

## **Research Paper Proposal (Due: February 18, by 11:59 p.m.)**

### Research Paper Summary

The research-based policy paper is designed to expose students to the complex process that bills undergo in the NYS Legislature. Your objective is to select a current bill that addresses a rich policy area for which there is substantial information and debate. You might think of this as an *extended policy memo* where you are thoroughly informing your member about your chosen bill through the lenses of the policymaking process, the political atmosphere, and the potential democratic ends it might serve (as well as how democratic you assess the process the bill has gone through has been). In the process of writing this paper there are two broad things to keep in mind: (1) don't forget about the bill! It is easy to become so focused on the larger policy area and lose sight of the actual bill that has been proposed; (2) you will want to employ a wide variety of resources to support your analysis (note this is analysis NOT personal opinion). This means you should provide empirical evidence for empirical claims, and you should also include scholarly research to buttress your analysis.

The Research Proposal is intended to encourage you to think carefully and early about your final project. It is also designed 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. The proposal and annotated bibliography should lay the foundation for the work to come. Look at the proposal as your general plan and the bibliography as the collection of materials which will help you complete the paper.

Please submit your information sheet, written proposal, and annotated bibliography to your Professor by February 18, 2024, at 11:59 pm. You should not proceed writing your Research 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.

### **Three Components of the Research Proposal:**

#### **I. Information Sheet (attached)**

Please complete the fillable PDF.

#### **II. 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. Make a case as to why this bill warrants a large research paper. 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 briefly explain 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.

### III. Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography is just like a regular bibliography where you provide a complete citation of a particular work in APA format. The difference for an annotated bibliography is that you also include what the major contribution this source makes to the policy area in question (especially if it is a scholarly source) or how, precisely you will use the information contained in the source to inform your analysis.

Your annotated bibliography must contain at least ten properly cited sources along with a concise paragraph summarizing the source and how you might use it in your research paper. Please note, the bibliography does not constrain you. You should draw on additional sources as you work on the paper.

Here are some helpful sites on how to construct an effective annotated bibliography:

- Purdue Online Writing Lab
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Writing Center
- Cornell University Research Guides
- University of California at Santa Cruz Library Guides

## HOW TO CHOOSE A RESEARCH PAPER TOPIC

**First – Learn how to use LRS (Legislative Retrieval System).** Watch the LRS tutorials found in “The Resources, Grades, and Paper Assignments” folder in Moodle. In addition, read the section on LRS in the Guidebook to the New York State Legislature (pages 162-170).

### 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.

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.

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 will likely mean there are more sources available. As you will be writing a 15–25-page paper, your topic 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.

**Third - 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?
- 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?

## **Research Proposal Information Sheet**

New York State Assembly Intern Program Assignment – **Due: February 18, by 11:59 pm**

Name:

Office Placement:

Title of Paper:

Bill No.:

Bill Summary:

Prime Sponsor:

Brief description of legislative history:

Please provide a brief explanation of why you chose this bill:

Please attach the following information:

- Bill Text
- Sponsor's Memo
- Written Proposal
- Annotated Bibliography

**\*Please submit via email to your Professor by February 18, at 11:59 pm.**