



Federal Legislative Histories

BOSTON COLLEGE LAW LIBRARY

WHAT IS A LEGISLATIVE HISTORY AND HOW IS IT USED?

A legislative history is a collection of the documents created by Congress or a state legislature during the process leading up to the enactment of a law or the rejection of a proposed law. Legislative history provides evidence that members of the legislative body were aware of particular issues and facts, and includes comments and recommendations of committees and individual members of the legislative body.

A legislative history helps determine the intent of the legislators when a particular statute was passed. When a question arises concerning the applicability or interpretation of a statute, a legislative history can be consulted to better understand the reasons for the enactment of that statute.

Legislative history is useful as a tool of statutory construction when the wording of the statute is vague or ambiguous. Legislative history is persuasive authority; it is never binding upon a court.

WHAT DOCUMENTS MAKE UP A FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE HISTORY?

A federal legislative history includes documentation from all steps in the law-making process. Different documents carry varying degrees of weight in showing congressional intent. The documents which can make up a legislative history include:

1. Bills and amendments. The text of a bill as introduced, reported from committees, and acted upon by either or both houses, provides information on the original language of its sponsor as well as evidence of deliberate exclusions and inclusions to the bill as it made its way through the legislative process. Bills are numbered consecutively by the chamber in which they were introduced for the two sessions of each Congress (e.g. S.2 is the second bill introduced in the Senate during a particular Congress).
2. Hearings. These are primarily transcripts of the testimony of witnesses before House and Senate committees. Hearings are used to illustrate that certain issues and considerations were made known to Congress through the hearing process. Hearings may be held on an individual bill or a group of bills on the same or similar subject. Not all hearings are published. There is often a lengthy delay for those hearings which are officially published. Final official versions may include other documentary evidence presented to a committee during the hearing process.
3. Committee Prints. Committee prints can be research studies, compilations of materials or statutes, background information, or working drafts of a bill. Not all committee prints are published or distributed. Some may be reissued as a House or Senate Document or Report or published in the Congressional Record. Although not significant in determining legislative intent they can provide valuable and often hard to find information for the researcher.
4. Committee Reports. These are committees' official communications to Congress explaining the purpose of a bill and setting forth the recommendations for passage of the bill. Many also contain a report by the minority members of the committee on their objections to the language or purpose of the bill. Reports may be issued by House, Senate and Conference (i.e. joint) committees, and are numbered consecutively for each Congress. Committee reports, especially Conference committees, tend to carry a great deal of weight in ascertaining congressional intent.
5. Debates. These include all activities which occur on the floor of the two houses of Congress. While individual comments during debates are not proof of congressional intent, statements by the bill's sponsor or chair of the committee reporting the bill, especially those with the stated intention of clarifying or explaining the bill, can have significant weight. Debates are particularly important when amendments to the bill are offered on the floor of the House or Senate.
6. Presidential Messages. Sent to Congress by the President, these messages are the comments by the President explaining the reasons for suggesting, signing or vetoing legislation.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR FINDING TOOLS FOR COMPILING A FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE HISTORY?

Print Finding Tools

1. Sources of Compiled Legislative Histories

LAW REFERENCE AREA KF 42.2 1979

(also in HeinOnline Federal Legislative History Library – electronic finding tool #5)

This is a bibliography of compiled legislative histories which are published in government documents, periodical articles and books. It indicates whether the source provides citations only or reprints the documents that make up the legislative history. Not all Public Laws are included. It begins with the 1st Congress and is updated periodically. To find a legislative history you need either the Public Law number or popular name of the law. This bibliography also includes a selection of legislative histories arranged by topic.

2. US Code Congressional and Administrative News (USCCAN)

(1941 to date)

(1941-1950 entitled United States Code Congressional Service)

LAW GENERAL COLLECTION KF 48 .U54

(also available on Westlaw – USCCAN database)

USCCAN publishes the texts of all Public Laws enacted in a particular session of Congress. The legislative history volumes reprint selected Committee Reports (House, Senate, and Conference) for each of the laws. 1941-1947 volumes contain congressional comments which describe the contents of important reports. Both the biweekly advance sheets and the bound volumes contain a legislative history table which lists for each Public Law: date approved, Statutes at Large citation, bill and report numbers, committees that recommended the bill, and dates of consideration and passage in the House and Senate.

