



# Library Briefs

June 2017

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

**GROWING DIGITAL COLLECTIONS:** Two of our most frequently-consulted collections are our files of newspaper clippings and our topical legislative histories. Both of these collections are finding a new home in the digital world.

Our **newspaper clippings** go back more than 50 years and cover a wide range of Legislature-related topics, including articles mentioning specific bills or legislative events, biographical news about legislators and others active in Maine political life, and clippings on topics relevant to matters pending in the Maine Legislature. Many of these articles are now gathered from online websites, while older clippings are scanned and added to our database. Although copyright law prevents distribution of these digital collections outside the Law Library, our indexed and searchable database of more than 140,000 of these articles is available at the public computers in the library.

Our **topical legislative histories** cover the origins of many successful (and unsuccessful) legislative initiatives. These histories were originally compiled in binders, but we are now reformatting these for online presentation. Completed topics include EPS Education Funding Act, Medical Marijuana, REAL ID Act Participation, Minimum Wage, and Sex Offender Registration. There are 21 completed topics, and others are being added on a regular basis. You can browse this list by visiting our legislative history collections homepage at <http://www.maine.gov/legis/lawlib/lldl/legishistory.htm>.

**HISTORICAL MATERIALS:** The bicentennial of Maine's statehood is just a few years away, and the Law Library has been delving into its historical collections.

In 1833, the Legislature passed a resolve that documents published by order of the Legislature should be gathered and bound for preservation. For nearly a century, these public documents were bound and distributed on a regular basis. The Law Library has begun a project to digitize these volumes, which contain a mixture of annual and special reports, bills, amendments, and committee reports, as well as the rules of the House and the Senate. At the time of this writing, we have completed digitizing volumes from 1833 through 1850; by the time you read this, we'll probably have 5 or 10 more years in place. We are missing the 1837 volume from our collection, but our colleagues at the Maine State Library have pledged to make those images available to us shortly. This collection may be found in our digital library at <http://maine.gov/legis/lawlib/lldl/pubdocs/pubdocshome.html>.



*Does the man in the photograph look familiar?* Here's a hint: he was Speaker of the House of Representatives in the 65<sup>th</sup> Legislature (1891). This image comes from one of two photograph albums in our possession. Thanks to the Maine State Archives, we now have high resolution scans of these albums. The Archives has also shared scans of photographs previously deposited by other legislative offices. These scans will prove a valuable resource, since the Law Library is sometimes asked for assistance in finding images of legislators from bygone days. By the way, the image is of Andrew P. Wiswell of Ellsworth.



**URSUS:** The Law and Legislative Reference Library’s holdings may be located through the URSUS catalog (<http://ursus.maine.edu>). This shared resource can also be used to locate items in the library collections of the University of Maine System, the Maine State Library, and Bangor Public Library. URSUS also provides access to over 300,000 pages of legislative and agency reports digitized in recent years by the Law Library. If a catalog record includes a link to “Law and Legislative Digital Library” as pictured in the example to the right, clicking on the link will take you either to the digitized report or to a listing of what issues of that title are available digitally.



**WE’RE HERE YEAR-ROUND:** Even after the end of the session, the Law Library staff will be available to answer your questions and supply you with information. If you're too far away to come in person, you can reach the librarians by phone at 287-1600 or by email through our reference intake form at <http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlibrary/ask-a-law-librarian/9209>.

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*We look forward to serving you*

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