



# Library Briefs

June 2013

From the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library, an office of the Maine Legislature

## *This issue*

### **A Note About the Law Library and this Newsletter**

The Law and Legislative Reference Library is a nonpartisan office of the Maine State Legislature, and our principal mission is to make sure that legislators have the resources they need to make informed decisions on the issues before them. *Library Briefs*, an occasional newsletter of the Law and Legislative Reference Library, alerts you to services and resources available to legislators, legislative staff, other agencies, and the citizens of Maine. From time to time we will use this newsletter to let you know about new databases and research tools and to keep you abreast of developments in our rapidly expanding program to make Maine's laws and legislative publications more widely available through electronic access.

We have been especially busy this year, which is one reason that this issue comes to you so late in the session. Please remember, however, that we are here to serve you and your constituents through the end of the session and through the interim beyond.

## *Ask us!*

### **iResearch Services**

The Law Library has a staff of specially trained librarians with many years of experience in researching legal and legislative information. We will work with you to identify and retrieve resources appropriate for your needs. Although you may choose to have printed materials delivered to your desk, we can generally provide a faster response by email with relevant documents attached.

You may contact a reference librarian by:

- ♦ stopping by the Reference Desk,
- ♦ emailing us at [lawlib.reference@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:lawlib.reference@legislature.maine.gov), or
- ♦ phoning us at 287-1600 and asking for the Reference Desk.

## *In the stacks and online*

### **The Law Library's Collection**

Our holdings include the most current treatises as well as historical works, materials written for the legal practitioner as well as those designed for the layperson. We have legal encyclopedias and dictionaries, all 50 state codes, the Federal document depository collection, and Law Court cases and briefs. Many of our resources are more conveniently accessed electronically than in print, and the librarians can help you choose and navigate the database options on our patron computer network. Most of our materials are cataloged in the University System's URSUS catalog (<http://ursus.maine.edu>), where our holdings are marked as LEG in the Location field.

## *Histories*

### **Legislative and Statutory History**

Legislative history reveals changes through bill drafts and amendments, debate, and committee testimony indicating matters brought to the legislators' attention during consideration of the bill. Statutory history traces the changes in a particular statute over time, and the legislative



history behind each particular change.

The Law Library has unique resources for investigating legislative and statutory history. We have complete collections of the Laws of Maine back to 1820, legislative documents back to 1868 and earlier, floor debate from 1897 forward, and committee testimony as far back as 1983. Furthermore, our extensive collection of newspaper clippings often provides context for legislative developments.

If the history of a bill or statute is not already covered in one of the more than 50 compiled legislative histories that we maintain, the reference librarians can produce a legislative history tailored to your needs. Please contact the Reference Desk if you wish to know more about legislative and statutory histories.

### Digitized Legislative Record

#### Historical Legislative Record

Since 1897, proceedings and debate of the Legislature have been published in the *Legislative Record*. The Records for the House and Senate are prepared and distributed by the offices of the Clerk of the House and the Secretary of the Senate, respectively. Now the Law Library has digitized earlier sessions of the *Legislative Record* and has added the complete historical collection of more than 168,000 pages, including appendixes and indexes, to our website. The contents are arranged by chamber and session day and can be browsed easily by session. To begin your *Legislative Record* research, please visit the home page at <http://www.maine.gov/legis/lawlib/lldl/legisrecord.htm>.

### Email News Updates

#### Front Page

Last year we launched *Front Page*, a compendium of Legislature-related news stories from around the state and nation. This service is available via RSS feed or our website at <http://www.maine.gov/legis/lawlib/frontpage.html>. You may also sign up to receive an email notification when *Front Page* is updated each weekday. Please visit the *Front Page* webpage for more information, or contact the Reference Desk (287-1600) for assistance.