3. CCH Congressional Index

LAW REFERENCE AREA KF 49 .C6 (1979 to date) &

LAW GENERAL COLLECTION KF 49 .C6 (1947 to 1978)

This looseleaf service, supplemented weekly when Congress is in session, is a good source for finding the current status of bills. Bills are indexed by bill number, author and subject. References are given to reports, hearings, Public Law number and voting records. Publication began with the 75th Congress (1937).

4. CIS/Index and Abstracts

LAW REFERENCE AREA & LAW MICROFORMS KF 49 .C62

(also in LexisNexis Congressional Universe - see electronic finding tool #3)

CIS abstracts and indexes most congressional publications (except the Congressional Record) issued since 1970. CIS is published monthly and cumulated annually in two parts: a subject index, and abstracts of the indexed publications. The legislative history documents can be located by bill number, Public Law number, report number, subject, title, author or witness name. Multi-year cumulative indexes have been issued, covering 1970-74, 1975-78, 1979-82, and 1983-86, 1987-1990 and 1991-1994. Starting in 1984 an annual Legislative Histories volume was added. Arranged by Public Law number, this volume indexes and abstracts all documents relevant to a public law even if the documents are from Congresses prior to the enactment of the law.

5. Congressional Quarterly Almanac

LAW GENERAL COLLECTION JK 8 .C64x (1969 to 2004)

(also see CQ Weekly Online – see electronic finding tool #10)

CQ contains summaries of congressional (and other federal government) activities, status of major legislation, lists of recently-passed public laws, and analyses of important legislative issues. This is particularly useful for tracking complex legislation that involves numerous amendments or researching the political background of legislation.

6. Congressional Record Index — “History of Bills and Resolutions” section

LAW GENERAL COLLECTION KF 35 .C56 (biweekly index)

LAW MICROFORMS KF 35 .C56 (bound annual index)

This status table appears in the biweekly index issue of the Congressional Record, and is cumulated for the entire session in the bound set in the annual index volume. It is arranged by bill number, with the title and action noted, and a reference to the Congressional Record page on which the record of the action can be found. A bill number will appear in the bi-weekly index only if the bill has been acted upon during those two weeks; if listed, however, all previous actions for that session will be recorded.

7. Congressional Record — Daily Digest section (1947 -)
LAW GENERAL COLLECTION KF 35 .C56x (Daily Congressional Record)
LAW MICROFORMS KF 35 .C56x (separate volume)
(also available in Thomas, electronic finding tool #1; GPO Access, electronic finding tool #2; HeinOnline U.S. Congressional Library, electronic finding tool #7 and LLMC Digital, electronic finding tool #8)

This digest provides a daily summary of actions taken on bills with page references to the Congressional Record. As its title implies, it is a section of the daily issue of the Congressional Record. A separate cumulative volume, published at the end of each session, provides both subject access and a table, "History of Bills Enacted into Public Law" (arranged by Public Law number). This "history" table gives the title, bill number, dates introduced and reported, hearings, report numbers, and Congressional Record citations.

8. CIS/US Serial Set Index (1789-1969)
LAW REFERENCE AREA Z 1223 .Z9 C65
(also in LexisNexis Congressional Universe - see electronic finding tool #4)

Provides subject matter access to American State Papers, a compilation of legislative and executive documents from 1789 through 1838, and U.S. Serial Set. The US Serial Set, compiled under direction of the Government Printing Office, is an ongoing collection of congressional publications including House and Senate committee reports and documents. The Serial Set Index provides access by subject, keyword, and bill number. Hearings and the Congressional Record are not included in the Serial Set.

9. CIS/US Congressional Committee Hearings Index (1833-1969)
LAW REFERENCE AREA KF 40 .C56 1981
(also in LexisNexis Congressional Universe - see electronic finding tool #4)

This index provides access to published US Congressional committee hearings (House and Senate) from the 23rd - 91st Congresses by subject, organization, personal name, title and bill number.

10. CIS Index to Unpublished US Senate Committee Hearings
(1823-1964; 1965-1968)
(also in LexisNexis Congressional Universe - see electronic finding tool #4)
LAW REFERENCE AREA KF 40 .C55 1986 (1823 - 1964 index)
O'NEILL GOV'T. DOCUMENTS REFERENCE KF 40 .C55 1989 (1965 - 1968 index)

This index provides access to unpublished US Senate hearings from the 18th - 90th Congresses by subject, organization, personal name, title and bill number.

