

# Finding or Compiling Federal Legislative Histories Electronically

Presented by Richard J. McKinney, Assistant Law Librarian, Federal Reserve Board for the AzALL Congressional Research Symposium, April 26, 2013, Phoenix, Arizona

## Information That Will Be Covered in This Presentation

- What Are Federal Legislative Histories and How Are They Used
- What Kind of Documents Are Included in a Federal Legislative History
- Some Helpful Resources for Federal Legislative History Research
- Major Electronic Sources for Compiled Federal Legislative Histories
- Electronic Sources for Customary & Miscellaneous Federal Legislative History Documents
- How Federal Legislative Histories Are Generally Arranged
- Options in Using Free and Commercial Electronic Legislative Sources
- Some Bibliographic, Print and Microfiche Sources for Federal Legislative Histories

## What Are Federal Legislative Histories and How Are They Used

Federal legislative histories are generally considered to be compilations of related documents to a specific U.S. public law that precede the law's enactment. The chronology of the bill's (or bills') development is normally set out as well, including related legislation in previous Congresses. Legislative histories assist Federal agencies and the courts to interpret the legislative intent of various public laws or a law's provisions especially when the text of the law is ambiguous or in apparent conflict with other laws.

## What Kind of Documents Are Included in a Federal Legislative History

Unlike most state legislation the legislative documents that may be related to a U.S. public law can be quite prodigious, including, in 'general' order of priority these *Customary Documents*:

- **Public Law** (the plain text of the law is the most binding in any interpretation)
- **Committee Reports** (explains legislation including conf. report joint explanatory statements)
- **Congressional Record** (remarks, debate, amendments - especially from chief sponsors)
- **Bill Texts** (how provision changed in its various stages, including related bills)
- **Congressional Hearings** (especially related testimony from implementing agencies)
- **Congressional Committee Prints** (often studies, but also named for draft legislation)
- **Presidential Signing Statements** (found in Compilation of Presidential Documents)

Other related *Miscellaneous Documents* may include:

- **Congressional Documents** (House & Senate numbered docs, used especially in the past)
- **Studies, White Papers, Reports, Analyses** (GAO, CRS, CBO, Federal agencies, etc.)
- **Committee Markup Summaries and Amendments** (text & votes on amendments, webcasts)
- **Press Releases** (by Congressional committees, Cong. members, White House, agencies)
- **Correspondence** (from agencies, private organizations, and members of Congress)
- **News Media** (can be helpful in understanding; de facto floor reporters in early Congresses)

## Why Miscellaneous Legislative History Documents May Be Useful

As noted above, many documents may have bearing on the interpretation of a law or one of its provisions or its words and phrases that could be included in a Federal legislative history. However, the further one strays from official documents, the less likely a U.S. court will give it consideration, that is, if a particular judge is even willing to consider any document other than an enacted statute. Nonetheless, when Federal agencies propose regulations to implement a law or one of its provisions, any related document to interpret the meaning of a statute may be found to be helpful and those writing comment letters regarding those proposed regulations may find relevant language in a legislative history that supports their comments. Bear in mind, that points or issues brought up in comment letters generally have to be summarized by an agency in its preamble to a finalized rule, including a response as to how or why a particular point was or was not adopted.

