

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

OBJECTIVE	INTERNET	LEXIS	WESTLAW	NOTES
TO FIND A COMPILED LEGISLATIVE HISTORY	Not available	LEGIS;X contains histories of specific acts which may include bills, hearings, reports, debates and statutes. X = act name abbreviation. Check database list or use GUIDE to determine if a compiled history exists for an act.	X-LH contains histories of specific acts. Histories may include bills, hearings, committee prints and reports, debates and public laws. X = act name abbreviation. Check database list or use IDEN to determine if a compiled history exists for an act.	Lexis provides links to legislative history so you do not have to search other databases to find documents. Only a few compiled histories are available on Lexis and Westlaw. Further, although Lexis and Westlaw include key history, they may not include all history.
TO SEARCH CIS INDEXES & LEGISLATIVE HISTORIES	1970 to current in Congressional Universe accessible on campus at http://web.lexis-nexis.com/cis Prior to 1970 in Congressional Masterfile I accessible on campus at http://www.lib.utah.edu/cgi-bin/drframe.pl?cnts=DB	Legislative histories of key laws from 1970 to 1997 are in LEGIS;CISLH . Also has hearing, report, print and document abstracts.	Not available	Lexis database LEGIS;CISINX contains CIS committee hearing, print, report and document abstracts from 1970 to current. However this database is apparently unavailable to educational subscribers.
TO FIND BILLS	From 1989 at http://thomas.loc.gov . Also has bill summaries and status information from 1973. From 1993 at http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/index.html#congressional_publications . From 1989 in Congressional Universe accessible on campus at http://web.lexis-nexis.com/cis	LEGIS;BILLS contains the text of and status reports for all bills introduced in the current Congress. Use LEGIS;BLTEXT (current Congress) or LEGIS;BTX# (where # = the Congress, from the 101 st Congress) to limit search to text. Use LEGIS;BLTRCK (current Congress) or LEGIS;BLT# (where # = the Congress, from the 101 st Congress) to limit search to status reports. Use LEGIS;BLARCH ¹ to find numbers, sponsors and the final status of bills introduced in the 99 th to the 104 th Congresses.	BILLS contains the text of and status reports for all bills introduced in the current Congress and state legislatures. ² Use CONG-BILLTXT (current Congress) or CONG-BILLTXT# (where # = Congress, from the 104 th Congress) to limit search to Congressional bill text. Use US-BILLTRK (current Congress) or BILLTRK-OLD (including Congress and state bills from 1991) to limit search to status reports. ³ Use BC-OLD ⁴ to find numbers, sponsors and the final status of bills introduced in the 99 th to the 104 th Congresses.	Electronic status report databases are great because they allow you to easily follow bills through the legislative process and on Lexis Congressional Universe and Thomas may provide links to amendments and different bill versions. Viewing bills online is preferable to microfiche. If you know a bill's number and the Congress, searching for a bill online is simple. However, searching for bills by topic online may not be as efficient as searching the books. Further, retroactive coverage is limited. Westlaw does have databases with earlier bills, but they are not available to educational subscribers. Thomas and Congressional Universe are more user friendly than GPO Access. Thomas is also "free."

¹BLARCH is the archive file for BILCAST. BILCAST lists bills introduced in Congress and projects the odds of bill success in committee and on the floor.

²To limit your search to status reports of current Congressional and state bills use BILLTRK.

³BILLS-OLD contains status reports for Congressional and state bills from 1991 and text of some state bills from 1991. However, BILLS-OLD, like CONG-BILLTXT#, only contains Congressional bill text from the 104th Congress.

⁴BC-OLD is the archive file for BILLCAST. BILLCAST lists bills introduced in Congress and projects the odds of bill success in committee and on the floor.

