Congressional Information Guides

- **How Our Laws Are Made** 65 pages, Revised and Updated by John V. Sullivan, Parliamentarian, United States House of Representatives) July 24, 2007
  [http://thomas.loc.gov/home/laws_made.html](http://thomas.loc.gov/home/laws_made.html)


- **Frequently Asked Questions**. THOMAS, Library of Congress. [Help](http://thomas.loc.gov/home/faqlist.html)

- **About THOMAS** [http://thomas.loc.gov/home/abt_thom.html](http://thomas.loc.gov/home/abt_thom.html)


- **Govtrack.us**. A Civic project to track Congress. GovTrack.us is a project of Civic Impulse, LLC. [http://www.govtrack.us/](http://www.govtrack.us/)

• **Reference Sources and Indexes**
  o *CQ Almanac*. CQ Press. In-depth analysis of the path legislation takes through Congress.
  o **Glossaries**
    ▪ Congressional Bills: Glossary (GPO) http://www.gpoaccess.gov/bills/glossary.html
    ▪ Glossary of Legislative and Archival Terms http://www.archives.gov/legislative/guide/house/appendix-e.html
    ▪ Senate Glossary
  o *CIS Index & CIS Microfiche Library* (1970-2010). Congressional Information Service (Lexis/Nexis)
  o *CQ Weekly*. CQ Press. About 10 reports; events of that week; Bills to Watch; Weekly Index; In Focus; Sept 13 Fall Outlook for key issues.
  o GPO *Monthly Catalog*
  o *LexisNexis Academic* (Galileo)
    ▪ News - Newspapers & Wires ; TV & Radio Transcripts
    ▪ US Legal - Federal Statutes, Codes and Regulations
      ▪ Annotated U.S. Code (USCS) Matthew Bender/Lexis Nexis
      ▪ Public Laws 1988-

• **Congressional Activity and Related Web Sites**
    ▪ Congressional Bills 103rd Congress (1993/1994) to Present
    ▪ Congressional Committee Prints 104th Congress (1995/1996) to Present
    ▪ Congressional Hearings 99th Congress (1985/1986) to Present, FDsys
      ▶ Not all congressional hearings are available on FDsys. Whether or not a hearing is disseminated on FDsys depends on the committee. GPO continues to add hearings irregularly as they become available during each session of Congress. If a congressional hearing is not listed in the Universal Catalog, it is not available electronically via GPO at this time. Published hearings take a while and a long while for a fiche and a long while for LexisNexis
    ▪ Congressional Documents 99th Congress (1985/86) to Present
    ▪ Congressional Reports 104th Congress (1995/1996) to Present
    ▪ Federal Register XML Bulk Data FR 2.0 1994 to Present
- GAO Reports and Comptroller General Decisions 1993 to 2008
- History of Bills 98th Congress (1983/1984) to Present. Legislative actions on bills that are reported in the Congressional Record
- Journal of the House of Representatives 1992 to 1999
- Public and Private Laws 104th Congress (1995/1996) to Present
- United States Code 1994 to Present
- United States Statutes at Large (2003 to 2006)

- THOMAS. Congress directed the Library of Congress (LC) to make federal legislative information freely available to the public. [http://thomas.loc.gov/](http://thomas.loc.gov/)
  - Congress-to-Year Conversion
  - Bills and Resolutions
    - Search Bill Text 101st Congress (1989/1990) to Present
    - Search Bill Summary & Status 93rd Congress (1973/1974) to Present
    - Search Multiple Congresses 101th Congress (1989-1990) to Present
    - Browse Popular and Short Titles 93rd Congress (1973/1974) to Present
  - Presidential Nominations 100th Congress (1987/1988) to Present
  - Treaties 90th Congress (1967/1968) to Present
  - Committee Reports 104th Congress (1995/1996) to Present

- Senate [http://senate.gov/](http://senate.gov/)
- Congressional Record. Substantially verbatim account of the remarks made by Senators and Representatives while they are on the floor of the Senate and the House of Representatives. It also includes all bills, resolutions, and motions proposed, as well as debates and roll call votes.
  - Congressional Record 101st Congress (1989-1990) to Present (THOMAS)
  - Congressional Record (Bound) 1998 to 2002 (FDsys)
  - Congressional Record (Daily) 1994 to Present (FDsys)
  - Congressional Record Index (Daily) 1983 to Present (FDsys)

- Print or microform

- Presidential documents/papers
  - Daily Compilation of Presidential Documents is the official publication of presidential statements, messages, remarks, and other materials released by the White House Press Secretary. [http://www.gpoaccess.gov/presdocs/browse.html](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/presdocs/browse.html)
  - Public papers of the presidents of the United States.