## Some Helpful Resources in Federal Legislative History Research

- CCH Congressional Index** (enactment info & history of each bill with action; for each Cong., 1937+)  
(only available in print as [loose-leaf volumes](#) published by Wolters Kluwer)
- CIS Legislative Histories of US Public Laws** (annual abstracts of related docs to each PL;1970/1984+)  
(available on [Proquest Congressional](#) and [LexisNexis](#))
- History of Bills and Resolutions** (in *Cong. Record* or *Cong. Globe* indices; for each sess., 1867 - cur.)  
(see GPO FDsys bill history of [S. 244](#), Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995)
- Legislative Reference Checklist: Key to Legislative Histories, 1789-1903** (to find early law to bill info)  
(available on [HeinOnline](#)'s U.S. Legislative History Library)
- Popular Names of Acts** (to law & USC section(s) to find statute to research; USCA, USCS, Shepard's)  
(see in LII - [Early Learning Opportunities Act](#) – PL 106-554, Dec. 21, 2000, 20 U.S.C. 9401 et seq.)
- Public Laws** (bill #s from 1903; brief leg. history notes from 1963 & on *Statutes at Large* from 1975)  
(see PL 94-239, [90 Stat. 251](#), Mar. 23, 1976 – Equal Credit Opportunity Act Amendments of 1976)
- U.S. Code** section notes have amendment notes to determine which law to research ([12 USC 84 notes](#))  
(amendment notes begin in 1926 or whenever a certain USC title became positive law & IRC 1954)
- Popular Name or Public Law Number Index** (to find the law/bill to research, from 1903 PL has bill #)
- [Congress.gov/THOMAS](#) has PL # searching from 1973 (THOMAS has PL # list & PDF links)
  - [Congress.gov/THOMAS](#) word/phrase searching from 1973 (THOMAS can search just titles/sum.)
  - [GovTrack.us](#) has searching by bill #, word, phrase, Congress, subject & legis. stage from 1951
  - [GPO FDsys](#) has PL # browse list, retrieve by PL # citation, and search capability from 1995
  - [Law Revision Counsel](#) has Popular Name Tool to acts with cites to USC sections or notes
  - [LII at Cornell](#) has Popular Name Table to acts with links to applicable USC sections or notes
  - [LLSDC](#) has selected popular name & public law number lists/links to leg. histories on the Internet
  - [CQ Roll Call](#) has public law text from 1999 with word and phrase searching capability
  - [HeinOnline](#) U.S. Fed. Legis. History & other libraries have histories by popular name & PL number
  - [HeinOnline](#) has PL bill #s in Legislative Reference Checklist: **Key to Leg. Histories from 1789-1903**
  - [LexisNexis](#) has get doc by cite (1789+) as in "79 pl 234" or "60 stat 327" & pop name table
  - [Westlaw](#) has find public laws by citation from 1973 & [popular name table](#) (USCA-POP)

**U.S. Code** (has brief history of amendments after each section of USC to discern which law to research)

- [GPO FDsys](#) has the USC from 1994 with browse, search & retrieve by citation capabilities (PDF)
- [Findlaw](#) has somewhat current U.S. Code with browse, cite retrieval, & direct linking capability
- [Justia](#) has the U.S. Code from 1994 with browse, search, and direct link capabilities (may be dated)
- [Law Revision Counsel](#) compiles the USC & has USC from 1994 with guides, tables, prelim. site +
- [LII at Cornell](#) has near current USC with browse, cite retrieval & direct linking capability
- [LLSDC](#) has a U.S. Statutes & U.S. Code explanation site with guides, tables & links to USC sites
- [Bloomberg Law](#) has near current U.S. Code and back years from 1994
- [HeinOnline](#) has U.S. Code editions, 1926 to current (every 6 years) & USC annual supplements
- [LexisNexis](#) has near current USCS and back years from 1992
- [LoisLaw](#), [TheLaw.net](#), [VersusLaw](#) and others have current USC
- [Westlaw](#) has near current USCA & back years from 1990 (USCA90, etc.) & by date range 1996+

