

Memorandum

To: Professor Sean Kealy

From: Caputo Chang

Date: May 15, 2012

Re: Legislative History Project

For the Legislative History Project, I organized the documents according to the process I went through in getting them (not the order of the bill's history). In this way, I thought it would clearly show the steps I took in obtaining the documents.

The law that I chose was Chapter 134 of the 2011 Session Laws, "An act increasing the membership of the Massachusetts Fire Training Council." Although it was a short, simple bill (S 1188), its history seemed long at first glance. In attempting to get the necessary documents, I simply began at the Massachusetts Legislature's website, where I found and printed out copies of the session law as it was enacted and passed, the bill as it was originally filed, and the bill's history.

Since the bill was first referred to the Senate Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security, which is chaired by Senator Timilty, I asked my supervisor Rob if I could take a look at the committee folder on the bill and make copies of the documents. The committee actually had two folders, one for S 1188 and another folder for the House counterpart, H 3169 ("An act placing on-call and volunteer firefighters on the Massachusetts Fire Training Council"). According to the history of S 1188, H 3169 accompanied it as they were essentially the same bill, just filed separately in the House and in the Senate. In the committee folder for S 1188 were the following: a letter of support from Senator Stephen Brewer (who was the sponsor), a bill summary, several letters and emails from constituents supporting the bill, and staff notes from the hearing during which this bill was considered. The committee's hearing took place on May 19, 2011 from 1-5 PM, and S 1188 was among the many bills that were heard. Rob told me to make sure to copy the inside of the folder, where the names of the people that gave oral testimonies on the bill were written. The office also had a folder on the accompanying bill H3169, which contained a bill summary, a copy of the bill text, and the name of the person that testified in support of the bill at the hearing.

My next step was to go to the House Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security, which is chaired by Representative Harold Naughton Jr. The staff was very polite and helpful, but they did not have much regarding either S 1188 or the accompanying H 3169. I did manage to get a copy of the list of all the individuals that testified at the May 19th hearing; four people gave oral testimonies on either S 1188 or H 3169. Unfortunately, the office did not have transcripts of the oral testimonies.

Next, I went to the State House Library to seek help. The librarian was very helpful and logged me onto InstaTrac, where I found more information on the bill. While both the House and Senate Committees on Public Safety and Homeland Security did not have transcripts of the oral testimonies given at the hearing, InstaTrac had transcripts of two testimonies.

According to the bill history, after the Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security reported the bill out favorably, the Senate referred it to the Senate Committee on Ethics,

and Rules. Therefore, I went to that committee's office and asked if they had any information or files on S 1188 and the staff informed me that they really did not have anything on S 1188.

I then went to the Senate Committee on Bills in the Third Reading, which is chaired by Senator Cynthia Creem, since the bill history showed that it had been ordered into third reading. When I asked if they had any folder, paperwork or information on S 1188, one of the staff members shook his head and another staff member suggested that I ask the librarians for help because "that's the kind of thing they're there for." As a result, unfortunately, I did not get any useful information from that committee. However, the Senate Journal for August 25, 2011 indicated that the Committee on Bills in the Third Reading had changed the title of the Bill to "An Act adding members of the Massachusetts Call and Volunteer Fire Fighters Association to the Massachusetts Fire Training Council."

After the bill was passed to be engrossed in the Senate and sent to the House, it was referred to the House Committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling. Therefore, I went to that committee and requested for information on the bill. The staff informed me that they do not have much information in terms of documents on the bill. They explained that their main job was to put the bill into the House schedule and the only thing they waited on before doing so was a phone call from Senator Brewer. As a result, they did not have any paperwork or files on the bill while it was briefly in the committee.

My next step was to go to the House Committee on Bills in the Third Reading. The staff did have a folder on the bill, but it only contained a copy of the bill text, the bill summary and a printout of an email from an individual supporting the bill. I asked if I could make a copy of the email, but the staff member said the office would rather not allow such copies to be made. The office did not have any information on changes to the title of the text, but the House Journal for September 29, 2011 indicated that the committee had changed the title to "Increasing the membership of the Massachusetts Fire Training Council."

After going to each committee that the bill was referred to and passed through, I checked the House and Senate Journals for each session that was listed in the bill history. The Journals essentially provide detailed summaries of what happened during the sessions. I printed out copies of each journal and highlighted the parts where S 1188 is mentioned. As stated above, some of the journals mentioned that the respective chamber's Committee on Bills in the Third Reading changed the title of the bill. The Journals also mentioned when the bill was reported out of committee, that the rules were suspended since there was no objection and was therefore read a second time and third time, and that the bill was passed to be engrossed.

Similarly, I checked the State House News Service for any news/information regarding this bill. I came across summaries of Senate and House sessions where the bill was considered, and I printed the summaries out. Furthermore, I checked the PR Archives and Daily Digest for any mention of the bill; unfortunately, I did not find anything. I also checked the Audio and Video Archives; while there were some audios of the various House and Senate sessions (but no relevant videos), there were no floor speeches or any particularly useful information on the bill that the Journals did not mention.

Lastly, I called the Governor's Office and asked them for any information they had on the bill, which the Governor signed into law. They informed me that they would check to see if there were any "guts" to the bill when it came to the Governor's office and get back to me if they had anything. I checked with the office twice to make sure they had my correct email address, but they never got back to me with an email. That concluded my legislative history project.