- Catalog of U.S. Government Publications
- **Directories**
  - **Congressional Directory** 105th Congress (1997/1998) to Present (FDsys)
  - **Congressional Pictorial Directory** 105th Congress (1997) to Present (FDsys)
  - **Congressional Yellow Book**. Annual. Leadership Directories, Inc
  - **Washington information directory**. CQ Press
  - **Congressional staff directory**. CQ Press

- **Reports.**
  - Congressional Committee Reports and be found throughout FDsys and THOMAS.
  - CRS, CBO, and GAO submit reports to Congress - these reports summarize key legislation or analyze issues, or provide cost analyses.
  - **CRS Reports. Congressional Research Service** (within Library of Congress). Many are available through third party sources, especially:
    - OpenCRS. Good browse with summaries for recent reports [http://opencrs.com/](http://opencrs.com/)
    - Federation of American Scientists Easiest browse Miscellaneous Topics (by broad topics plus miscellaneous) [http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/index.html](http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/index.html)
    - University of North Texas. UNT Digital Library. Good Browse by Subject (but old info.) [http://digital.library.unt.edu/explore/collections/CRSR/](http://digital.library.unt.edu/explore/collections/CRSR/)
  - **GAO - Government Accountability Office** (until 2004 the Government Accounting Office) - website has full-text to more than 50,000 reports from 1970 onward (select "Reports & Testimonies"). Can also browse a hot topics current list of reports by selecting "Topic Collections". [http://www.gao.gov/](http://www.gao.gov/)

- **Historical**
  - **Congress and the Nation**. CQ Press. 1945-2008; every four years. Volume XII was released September, 2010. Key legislation is summarized; also includes legal actions.
    - The *Annals of Congress*, formally known as *The Debates and Proceedings in the Congress of the United States*, cover the 1st Congress through the first session of the 18th Congress, from 1789 to 1824. The *Annals* were not published contemporaneously, but were compiled between 1834 and 1856, using the best records available, primarily newspaper accounts. Speeches are paraphrased rather than presented verbatim, but the record of debate is nonetheless fuller than that available from the House and Senate *Journals*.
    - The *Register of Debates* is a record of the congressional debates of the 18th Congress, 2nd Session through the 25th Congress, 1st Session (1824-37).
    - The *Congressional Globe*, as it is usually called, contains the congressional debates of the 23rd through 42nd Congresses (1833-73).
The Congressional Record began publication in 1873. Printed by the Government Printing Office, it is the fourth and final series of publications containing the debates of Congress. (It was preceded by the Annals of Congress, Register of Debates, and Congressional Globe.). Congressional Record, 1873-1875.

- **CIS U.S. Serial Set Index.** Washington : Congressional Information Service, 15th-34th Congresses, 1789-1857
- **U.S. Serial Set Digital Collection** (commercial database) – Readex or LexisNexis (1789-1969; Serial Set map collection sold separately)

**Children’s guides to how laws are made**

- **Kids in the House -- How Laws are Made** http://kids.clerk.house.gov/
  - **How Laws Are Made** http://kids.clerk.house.gov/gradeschool/lesson.html?intID=17 (Grade School)

- **Facts of Congress Videos with Scripts.** In cooperation with Indiana University Television and Flashback Productions of Boulder Colorado, the Center on Congress has developed a series of brief, 60-second video segments aimed at middle-school students. http://www.centeroncongress.org/learn_about/feature/tv_fact_of_congress.php

- **Congress for Kids.** Dirksen Congressional Center. Geared for grades 4-12. Interactive site providing a tour of the federal government, covering the three branches of government, democracy, the Constitution, and elections. http://congressforkids.net/index.htm


Note: This guide is located at the Government Information Research Guide, Georgia Tech Library http://libguides.gatech.edu/government

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