### **Bill/Public Law Chronologies/Actions & Summaries**

- [Congress.gov/THOMAS](#) has bill actions & CRS summaries from 1973
- [GovTrack.us](#) has major actions from 1973 and votes from 1993; also links to THOMAS action/sum.
- [GPO FDsys](#) has history of bills & resolutions from 1983 & from 1993 with dates /CR page numbers
- [Library of Cong.](#) has history of bills & res. in Cong. Globe (1867-1873) & in early Hse/Sen Journals
- [LLSDC](#) has final status table on selected legislative topics from 1985-2008 (99<sup>th</sup> - 110th Cong.)
- [Bloomberg Government](#) (BGov.com) has legislative tracking information and analysis from 2011
- [CQ Roll Call](#) has CQ Bill Track of actions with links to related bills, C.R. pages & reports, 1995+
- [CQ Roll Call](#) has CQ Bill Analysis for selected legis. from 1995
- [CQ Roll Call](#) has CRS Bill Digest from all bills from 1995; CQ Archives 1985-1998
- [HeinOnline](#) U.S. Cong. Doc. Library has Cong. Rec. History of Bills and Res. separated (1867+)
- [LexisNexis](#) has Bill Tracking Reports from 1989 with links to Bill Text, Cong. Rec. & Cong. Reports
- [LLMC.com](#) has Digest of Public General Bills by CRS, 1937-1945, 1948, 1965-1968, 1971-1972)
- [ProQuest Congressional](#) -Bills & Laws - US Statutes 1789+; Bills 1925-62, 1971-82; (Status 1989+
- [StateNet](#) has U.S. bill chronologies from 1991 (102<sup>nd</sup> Cong.) but no links
- [Westlaw](#) - has US-BILLTRK and US-BILLTRK-OLD (2005+) no links or CR page #s – via Netscan)

## Major Electronic Sources for Federal Legislative Histories

(Note: free sources precede those that are *fee-based in italic*)

### Legislative History Electronic Compilations (selected committee reports & other related documents)

- [Congress.gov/THOMAS](http://Congress.gov/THOMAS) has bill actions 1973+, links to related bills 1989+, repts 1995+, C.R 2001+
- [LLSDC](#) has links to free & commercial legis. histories on Internet, research guide, union list, etc.
- [CQ Roll Call](#) has detailed bill actions from 1995 with links to related bills, reports, & C. Rec. pages
- [HeinOnline](#) U.S. Fed. Leg. History Library has **hundreds of histories** (by title, pop. name, PL #)
- [HeinOnline](#) Tax & Economic Reform (banking) & IP libraries have dozens of other leg. histories
- [LexisNexis](#) has Bill Tracking Reports from 1989 with links to Bill Text, Cong. Rec. & Cong. Reports
- [LexisNexis](#) has CIS leg. history indices from 1970 with abstracts & links to bills & Record pages
- [LexisNexis](#) has many related cmte reports (Taxation 1954+; Appropriations 1992+; & all 1990+)
- [LexisNexis](#) has selected leg. histories (especially on environment) - see LLSDC leg. hist. links
- [ProQuest Congressional](#) has CIS leg. history indices from 1970 with abstracts & many doc links
- [ProQuest Legislative Insight](#) has some **18,000 compiled legislative histories** from 1929
- [Westlaw](#) has a 12 stage Congressional Lawmaking Process site with various file links for each stage
- [Westlaw](#) has linked leg. history docs to public law citations from 1974 to present (PL 93-259, etc.)
- [Westlaw](#) has LH file with selected cmte reports related to laws from 1948 & all reports from 1990
- [Westlaw](#) has 31 selected searchable histories (Arnold & Porter Coll.; see LLSDC leg. hist. links)
- [Westlaw](#) has legislative history group files – immigration, securities, taxation, testimony, etc.
- [Westlaw](#) FED-LH file has some **21,000 digitized GAO leg. histories** (1924-1994 - premium service)

### Electronic Sources for Customary Federal Legislative History Documents

(Note: in each listed group free sources precede those that are *fee-based in italic*)

