

RESEARCH REPORT (PAPER) PROPOSAL

The Research Report Proposal is intended to prevent interns from choosing a bill that does not lend itself to sophisticated Policy, Political and Democratic Analyses and does not have enough content to write a 15 to 25 page paper.

Write and submit your written proposal in class by February 9, 2023. You should not proceed writing your Research Report (Paper) until we approve your proposal. We will return the proposal with an indication of whether the proposed bill is feasible and acceptable, and whether we need to meet to discuss questions or concerns.

Requirements for the Bill:

- It must be introduced this session (it has an assigned number i.e., A.232)
- It must have a "Same As" bill in NYS Senate
- It should address a controversial issue

Proposal (1/2 to 1 ½ pages):

- a) You must clearly state what the bill proposes to achieve and how; and why it is important to research. The less obvious the feasibility of the bill is for this report the more you will need to write to convince us that it is feasible. The sponsor memo (obtained from LRS) provides the sponsor's justification for introducing the bill and will help with your proposal.
- b) Be sure to explain briefly the debate or the policy arguments from both sides. If your bill is one-sided, or is unlikely to have any serious opposition, please choose another bill. It is very difficult to write an interesting paper about something that there is widespread consensus and little political controversy, let alone write a solid 15 page report.
- c) Include and upload into Moodle all of the following in your proposal:
 - i) A bibliography of materials that exist on the topic
 - ii) A tentative outline of the proposed paper
 - iii) A copy of the bill your propose to analyze (unless it is over 20 pages)
 - iv) A copy of the sponsor's memo from LRS and
 - v) The legislative history from LRS

HOW TO CHOOSE A RESEARCH PAPER TOPIC

First – Take the LRS (Legislative Retrieval System) course. This training will significantly enhance your research and allow you to include relevant information that you might not find elsewhere or access easily. Go to <https://intranet.nysa.us/helpdesk/?sec=schedule> for class schedules. If you cannot take the LRS class, then ask your supervisor for help or read the section on LRS in the Guidebook to the New York State Legislature (Chapter 7, the electronic version is in Moodle under Resources, Grades, and Assignments).

Second – Pick a good topic

a) What areas of policy or legislation are you interested in?

First and foremost – It is important for you to choose a topic that you find interesting and challenging so that you can devote your time and energy in producing a high quality product that you can be proud of.

b) What is your office talking about?

If your office is “abuzz” about a certain piece of legislation, then it might be good to check out this legislation to see what all the fuss is about. In doing so, you will be “in the know.” Perhaps this is a piece of legislation that your member is sponsoring or is a co/multi-sponsor on.

Remember that for the purpose of the research paper, so that you can answer all the questions on legislation process, the piece of legislation you select should have viability in both the Assembly and Senate, and be controversial. Note also that your work on the paper could potentially benefit your office if you become an expert on this specific piece of legislation.

c) What is in the newspaper?

If the public is concerned with the legislation then it is most likely rich with different points of view and opinions. Diversity in positions may certainly enhance the quality of your paper, make it more interesting to read and last, but not least, allow you to answer the required questions on the syllabus more easily. As you will be writing a 15-25 page paper, your analyzed bill needs to have substance to it and include a strong discussion of differing viewpoints. It is very difficult to write an interesting research paper about something everyone agrees on and has little political controversy.

d) What was mentioned in the State of the State Address or in Speaker Heastie’s response to the Governor’s speech? See also Speaker Heastie’s opening of the session remarks and the Assembly Minority Leader’s response. If the leadership is pushing it then it is sure to be on the agenda. Not only is it on the agenda, but it has power behind it and it will potentially have a large impact on New York policy.

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- e) What is controversial and has legislative viability this year? Use the advance function on LRS to search for particular subjects or groups of subject i.e., "Guns" or "Guns and Control" (when entering two term you must include a "and," "on," etc.
- f) What bill was controversial, but yet made it all the way through the legislative process last year on a previous legislative session 2022 (let alone, other previous sessions)? When searching 2022, LRS will indicate on the top of the bill history whether there is a new bill (and the new bill number) and whether there is an old bill (and the previous bill number) i.e.,
A8907 Conroy Same as OLD BILL: A 8078 OF 2016, NEW BILL: A 6064 OF 2023

Third – Make sure that the bill has legislative viability in both houses and is controversial.

Specific criteria include:

- a) The issue is substantial in nature This means that the legislation has serious importance to more than a few select individuals in a given district (i.e., Medicaid reform, homeland security issues vs. individual privacy, charter school reform legislation, etc.)
- b) The issue has opposing viewpoints (i.e., Stem cell research or death penalty legislation) and groups will be weighing in on all sides.
- c) It is important to the voting public that this legislation be addressed (i.e., property tax reform).
- d) The legislation you are researching has a “same as” or companion bill. This does not reflect on the importance of a one-house bill; it simply reflects the intent of the course that you be able to explore all aspects of the legislative process and answer all questions on the syllabus.

Fourth - Check if the topic of your chosen bill will allow you to answer all the required questions your report must address. (note: some of this information does not need to be included in your proposal) They are as follows:

- a) What is the specific bill that you are analyzing? (Attach a copy in the Appendix.)
- b) What conflict or catalyst precipitated the bill? Did a specific problem suddenly emerge, or has the problem been building gradually? Were there any policy windows and policy entrepreneurs that influenced this piece of legislation?
- c) Does the conflict involve large groups, or is it relevant to only a small group? What are the implications of this conflict either way?

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- d) Who is in favor of this bill and why? Which groups and Assemblymembers are supporting it and why?
- e) Who is opposed to the bill and why? Which Assemblymembers oppose it and why? Are there any organized groups against it and why? If a bill is not moving out of committee in the Assembly or Senate, why not?
- f) Has the leadership in each House taken a position on the bill? What about the Governor's office? What about other executive branches of the government or leading state agencies?
- g) What role, if any, does policy analysis play in this story? Has the staff of the legislature (Assembly and Senate) analyzed the pros and cons of the legislation? What were their findings?
- h) What are the implications of the legislation for your Member's district? Has there been any action on his or her part, from his or her constituency, district newspapers or the media?
- i) What do you think are the prospects of the legislation? What will happen to the bill? Why?
- j) What are the lessons about the intersection of politics and policy around this issue?
- k) If your bill was not or most likely will not be passed, are there specific strategies for either the political or policy process that you believe might increase the likelihood of this bill being passed in the future? Explain.
- l) Do you think democracy has been well served by the legislative process around this issue?