

# Government Documents Center Help Guides

## Series F - Locating Federal Materials

### Part 2 - Federal Statutory Resources

Patrons may request help locating documents relevant to all aspects of the legislative process. This guide provides resources as well as some context helpful for responding to such questions. *This guide will not provide extensive assistance for completing legislative histories, but is geared toward finding current enacted and proposed laws. For coverage of the process of compiling legislative histories, consult the Government Document Center site at <http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/legishis.html>.*

**Bills:** The first step of the legislative process is the introduction of an issue to be considered by Congress in one of the legislative chambers, the House of Representatives or the Congress. Bills can be found in several places online and on microform. Resolutions of the chambers of Congress are also available through the sites below.

Source	Location	Coverage
LexisNexis Congressional Universe (UMich only)	<a href="http://web.lexis-nexis.com/congcomp/">http://web.lexis-nexis.com/congcomp/</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Provides full text of bills beginning in 1989;</li> <li>~ Searchable by keyword, sponsor, bill number &amp; Congress</li> <li>~ Provides links to hearings, committee prints, and reports and some legislative histories.</li> </ul>
Thomas - Provided by the Library of Congress	<a href="http://thomas.loc.gov">http://thomas.loc.gov</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Indexes bills, beginning in 1973, by subject, sponsor, committee, and state of legislative process;</li> <li>~ Provides summary and detailed status, including page citations to the Congressional Record;</li> <li>~ Provides full text of bills from 1993 on, searchable by keyword and bill number only.</li> </ul>
Bill (Microfiche)	Law Library Micro 10 S-502	~ 1933 - present
Bills (GPO Fiche)	Docs Center Found next to SUDOCS cabinets in back of Center; Finding aids found on Document Ready Reference Shelf	~ 1979 - 2000
House Bills (Microfilm)	Serials/Microforms MICROFILM X557	~ 1789 - 1899
Senate Bills (Microfilm)	Serials/Microforms MICROFILM X558	~ 1789 - 1899

### *Practice Questions*

1. What is the subject of H.R. 11 of the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress?
2. On October 22, 1997, Jesse Jackson received congratulations from the House of Representatives for what? (Hint: In 1997, the 105<sup>th</sup> Congress was seated.)

***Public and Private Laws:*** After they are passed, most bills become *Public Laws*. Less frequently laws are passed that affect only a small segment of the population; this may be as small as one person resolving questions of , for example, property or immigration, these are called *Private Laws*. Both Private and Public Laws are first published as Slip Laws and later appear in Statutes at Large before being codified.

Source	Location	Coverage
LexisNexis Congressional Universe (UMich only)	<a href="http://web.lexis-nexis.com/congcomp/">http://web.lexis-nexis.com/congcomp/</a>	~ 1 <sup>st</sup> Congress, 1789 + ~ Searchable by keyword, bill number, Public Law number and Statutes at Large number; ~ Provides full text and bill tracking report.
Thomas - Provided by the Library of Congress	<a href="http://thomas.loc.gov">http://thomas.loc.gov</a>	~ 1973, 93 <sup>rd</sup> Congress +
GPO Access	<a href="http://www.gpo.gov">http://www.gpo.gov</a>	~ 1995 +
United States Statutes at Large (Paper)	Doc.Ctr. K .U565 FILM X3364	~ 1789 + ~ Searchable by title and date or Statutes at Large citation
United States Statutes at Large (Online)	<a href="http://web.lexis-nexis.com/congcomp/">http://web.lexis-nexis.com/congcomp/</a>	~ Full text of public laws, 1789- ~ Searchable by title, date, Statutes citation; ~ Includes treaties, both foreign and those with Indian tribes

### *Practice Questions*

3. H.R. 1994 of the 100<sup>th</sup> Congress, a bill, in part, to amend the boundaries of Stones River National Battlefield, Tennessee, became P.L. 100-\_\_\_.
4. What is P.L. 103-207 about?

**United States Code:** The United States Code, or U.S.C., is the final codified version of enacted statutory law. Current versions of the Code, updated by pocket part in paper, consist of the existing laws in force.

Source	Location	Coverage
LexisNexis Congressional Universe (UMich only)	<a href="http://web.lexis-nexis.com/congcomp/">http://web.lexis-nexis.com/congcomp/</a>  Select "Bills, Laws and Regulations"	~ Permits search of existing laws in force by keyword or USC citation; ~ Updated within days of enactment of new laws; ~ Provides USC text and references to bills and public laws from which the codified law derived.
GPO Access	<a href="http://www.gpoaccess.gov/uscode/index.html">http://www.gpoaccess.gov/uscode/index.html</a>	~ Subject arrangement of all laws in force; ~ Includes annual updates; ~ Searchable by keyword and browseable by title.
United States Code (Paper and CD-ROM)	Current: Doc.Ctr. KF 62 .A2 Older versions in Buhr	~ 1789 + ~ Searchable by title and date or Statutes at Large citation

Note that the process by which federal laws are made is a complex one. Understanding legislative documents in context may be necessary for responding accurately to patron inquiries. The Government Documents Center website includes links to several explanations of this process that may be helpful for responding to complex questions. These links can be found at <http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/legishis.html> under the heading "Legislative Process."

### *Practice Questions*

5. What Title of the U.S. Code is the determination of the National Minimum Drinking Age determined?
6. Define the term "spoils of war" as it is defined in the U.S. Code.

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