### Bill & Public Law Texts (some sources don't have public law in PDF which have bill #s from 1903)

- [Congress.gov/THOMAS](http://Congress.gov/THOMAS) has full text of bills in all versions, including enrolled versions, from 1989
- [GovTrack.us](#) has text of bills in all versions from 1989 and bill/public laws from 1951
- [GPO FDsys](#) has full text of bills in all versions from 1993 (103<sup>rd</sup> Cong.) (text & PDF)
- [GPO FDsys](#) has full text of all public laws from 1995 & U.S. Statutes at Large from 1951 (PDF)
- [Library of Congress](#) Century of Lawmaking project has U.S. statutes & many bills, 1789-1873
- [Bloomberg Law](#) has bill texts from 1995; Statutes At Large 1789-Present; & selec. Acts as amended
- [CQ Roll Call](#) has Bill Text of all versions from 1995 (104<sup>th</sup> Cong.) & CQ Archives from 1987-1998
- [CQ Roll Call](#) has a Bill Compare side-by-side of different bill versions and companion legislation
- [CQ Roll Call](#) has Law Track that links bill text to the U.S. Code section it would amend (from 2011)
- [DSCS.com](#) (DataStream Content Solutions) has bill texts from 2005; Statutes at Large from 1789
- [HeinOnline](#) has searchable U.S. Statutes at Large from 1789 to near present
- [LexisNexis](#) has text (not PDF) of public laws from 09/09/1988 (100<sup>th</sup> Cong.)
- [LexisNexis](#) has U.S. Statutes from 1789+ (Get Doc. by Citation - 63 pl 43 or 38 Stat 251, etc.)
- [LexisNexis](#) has full text of all bill versions from 1989 (101st Cong.+) (searchable text not PDF)
- [LLMC.com](#) has digital U.S. Statutes At Large (1789 to near current with some gaps)
- [ProQuest Congressional](#) Bills & Laws has U.S. Statutes 1789+ & Bills 1925-62, 1971-82, 1989+
- [ProQuest Congressional](#) has U.S. Statutes from 1789 & growing repository of bill texts from 1937
- [Westlaw](#) has laws from 1973 (USCCAN-PL) & US Statutes 1789-1972 (PDF-prem. US-STATLRG)
- [Westlaw](#) has full text of bills in all versions from 1995 (104th. Cong.)

### **Congressional Committee Reports** (conference and standing committees)

- [Congress.gov/THOMAS](http://Congress.gov/THOMAS) has all congressional committee reports from 1995 (104<sup>th</sup> Cong. - in html)
- [GPO FDsys](http://GPO FDsys) has all cong. committee reports from 1995 (104<sup>th</sup> Cong.; in text & PDF)
- [GPO FDsys](http://GPO FDsys) has list of docs & rept. found in U.S. Serial Set vols. 1957 to near current year
- [Library of Congress](http://Library of Congress) has selected Serial Set reports & documents 1817-1917
- [Bloomberg Law](http://Bloomberg Law) has committee reports from 1995 (104<sup>th</sup> Congress)
- [CQ Roll Call](http://CQ Roll Call) has Committee Reports from 1995 and in CQ Archives from 1989-1998
- [DSCS.com](http://DSCS.com) (DataStream Content Solutions) has committee reports from 2007
- [Lexis](http://Lexis) has Hse & Sen. rept. SERSET & SERSET2 (pre/post 1969) for law firms & agencies only
- [LexisNexis](http://LexisNexis) has all committee reports from 1993 (103rd Cong. with selected coverage from 1990)
- [LexisNexis](http://LexisNexis) has CIS abstracts of reports from 1970 (links after 1990) & CIS hist. index before 1970
- [ProQuest Congressional](http://ProQuest Congressional) has all House and Senate reports from 1817
- [ProQuest Congressional](http://ProQuest Congressional) has U.S. Serial Set (1817+) & American State Papers (1789-1838)
- [Readex](http://Readex) has U.S. Serial Set (1817-1994) with all committee reports & American State Papers
- [Westlaw](http://Westlaw) has all committee reports from 1990, selected ones related to public laws from 1948 (LH)

