearings or examine the issue beside the funding aspect, and the same goes for the Senate Ways and Means. I then went to the library and found the copy of the bill signed by the Governor. I also went to Representative Greene's office to inquire about the amendment he attempted to attach; he could not remember at first but the secretary and he eventually realized what it was. I then compiled all the documents I had found, in both paper and digital form.