11. CIS Index to Unpublished US House of Representatives Committee Hearings (1833 - 1936; 1937 - 1946)
(also in LexisNexis Congressional Universe - see electronic finding tool #4)
O'NEILL GOV'T. DOCUMENTS REFERENCE KF 40 .C54 1988 (1833 - 1936 index)
O'NEILL GOV'T. DOCUMENTS REFERENCE KF 40 .C54 1990 (1937 - 1946 index)

This index provides access to unpublished US House of Representatives hearings from the 23rd - 79th Congresses by subject, organization, personal name, title and bill number.

12. CIS/US Congressional Committee Prints Index
("From the Earliest Publications through 1969")
LAW REFERENCE AREA Z 1223 .Z7 C66
(also in LexisNexis Congressional Universe - see electronic finding tool #4)

This index provides access to a variety of prints prepared for internal committee use. Prints are indexed by title, subject, author, bill number, Congress and committee, and Superintendent of Documents classification number.

13. Digest of Public General Bills and Resolutions
GENERAL LAW COLLECTION KF 18 .L5 (1975 - 1990)

Published by the Library of Congress during each session, with a final cumulative issue, the Digest is a good source for fairly extensive summaries of public bills and resolutions, and also gives the status of proposed legislation. Entries are indexed by bill or resolution number, by sponsor, subject, title and companion bill number. It does not give references to debates or hearings. BC's holdings begin with the 94th Congress, 1st Session (1975) and end with the 101st Congress, 2nd Session (1990). The Digest ceased publication in 1990.

Electronic Finding Tools

1. Thomas: Legislative Information on the Net - <http://thomas.loc.gov>

Thomas makes available a wide range of federal legislative information starting in 1989 with the 101st Congress. Of interest in compiling legislative histories are the Legislation, Congressional Record and Committee Reports databases.

The Legislation database includes a Bill Summary and Status section which provides summary and status records for bills which became law. Coverage begins in 1973 (93rd Congress). A Congress is searchable by word/phrase, subject, sponsor, committee, date of introduction or bill number. The Bill Summary and Status section may also be browsed by public law number or by popular name. For Public Laws enacted since 1989, the "Bill Text" section provides the full text of all versions of bills (including those which were not enacted). This section also provides links to Congressional Record pages. The "Bill Text" section is searchable by word/phrase or may be browsed by bill number.

The Committee Reports database provides full text of most House and Senate committee reports (including conference reports) issued since 1995 (104th Congress). This database is searchable by word/phrase and by committee. Committee Reports may be browsed by type of committee (i.e. house, senate, conference or joint).

The Congressional Record database contains the full text of the daily Congressional Record from 1989 to the current issue. It is searchable by word/phrase, member name, date, or date range. The Congressional Record Index is available from

1995 (104th Congress, 1st Session). It is searchable by word/phrase, and is browsable by index terms arranged in alphabetical ranges. The index links to articles and entries in the Congressional Record.

2. GPO Access - <http://www.gpoaccess.gov>

This website provides access to a number of full text document databases essential to legislative history research. Each database is searchable by phrase (include " " around a phrase) or by use of the Boolean operators ADJ, AND and OR. Sample searches are provided.

The databases are:

- Congressional Bills (1993 to date)
- Congressional Documents (House, Senate and Treaty documents - 1995 to date)
- Congressional Record (1994 to date)
- Congressional Record Index (1983 to date)
- Congressional Reports (1995 to date) (conference reports available from 2006)
- History of Bills and Resolutions (with links to the Congressional Record) (1983 to date)
- Public Laws (1995 to date)
- House Journal (1991 – 1999)
- Committee Hearings (selective reports available from 1995 to date)
- Senate Judiciary Committee Hearings on Supreme Court nominations (1971 to date)
- Committee Prints (selective prints available from 1997)

3. LexisNexis Congressional Universe - <http://web.lexis-nexis.com/congcomp>

Congressional Universe provides electronic access to the information in the CIS Index and Abstracts described in print finding tool #4. The abstracts are searchable by subject, Public Law number, committee, witness, bill number and publication title. Many are linked to the full text of the documents. Keyword searching of the compiled histories is also available. In addition, the "Publications," "Testimony," "Bills" and "Laws" segments are most useful to legislative researchers. They provide searchable access to the full text of congressional documents including the Congressional Record. Our subscription to Congressional Universe provides for access from law library workstations only. A selected list and dates of full text coverage are provided below.