### **Congressional Record** (bill actions, votes, floor debate, remarks, daily digest of floor & cmte actions)

- [Congress.gov/THOMAS](http://Congress.gov/THOMAS) has full text of daily edition from 1989 (not in PDF but links to FDsys)
- [GPO Catalog](http://GPO Catalog) has bound 1985 (v. 131) Congressional Record on CD-ROM; created in 1990 - \$40.
- [GPO FDsys](http://GPO FDsys) has daily edition from 1994; in PDF from 1995 (daily has H, S, & E pages from 1967)
- [GPO FDsys](http://GPO FDsys) has bound edition from 1999 (straight numeric pages for each Cong. session volume)
- [GPO FDsys](http://GPO FDsys) has Congressional Record Index from 1983 (98<sup>th</sup> Cong.) with dates from 1993
- [Library of Congress](http://Library of Congress) Century of Lawmaking project has pre Cong. Record (1789-1874) (not PDF)
- [LLSDC](http://LLSDC) has Cong. Rec. overview & Cong. session table with dates, Cong. Rec. vol. #s & notations
- [Bloomberg Government](http://Bloomberg Government) has daily Congressional Record from 2011
- [Bloomberg Law](http://Bloomberg Law) has Cong. Record daily edition from 1989 & bound Cong. Record 1933-1988
- [CQ Roll Call](http://CQ Roll Call) has full text of daily ed. from 2000 (Archives 1987-98) and abstracts of proceedings
- [CQ Roll Call](http://CQ Roll Call) has Floor Videos of Cong. proceedings from 2003 and [Floor Votes](http://Floor Votes) from 1991
- [DSCS.com](http://DSCS.com) (DataStream Content Solutions) has Cong. Record daily edition from 2000
- [HeinOnline](http://HeinOnline) U.S. Cong. Doc. Library has daily Cong. Rec. 1980+ & daily to bound page locator
- [HeinOnline](http://HeinOnline) US Cong Doc Lib. has Cong. Rec. & predec. vols. 1789+ with indices & history of bills
- [LexisNexis](http://LexisNexis) has daily ed. from 1985 with files like RECORD, DIGEST, SENATE, 99TH, 106TH, etc.
- [LLMC.com](http://LLMC.com) has bound Record by vol. # (1873-1876, 1992-93, 1995, 1999 to near current)
- [ProQuest Congressional](http://ProQuest Congressional) has bound Cong. Record vols. & predecessor publications from 1789
- [Westlaw](http://Westlaw) has full text of daily edition (CR file) from 1985 ( 99<sup>th</sup> Cong. to present)

### **Congressional Committee Hearings** (from House and Senate standing committees)

- [GPO FDsys](http://GPO FDsys) has published hearings in PDF from 'most' committees, some as early as 1997 (105<sup>th</sup>)
- [House.gov](http://House.gov) Most Committee pages have prepared testimony for recent years with archived webcasts
- [Senate.gov](http://Senate.gov) Most Committee pages have prepared testimony for recent years with archived webcasts
- [Google Books](http://Google Books) has digitized thousands of hearings with accessible snippets & purchase/library info
- [Hathi Trust Digital Library](http://Hathi Trust Digital Library) has thousands of digitized Cong. hearings & docs (1800s to recent)
- [Rutgers Congressional Docs](http://Rutgers Congressional Docs) has thousands of Congressional hearings & committee prints (1970-98)
- [Bloomberg Government](http://Bloomberg Government) has prepared statements and selected transcripts (FNS & CQ) from 2007
- [C-Span Video Library](http://C-Span Video Library) has audio & video coverage of many congressional hearings from 1987
- [CQ Roll Call](http://CQ Roll Call) Cong. Transcripts of selec. testimony from 1995 (formerly FDCH; Archives 1989-98)
- [Federal News Service](http://Federal News Service) FNS has most prep. statements & selected transcripts of testimony from 1993
- [HeinOnline](http://HeinOnline) has thousands of hearings from 1980s to near present (U.S. Cong. Doc. Library)
- [LexisNexis](http://LexisNexis) has most prepared statements from 1993 (CQ Congressional Testimony)

- [LexisNexis](#) has selected unofficial transcripts of oral testimonies from 1988 (Federal News Service)
- [LexisNexis](#) has CIS abstracts of hearings from 1970 & CIS historical index/abstracts before 1970
- [Lexis](#) has nearly all Cong. hearings(1823+) in four files marketed only to law firms & agencies
- [ProQuest Congressional](#) has nearly all published & unpublished hearings **1823 to current**
- [Westlaw](#) has written statements of Cong. testimony (USTESTIMONY) from 1993 via CQ/FDCH
- [Westlaw](#) has selected transcripts (Q&A) of Cong. testimony (CONGTMY) from 2005 via CQ/FDCH