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TO FIND COMMITTEE PRINTS	<p>Current Congress select prints at http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/index.html#congressional_publications</p> <p>From 1995 select in Congressional Universe accessible on campus at http://web.lexis-nexis.com/cis</p>	<p>From 1995 select prints in LEGIS;CMTPRN.</p>	<p>X-LH contains specific act histories including prints for some acts. X = act name abbreviation.</p>	<p>Easier to find online than in print. However, online coverage is limited. Also try a keyword search on UNIS to find prints.</p>
TO FIND HEARINGS	<p>Select recent testimony at http://thomas.loc.gov and http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/index.html#congressional_publications</p> <p>Testimony from 1988 accessible on campus in Congressional Universe at http://web.lexis-nexis.com/cis</p>	<p>LEGIS;POLTRN contains most oral testimony from 1995. LEGIS;CNGTST from July 28, 1993 contains written witness statements. LEGIS;POLSUM from January, 1995 contains detailed summaries of select hearings. Summaries include background information, names of members present and discussion summaries. LEGIS;HEARNG contains all of the hearing databases above.</p>	<p>USTESTIMONY from January 1993 contains witness lists and transcripts of oral and written hearing witness statements. CONGTMY from July 19, 1995 contains testimony and official documents collected from committees.</p>	<p>Hearings are available online much sooner than in print or microfiche. However only select available through Thomas and GPO Access. Further, because Congressional Universe, Lexis and Westlaw treat each witness' testimony as separate document you have to carefully formulate your search so you will not miss testimony. You can also do a keyword search on UNIS to find hearings on particular subjects.</p>
TO FIND COMMITTEE REPORTS	<p>From 1995 at http://thomas.loc.gov and http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/index.html#congressional_publications</p> <p>From 1990 in Congressional Universe accessible on campus at http://web.lexis-nexis.com/cis</p>	<p>LEGIS;CMTRPT select from January 1990 to 1993 then full coverage</p>	<p>LH, from 1948 through December, 1989, contains reports as reprinted in USCCAN. From January, 1990 contains all reports.</p>	<p>Reports are available online much sooner than in print. Retroactive coverage online is better than other legislative history sources. Thomas and Congressional Universe are more user friendly than GPO Access. Thomas is also "free."</p>
TO FIND FLOOR DEBATES/ CONGRESSIONAL RECORD	<p>From 1989 at http://thomas.loc.gov; from 1995 at http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/index.html#congressional_publications; and from 1985 on campus in Congressional Universe at http://web.lexis-nexis.com/cis</p> <p><i>Congressional Record Index</i> from 1994 at http://thomas.loc.gov</p> <p><i>Congressional Record Index and History of Bills and Resolutions</i> from 1983 at http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/index.html#congressional_publications</p>	<p>LEGIS;RECORD from January 3, 1985, contains the full text of the <i>Congressional Record</i>. Use LEGIS;# (where # = a Congress, from the 99th) to limit search to a Congress; use LEGIS;HOUSE or LEGIS;SENATE to limit search to a house; LEGIS;REMARK to limit search to inserted statements and other off-floor activity.</p> <p>Use LEGIS;DIGEST to limit search to the <i>Daily Digest</i> (committee information, a daily summary of floor activity and laws signed by the President).</p>	<p>CR from 1985 contains chamber proceedings, remark extensions and the <i>Daily Digest</i></p>	<p>Thomas and Congressional Universe are more user friendly than GPO Access. Thomas is also "free." However GPO Access has a PDF version of the <i>Congressional Record</i> plus has a searchable <i>History of Bills and Resolutions</i>. Lexis and Westlaw do not include the <i>Index</i> or the <i>History of Bills and Resolutions</i>. Further, each order of business on the floor, single member's extension of remarks, etc. is treated as a separate document, so you have to formulate searches carefully.</p>

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TO FIND PRESIDENTIAL VETOES, SIGNING STATEMENTS AND OTHER MESSAGES TO CONGRESS	In <i>Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents</i> , which includes veto messages, signing statements, other messages and lists of acts approved by presidents. Accessible from 1993 in http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/nara003.html .	LEGIS;PRESDC from March 24, 1979, contains <i>Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents</i> , which includes veto messages, signing statements, other messages and lists of acts approved by presidents. LEGIS;HSDOCS from 1995 contains communications from the President to Congress.	LH from 1986 contains signing statements as reprinted in USCCAN. WCPD from January 1, 1995, contains <i>Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents</i> , which includes veto messages, signing statements, and other messages. X-LH contains histories of specific acts including messages for some acts. X = act name abbreviation.	The value of these messages to legislative history is disputed. Several law review articles have been written on the subject.
TO FIND CONGRESS MEMBERS/ DIRECTORIES	Current House of Representatives at http://clerkweb.house.gov/mbrcmtee/mbrcmtee.htm and current Senate at http://www.senate.gov/contacting/index.cfm . From 1995 at http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/index.html#congressional_publications .	Most recent <i>Congressional Yellow Book</i> in LEGIS;YBCONG and <i>Congressional Staff Directory</i> in LEGIS;CONDIR <i>The Capital Source</i> from 1988 in LEGIS;CAPTAL	Most recent <i>Congressional Yellow Book</i> in CONGYB	Check Lexis GUIDE or Westlaw SCOPE for personnel coverage.