- Committee Reports (1989 to date)
- House and Senate Documents (1995 to date)
- Committee Prints (1993 to date)
- Testimony (Committee Witnesses) (1988 to date)
- Bill Texts (1989 to date)
- Congressional Record (1985 to date)
- Public Laws (1988 to date)

4. LexisNexis Congressional Universe - Congressional Indexes 1789-1969

<http://web.lexis-nexis.com/congcomp>

This searchable database within Congressional Universe allows Boolean searching of the index and abstract information described in print finding tools #8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.

5. HeinOnline Federal Legislative History Library
<http://heinonline.org>

This HeinOnline library contains the following resources in pdf format: 1) Nancy P. Johnson's Sources of Compiled Legislative Histories; 2) Eugene Nabors's Legislative Reference Checklist, a reference book which correlates public laws passed between 1789 and 1903 with corresponding bill numbers, dates of enactment and Statutes at Large citations; and 3) a collection of more than 50 compiled legislative histories, from the Administrative Procedures Act to the USA Patriot Act. This library is searchable by word or phrase and is browsable.

6. HeinOnline U. S. Presidential Library
<http://heinonline.org>

This HeinOnline library contains the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, in pdf format from 1965 to the current issue, where researchers can find presidential messages on proposed legislation. The Weekly Compilation is searchable by word/phrase and is browsable.

7. HeinOnline U. S. Congressional Documents Library
<http://heinonline.org>

This HeinOnline library contains the following in pdf format: 1) Annals of Congress (1789-1824); 2) Register of Debates in Congress (1824-1837); 3) Congressional Globe (1833-1873); 4) Congressional Record (1873-1880, 1996-2003); 5) U. S. Statutes at Large (1789-2004); 6) American State Papers (1789-1838); and 7) Journals of the Continental Congress (1774-1789).

8. LLMC (Law Library Microform Consortium) Digital
BC Online Databases

The U.S. Federal – Legislative Library of this database contains pdf images of United States Statutes at Large (currently available through Public Law 107-136 (2001)), the Congressional Record (currently available from January 1990 through June 2003) and the Senate Executive Journal (currently available from January 1954 through December 2001).

9. NewsBank Archive of Americana
BC Online Databases

This database contains pdf images of American State Papers, 1789-1838 (select legislative and executive documents from the Early Republican Era); House and Senate Journals, 1789-1817; U.S. Congressional Serial Set, 1817-1980 (reports and congressional documents [currently available through 1919]).

10. CQ Weekly Online and CQ Weekly Index
BC Online Databases

CQ contains summaries of congressional (and other federal government) activities, status of major legislation, lists of recently-passed public laws, and analyses of important legislative issues. This is particularly useful for tracking complex legislation that involves numerous amendments or researching the political background of legislation. News and analysis of virtually every act of Congress. Available online from 1983 to the current issue. Contains summaries of congressional news, including bill status, committee and floor activity, debates and roll-call votes. Database is browsable by date or topic and is searchable by keyword, date, bill number or topic.

11. American Memory – A Century of Lawmaking
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lawhome.html>

U. S. Congressional Documents and Debates from 1774 to 1875. Includes American State Papers (1789-1838), the U. S. Serial Set (1833 to 1917), the Journals of the Continental Congress (1774-1789), House and Senate Journals (1789 to 1875), the Annals of Congress (1789-1824), the Register of Debates (1824-1837), the Congressional Globe (1833-1873) and the Congressional Record (1873-1875 only).

12. Congressional Research Service
<http://www.opencrs.com>

The Center for Democracy & Technology's project to provide public access to committee prints prepared by Congressional Research Service. Database is browsable by collection and is searchable by keyword. Coverage is selective.

13. LLSDC's Legislative Sourcebook
<http://www/llsdc.org/sourcebook/>

The Law Librarians Society of Washington, D.C. 's portal for federal legislative history research. The site includes useful directories, lists, tables and research guides as well as links to electronic compiled legislative histories and electronic sources of legislative history documents.

HOW DO I COMPILE A FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE HISTORY?

To compile a legislative history you must first obtain citations to the documents that comprise a legislative history, then locate and read the documents. Listed here are steps to follow and finding tools to use.

