

Congressional Universe

<http://lib.nmsu.edu/resources/dbcis.html>

Covers federal legislative and some administrative law materials

Database	Search Options & Coverage Dates
CIS (Congressional Information Service) Index	<u>Subject</u> : Search keywords or subject headings in document summaries or subject headings fields. Does not search keywords or subject headings in the document's full-text. 1970 to present. Updated monthly.
	<u>Legislative histories</u> : Search by keyword, law or bill number, or Statutes at Large citation. 1970-present. Updated annually.
	<u>Committee</u> : Search by name of committee issuing the publication. 1970-present.
	<u>Title</u> : Search for words in publication titles. Titles may not be the most obvious of words, so this can be clunky. 1970-present.
	<u>Witness</u> : Search by the name or affiliation of witnesses at Congressional hearings. 1970-present.
	<u>Bill Number</u> : Search by bill number (e.g., 98 HR 4952) to find all publications associated with the bill. 1970-present.
	<u>Document number</u> : Search by report, document, print or hearing number. 1970-present.
	<u>Bibliographic information</u> : Search by SuDoc, Library of Congress card number, Government Printing Office Monthly Catalog number, or CIS number. 1970-present.
Publications	<u>Reports</u> : Searches full-text of documents. Reports make recommendations to the House or Senate as a whole and give the findings of hearings or the results of deliberations. Often include legislative intent or histories of bills. 1990 to present. Updated daily.
	<u>Documents</u> : Searches full-text of documents. Issued by the full House or Senate. Often contain presidential messages on new legislation or vetoes, reports of executive branch agencies, or biannual reports of committees. 1995 to present. Updated monthly.
	<u>Committee prints</u> : Searches full-text of documents. Committee print can be anything that a committee wants to issue in support of its legislative and oversight functions. Draft legislation, situation reports, statistical information, historical information, legislative analyses, committee rules, legislative calendars are often issued as committee prints. Can be issued by only part of the committee—but then they carry the note does “not reflect the consensus” of the committee. 1993 to present. Updated monthly.
	<u>Bills</u> : Searches full-text of documents.
	<u>Congressional Record</u> : Search by topical keyword, speaker, page citation, or date. 1985 to present. Updated daily.
	<u>Rules</u> : Searches by keyword or rule number in the full-text of the House of Representatives Rules, the Senate Rules, and Jefferson's Manual. “Rules” here are procedural ones for Congress, not the administrative law rule found in the Federal Register or Code of Federal Regulations. Current information; not historical. Updated as new information becomes available.
	Can search by <u>keyword</u> , <u>witness</u> (name only), and <u>committee</u> . Searches electronic full-text of discussion transcripts and written subpoenas from Congressional hearings. Hearing transcripts are official records of the committee's proceedings on pending legislation or national/international issues. Testimony transcripts from Federal News Service (1988-present), Federal Document Clearinghouse (1993-present), and National Narrowcast Network (2000-present). Updated daily. Transcripts from 1988-1993 less comprehensive.
Bills	<u>Bill tracking</u> : Search bill tracking reports by keyword, sponsor, or bill tracking number. A bill is a proto-law that may, or may not, be enacted. 1989 to present. Updated daily.
	<u>Bills</u> : Search full-text of bills by keyword or bill number. 1989 to present. Updated daily.

