

# Researching Wisconsin Legislative History

## Always Start with the Text of the Law...

### Wisconsin Statutes (code):

- State laws currently in force arranged by subject matter.
- Where to find: In print (*Wisconsin Statutes*) or online via WI Legislature\*, Westlaw, Lexis

### Acts and Laws of Wisconsin:

- When enacted, a law is assigned a sequential act number and is printed in slip form (slip laws).
- After legislative session ends, acts are printed chronologically in *Laws of Wisconsin* (session laws).
- Where to find: In print (*Laws of WI*) or online via WI Legislature\*, Hein Online, Westlaw, Lexis

## ...then, Read Legislative History in Reverse

### Procedural History:

- Chronology of how bill progressed through legislature.
- Where to find: Online via WI Legislature\* (with links) or in print in Bulletin of Proceedings and Journals

### Governor's Veto Message (if applicable):

- Provides governor's reasons for vetoing bill language.
- Where to find: Online via WI Legislature\*

### Readings, Floor Debate and Record of Vote:

- Where to find: Readings & Debate – Online via WisEye\*\*; Record of Vote - Online via WI Legislature\* (procedural history) or in print Journals

### Bills & Amendments:

- Language deleted is **struck through**; language added is **underscored**; bills include nonpartisan analysis by LRB.
- Where to find: Online via WI Legislature\*, Westlaw, Lexis or in print/microform at UW Law Library

### Committee Meetings and Recommendations:

- Where to find: Recordings - Online via WisEye\*\*; Brief report with recommendation for or against the bill - Online via WI Legislature\* or in print Journals

### Hearings:

- Where to find: Recordings - Online via WisEye\*\*; Appearance list & records submitted - Online via WI Legislature\* (with committee proceedings)

### Fiscal Estimate:

- Available for each bill affecting revenue or expenditures.
- Where to find: Online via WI Legislature\* or in print

### Drafting Records:

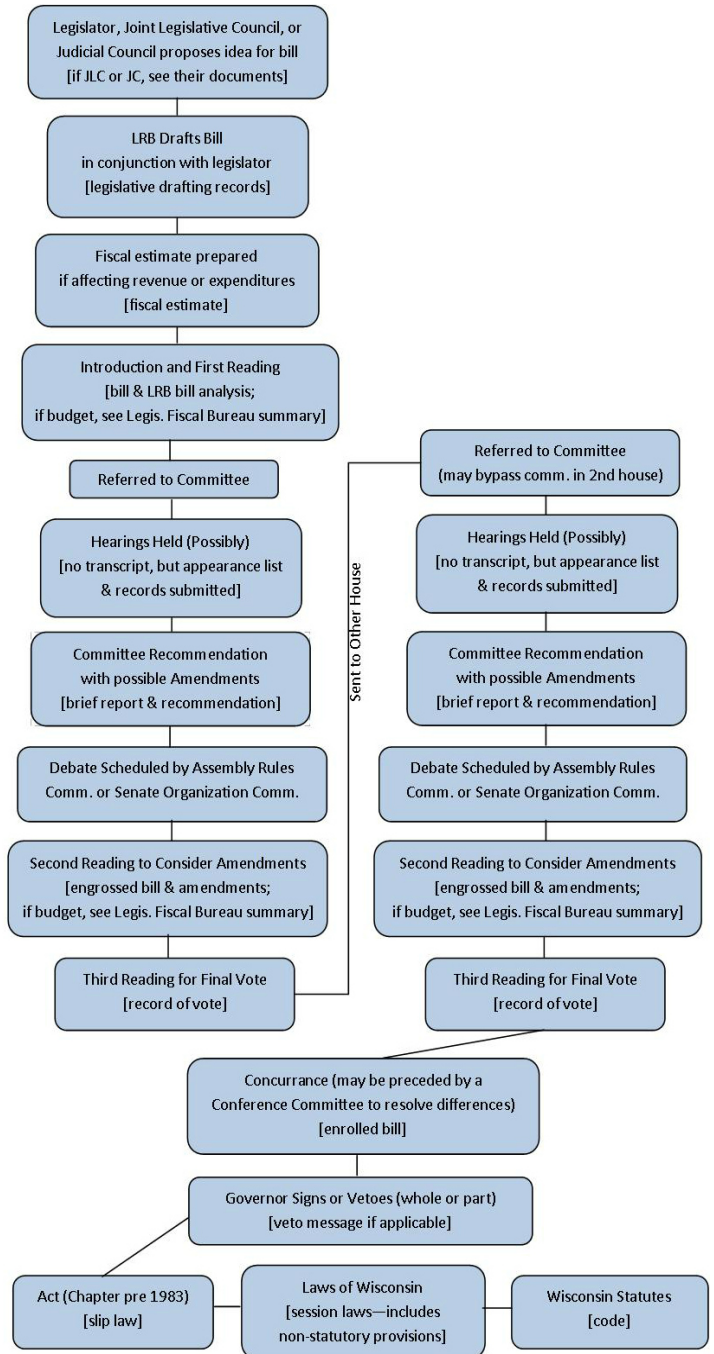
- LRB's administrative record of the bill drafting process.
- Where to find: Online via WI Legislature\*, UW Law Library\*\*\*

### Joint Legislative Council Documents:

- Special study committees; may propose legislation.
- Where to find: Online via WI Legislature\* & on file at LRB

### Judicial Council Documents:

- Drafts rules & laws relating to the courts.
- Where to find: Online via WI State Law Library\*\*\*\*



### Budget Specific Materials:

- Legislative Fiscal Bureau Summary – a summary of the budget at each stage of the process.
- Budget Index Report – index to specific parts of budget.
- Where to find: Online via WI Legislature\*

\* Wisconsin Legislature - <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/>

\*\* WisconsinEye - <http://www.wiseye.org/> (very recent only)

\*\*\* UW Law Library Drafting Records - <http://tinyurl.com/84mngu9>

\*\*\*\* WSL Judicial Council Docs. - <http://wilawlibrary.gov/search/jc.html>