1. To see if a legislative history has already been compiled:

If you have	From:	You can use:
Public Law Number	major legislation only - any date	Sources of Compiled Legislative Histories
	1941 or later	US Code Congressional and Administrative News
	1970 - 1983	CIS Annual Abstracts volumes (1970-1983), "Legislative Histories" section
	1983 or later	CIS Legislative Histories volumes
	1970 or later	Lexis-Nexis Congressional Universe "CIS Index" database
Statutes at Large citation	major legislation only - any date	Sources of Compiled Legislative Histories
	1941 or later	US Code Congressional and Administrative News
	1970 or later	LexisNexis Congressional Universe "CIS Index" database
Popular Name	major legislation only - any date	Sources of Compiled Legislative Histories and HeinOnline's U.S. Federal Legislative History Library
Year or Congress and Bill Number	1973 or later	Thomas - "Bill Summary & Status"
	1070 or later	LexisNexis Congressional Universe "CIS Index" database

2. To find a Public Law number:

If you have	From:	You can use:
US Code, USCA, or USCS citation		The credits/history citations at end of code section text
Popular Name		Shepard's Acts and Cases by Popular Name ; Popular Names Table of the US Code, US Code Annotated or US Code Service
	legislation enacted in 1983 or later	CIS Index Legislative Histories volumes - "Index of Subjects and Names" table
	legislation enacted in 1937 or later	CCH Congressional Index - Enactments section; "Names of Laws Amended/Enacted"
Year or Congress and Bill Number	legislation enacted in 1983 or later	CIS Index Legislative Histories volumes - "Index of Bill Numbers"
	legislation enacted from 1970 - 1983	CIS Cumulative Index volumes - Supplementary Indexes section - "Index of Bill Numbers"
	legislation enacted in 1983 or later	Congressional Record - "History of Bills and Resolutions" section
	legislation enacted in 1973 or later	GPO Access - History of Bills and Resolutions database
	legislation enacted since 1941	Thomas - "Summary of Bills & Status"
	legislation enacted since 1937	US Code Congressional and Administrative News - "Bills & Joint Resolutions Enacted" table CCH Congressional Index - Enactments section; "Enactments by Bill/Resolution Number"

3. To find a bill number:

If you have	From:	You can use:
Public Law Number or Statutes at Large citation	legislation enacted in 1901 or later	United States Statutes at Large
	legislation enacted in 1941 or later	US Code Congressional and Administrative News - "Legislative History" table
Public Law Number	legislation enacted in 1973 or later	Thomas - "Public Laws"
	legislation enacted in 1983 or later	CIS Index Legislative Histories volumes
	legislation enacted from 1970 - 1983	CIS Annual Abstract volumes - "Legislative Histories" section
	legislation enacted in 1937 or later	CCH Congressional Index - Enactments section "Enactments by Public Law Number"
Subject or topic information only		CCH Congressional Index - Subject Index
		Thomas - "Bill Summary and Status"
		GPO Access - History of Bills database
		Congressional Record database or Congressional Record Index database
		CIS Congressional Universe - "Bills" database

4. To determine what actions have been taken on a bill:

If you want:	From:	You can use:
Committee actions, committee reports and floor activities	legislation in 1973 or later	Thomas - "Bill Summary & Status"
	for legislation in 1937 or later	CCH Congressional Index - "Status" section
Committee and floor activity, debates and vote tallies	1983 or later	CQ Weekly Online and CQ Weekly Index Online
Committees, Reports, floor activities only		Congressional Record Index - "History of Bills and Resolutions"

5. To locate citations to committee reports:

If you have	From:	You can use:
Report numbers only	1873 or later	Congressional Record - Daily Digest - "History of Bills Enacted into Public Law"
	for laws enacted in 1941 or after	US Code Congressional and Administrative News (may also include text of selected reports)
Report numbers, abstracts, and references to CIS microfiche	legislation in 1970 or later	CIS/Index and Abstracts LexisNexis Congressional Universe - "Congressional Publications" (also provides full text of reports from 1995 and later)
	legislation in 1937 or later	CCH Congressional Index - "Status" section
	legislation from 1789 - 1969	CIS US Serial Set Index LexisNexis Congressional Universe - "Congressional Indexes 1789-1969" database
Subject or topic information only; or report numbers	legislation from 1789 - 1919	Newsbank - Archives of Americana American State Papers (1789 - 1838) U.S. Congressional Serial Set (1817 - 1919)