	<u>Hot bills</u> : Lists bills that have received national attention.
Laws	<u>Legislative histories</u> : Search legislative histories by keyword, law or bill number, or Statutes at Large citation.
	<u>United States Code</u> : Search by keyword or citation. Current issue only; not historical. Updated monthly.
	<u>Public laws</u> : Search by keyword, law or bill number, or Statutes at Large citation. Laws full-text from 1988 to present. Updates within 2 weeks of a laws passage.
Regulations	<u>Code of Federal Regulations</u> : Search by topical keyword, statutory authority, or citation. Focuses on regulations from federal agencies. Current issues. Updated every two weeks.
	<u>Federal Register</u> : Search by topical keyword, statutory authority, Federal Register citation, or Code of Federal Regulations citation. 1980 to present. Updated daily.
Members	<u>Individual</u> : Search a member of Congress's name to find biographical information and committee assignments. Current information; not historical. Updated as new information becomes available.
	<u>Profile</u> : Can identify members sharing such demographic characteristics as sex, race, party affiliation, state or territory represented, date of birth, religion, military service, educational attainment, alma mater, date elected, and membership in House or Senate. Current information; not historical. Updated as new information becomes available.
	<u>Bills sponsored</u> : Search a member of Congress's name to find bills s/he has sponsored.
	<u>Key votes</u> : Search a member of Congress's name to find out how s/he voted. 1987 to present. Updated as new information becomes available.
	<u>Floor statements</u> : Search a member of Congress's name to find texts of statements from the Congressional Record.
	<u>Votes</u> : Search a member of Congress's name to find out how s/he voted on bills.
	<u>Campaign finance</u> : Search a member of Congress's name to find reports s/he has filed with the Federal Election Commission. 1987 to present. Updated monthly to quarterly.
	<u>Financial disclosures</u> : Search a member of Congress's name to find out about her/his finances. 1991 to present. Updated annually.
	<u>Campaign contributions</u> : Search a member of Congress's name to find out which people, companies, or organizations have contributed to a campaign. 1987 to present. Updated monthly to quarterly.
	Committees
<u>Schedules</u> : Find times and locations of hearings and other meetings. Current information only. Updated as new information becomes available. 1996 to the present. Updated daily.	
Inside Washington	<u>Roll Call</u> : Can search full-text of article, or an article's headline, byline, or body. Can also search by an organizational or personal name. 1989 to the present. Updated twice each week: on Mondays and Thursdays.
	<u>Washington Post</u> (front section, only): Can search full-text of article, or an article's headline, byline, or body. Can also search by an organizational or personal name. Use Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe to search the entirety of the Washington Post. 1977 to the present. Updated daily.
	<u>The Hill</u> : Can search full-text of article, or an article's headline, byline, or body. Can also search by an organizational or personal name. 1995 to the present. Updated weekly on Wednesdays.
Hot Bills/Topics	Lists around 10 "hot bills" enacted or under consideration by the current Congress. Also lists around 10 "hot topic" areas, as reflected by current legislation. No archiving of prior hot topics; current issues only. Updated monthly.
List of Links	Links to 20-some Web sites that provide more information on the American political process, including Congressional sites, political parties, news sites, GPO Access, Thomas, and the White House.

Tips for Searching

- With **keyword** searching,
 - use **AND** to find documents using all your search terms
 - use **OR** to find documents using any of your search terms
 - * If you enter multiple words not connected by AND or OR, they will be searched as a **phrase**
- **Capitalization** does not matter: president = President
- **Punctuation** does not matter: patients bill of rights = patient's bill of rights
- **Plurals** in -s do not matter: doctor = doctors
- * is the wildcard symbol and can be used to replace letters within words, getting at variants of a word: wom*n = women AND woman
 - Cannot be used in place of the first letter of a word
 - Use one * for each letter of a word; can use * multiple times in a word
- ! is the truncation symbol and can be used to replace one or more letters at the end of a word, getting at variants of a word: ma! would find Mary, Matthew, marine, etc.
- **Date limits**
 - Congressional Universe provides some predefined date ranges in its drop-down menus.
 - Can enter other dates using most date formats: 07/24/97; Jul 24, 1997; 07/97; July, 1997; 1997
 - To search only a specific day, enter the same date in the from and to boxes
 - To search everything after a specific date, fill in the from box and leave the to box blank
 - To search everything before a specific date, fill in the to box and leave the from box blank
 - Be aware that Congressional action typically does not happen on the same date as, or even immediately following, an event
- Using pull-down menus--Sometimes you can **search multiple categories in a pull-down menu** simultaneously
 - **CTRL** allows you to select multiple, non-consecutive sources
 - **SHIFT** allows you to select multiple consecutive sources

Results Lists

- Results are always listed in reverse chronological order, from the most recent to the least recent
- When multiple types of documents are included among the results, the results will be listed in reverse chronological order within their document types (e.g., hearings, then legislative histories, then reports)
- Search terms are highlighted within the documents; you can also use the "Find" feature within your Web browser to search within the document