6. To find citations to hearings on a bill or general topic

If you have	From:	You can use:
Bill number, subject information, or persons testifying	legislation in 1970 or later	CIS Index - "Index of Subjects and Names" or "Index of Bill Numbers" (a supplementary index contained within the "Index of Subjects and Names")
		LexisNexis Congressional Universe "CIS Index" database (also provides full text of selected testimony from last 10 years)
	legislation from 1833 - 1969	CIS Congressional Committee Hearings Index
	legislation from 1789-1969	LexisNexis Congressional Universe "CIS Index" database 1789-1969
	legislation from 1988 and later	LexisNexis>Legal>Legislation & Politics>U.S. Congress>Committee Hearings Transcripts
	legislation from 1993 and later	Westlaw (USTESTIMONY; CONGTMY)
legislation from 1995 and later	GPOAccess.gov>Legislative Branch>Congressional Hearings	

7. To find citations to Congressional debates

If you have	From:	You can use:
Bill number	1873 or later	Congressional Record Index - "History of Bills and Resolutions"
Name of sponsor or subject information	1873 or later	Congressional Record Index
	1989 or later	Thomas - Congressional Record database
	1983 or later	GPO Access – Congressional Record Index database
	1789 or later	HeinOnline>U.S. Congressional Documents>Debates of Congress

8. To find Presidential messages

If you have	From:	You can use:
Bill number	1873 or later	Congressional Record Index - "History of Bills and Resolutions"
	1983 or later	GPO Access - Congressional Record Index database
	1965 or later	Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents (HeinOnline)

WHAT FINDING TOOLS SHOULD I USE FOR COMPILING A LEGISLATIVE HISTORY FOR LEGISLATION ENACTED PRIOR TO 1970?

LexisNexis Congressional Universe – Congressional Indexes 1789-1969

Sources of Compiled Legislative Histories

US Code Congressional and Administrative News

CCH Congressional Index

Congressional Record and the Congressional Record Index

CIS/US Serial Set Index

CIS/US Congressional Committee Hearings Index

CIS/US Congressional Committee Prints Index

NewsBank – Archives of Americana

HeinOnline – Federal Legislative History Library

HeinOnline – U.S. Congressional Documents Library

HeinOnline – U.S. Presidential Library

American Memory – A Century of Lawmaking

WHERE ARE THE LEGISLATIVE HISTORY DOCUMENTS IN THE BOSTON COLLEGE LAW LIBRARY?

The Boston College Law Library has most of the legislative history documents for federal legislation enacted from 1959 to date. The library also has all the proceedings that took place on the floor of Congress since the ratification of the Constitution. A majority of these documents are available in micro-format. All need to be accessed using the finding tools discussed in this information guide. Some federal legislative materials from 1789 to 1875 are available online on various historical databases and websites. More recent federal legislative materials are available online on government websites. LexisNexis and Westlaw have developed legislative databases covering bills, hearing testimony, committee reports, committee prints, debates and public laws as well as compiled legislative histories.

At the Boston College Law Library, access to both LexisNexis and Westlaw is limited by the terms of our contracts to Boston College law students and faculty. Congressional Information Service (CIS) has developed CIS Congressional Universe, available at <http://web.lexis-nexis.com/congcomp>. Congressional Universe is available only from Internet-accessible workstations in the Boston College Law Library. GPO Access databases (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/databases.html>), Thomas (<http://thomas.loc.gov>) and American Memory -- A Century of Lawmaking (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lawhome.html>) are available to anyone with access to the Internet and web browser software.

1. Bills. Bills for Congresses beginning with the 96th Congress (1978) are available on microfiche at Law Microforms cabinet 6, drawers 2 - 7. Thomas provides full text of bills from the 101st Congress (1989). GPO Access - Congressional Bills database provides full text of bills from the 103rd Congress (1993). CIS Congressional Universe provides full texts of bills from the 101st Congress (1989). Full text of bills are available on Westlaw (cong-billtxt) from the 104th Congress (1995).
2. Hearings. Beginning with 1959, hearings are available in the Congressional Information Service (CIS) Microfiche Collection housed at Law Microforms cabinets 11 - 14. The library has paper copies of selected hearings from the 48th Congress to the 94th Congress. Hearings held in the collection in paper copy appear in the library catalogs under the name of the committee and subcommittee, and sometimes by subject or title. Consult a librarian for assistance with the library catalogs. LexisNexis provides summaries of congressional hearings from 1995 and text of witnesses' written testimony from 1995 (selective transcripts are available from 1988). Westlaw provides text of committee witnesses' oral and written testimony selectively from January, 1993 and exhaustively from 1996. CIS Congressional Universe provides text of oral and written committee testimony from 1989. Some hearing transcripts can be found online on GPO Access and on committee websites.
3. Committee Prints. Committee prints since 1970 can be found in the CIS Microfiche Collection, at Law Microforms cabinets 11 - 14. Some committee prints prior to 1970 are available in paper and can be located through the library catalogs. Consult a librarian for assistance with the library catalogs. In addition, CIS Congressional Universe includes full text of committee prints since 1993. LexisNexis provides full text of selective committee prints since 1995. Selective committee prints prepared by Congressional Research Service are available online at <http://www.opencrs.com>
4. Reports. Beginning with 1959, committee reports are available in the CIS Microfiche Collection and are housed at Law Microforms cabinets 11 - 14. Paper copies of some reports prior to 1977 can be located through the library catalogs. Reports are cataloged by committee, subject or title. Consult a librarian for assistance with the library catalogs. Reports also appear selectively in United States Code Congressional and Administrative News, Law General Collection KF 48 .U54. Full text of committee reports are also available on LexisNexis and Westlaw from 1990 to date. Thomas and GPO Access provide full text since 1995. CIS Congressional Universe provides full text of reports since 1989. American Memory -- A Century of Lawmaking provides electronic access to committee reports from 1789 to 1917.
5. Debates. Debates and other official congressional activities appear in the Congressional Record (1873 to date). Individual issues of the Congressional Record, Daily Edition in paper are at Law General Collection KF 35 .C56. After a delay of approximately five years, the Congressional Record is compiled into annual permanent editions with pagination different from the daily edition. Volumes 1 - 60 are on microfilm in cabinet 2, drawers 6 & 7. Volumes 61 to date are on microfiche in cabinet 5, drawers 7 & 8. The earliest predecessor of the Congressional Record, the Annals of Congress (1789 - 1824) is at Law General Collection KF 35 .C558. Its more recent predecessors are in microfilm the Register of Debates (1824 - 1837) in cabinet 2, drawer 7, and the Congressional Globe (1833 - 1873) in cabinet 2, drawers 5 & 6. The full text Congressional Record is on LexisNexis and Westlaw from the 99th Congress (1985 to date); GPO Access (1994 to date) and CIS Congressional Universe (1985 to date). Congressional debates are available in the Congressional Record and its predecessor publications on HeinOnline (1789-1880; 1996-2003) and on American Memory -- A Century of Lawmaking (1789-1875).

6. Presidential messages. Presidential messages can be found in two publications, both located in the government documents section of the library and are available in pdf format on HeinOnline. The Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents contains a wide range of documents relating to the presidency, including messages. Our holdings date from vol. 1 (1965) at Law General Collection J 80 .A2844x. Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States begin with the papers of Herbert Hoover and continue to the present. They are at Law General Collection J 80 .A284x. Presidential messages sometimes are printed as House or Senate documents. These are included in the CIS microfiche. LexisNexis also provides text of presidential messages since 1979. Presidential messages are available through the American Presidency Project Electronic Presidential Documents Archive at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/>

FURTHER REFERENCE

Cohen, Morris L., Robert C. Berring, and Kent C. Olson, *How to Find the Law* (West Publishing). Chapter on "Legislative History." Law Reserve KF 240 .H6

Morehead, Joe, *Introduction to United States Government Information Sources* (Libraries Unlimited). Chapter on "Legislative Branch Information Sources." Law Ref Area ZA 5055 .U6 M67

Singer, Norman J., *Statutes and Statutory Construction* [Sutherland on Statutory Construction] (Clark Boardman Callaghan). Chapter on "Extrinsic Aids—Legislative History." Law General Collection KF 425 .S26

Wren, Christopher G. and Jill Robinson Wren, *The Legal Research Manual* (A-R Editions). Appendix on "Researching Legislative History." Law General Collection KF 240 .W7

An electronic version of this guide may be found at: <http://www.bc.edu/schools/law/library/research/researchguides/>

Revised January 2009

Copyright 2009, The Boston College Law Library. Permission to reproduce is hereby granted except for use in items to be offered for sale. Please credit the Boston College Law Library.