### **Congressional Committee Prints** (studies/compilations; also the name for bill drafts before markup)

- [GPO FDsys](#) has selected prints of many committees from 1997 (105<sup>th</sup> Cong.)
- [House.gov](#) many Committee Web sites have selected prints from 1997 (105<sup>th</sup> Cong.)
- [Senate.gov](#) many Committee Web sites have selected prints from 1997 (105<sup>th</sup> Cong.)
- [Hathi Trust Digital Library](#) has many committee prints in limited form or full text (1900 to present)
- [Rutgers Congressional Docs](#) has thousands of Congressional hearings & committee prints (1970-98)
- [LexisNexis](#) has many selected committee prints from August 1994 to December 2003
- [ProQuest Congressional Research Digital Collection](#) has most committee prints from 1830

### **Presidential Signing Statements** (from Daily/Weekly Compil. of Pres. Docs & Public Papers of Pres.)

- [American Presidency Project](#) has signing statements from 1929 (U. of Calif., Santa Barbara)
- [GPO FDsys](#) has Daily/Weekly Compil. from 1993 & Public Papers of Pres from 1992 (text, PDF)
- [HeinOnline](#) has Weekly (1965-2008) & Daily (2009+) Compil. of Pres. Docs (U.S. Pres. Library)
- [HeinOnline](#) has Public Papers of the President (1931+) in U.S. Presidential Library
- [LexisNexis](#) has Public Papers of the President from 1979 & [daily compilation](#) from 2001
- [Westlaw](#) has WCPD from 1995-2008, PRES-DAILY from 1993, and USCCAN-MSG from 1986

## **Electronic Sources for Miscellaneous Federal Legislative History Documents**

### **Congressional Documents** (now mostly communications from the President - budget, treaties, vetoes)

- (before 1976 included agency annual reports & many other docs, journals, studies, & some hearings)
- [GPO FDsys](#) has the numbered document series from 1995 (104<sup>th</sup> Cong.) for most documents
- [Hathi Trust Digital Library](#) has hundreds House & Senate docs in limited form or full text (1776+)
- [Library of Congress](#) Century of Lawmaking project has selected U.S. Serial Set docs, 1833-1909
- [Lexis](#) has Hse & Sen. docs SERSET & SERSET2 (pre/post 1969) for law firms & agencies only
- [ProQuest Congressional](#) has all numbered Congressional documents from 1817 (U.S. Serial Set)
- [Readex](#) has U.S. Serial Set (1817-1994) which includes House & Senate documents

### **Congressional Committee Markup Summaries and Amendments** (amendment votes in committee)

- [GPO FDsys](#) Cong. Reports often discuss & sometimes insert markup votes into text of reports
- [House.gov](#) & [Senate.gov](#) Committee Web Pages often have info on recent markups & meetings
- [Bloomberg Law](#) has BNA articles on markups in various newsletters (also on Lexis/Westlaw)
- [CQ Roll Call](#) Committee Coverage has markup sessions, amendment info & votes from 2003
- [CQ Roll Call](#) Amendment Text has draft committee & floor amendments to Cong. bills from 2003

### **Studies, White Papers, Reports** (from GAO, CBO, OMB, CRS, White House, agencies, others)

- [CBO.gov](#) has Congressional Budget Office legis. cost estimates & other studies/reports from 1981
- [FAS.org/sgp/crs/](#) Federation of American Scientists has links to hundreds of recent CRS reports
- [Federal agency](#) & commission Web sites, law firm & other analyses (use search engines)
- [GAO.gov](#) has Government Accountability Office reports from 1920s (in PDF with html abstract)
- [GPO FDsys](#) has GAO reports 1994-2008, U.S. Budget from 1997, Economic Rept. of the President

- [LLSDC](#) has links to CRS reports on Congress & to Sources for Mandated Reports to Congress
- [OMB.gov](#) has recent statements of White House administration policy on specific legislation
- [OpenCRS.com](#) has thousands of past CRS reports with search engine; not always recent versions
- [Bloomberg Law](#) usually has related articles in various BNA daily/weekly reports and newsletters
- [CQ Roll Call](#) has nearly all CRS Reports from 1993 (via PennyHill.com) & many other “Hot Docs”
- [DSCS.com](#) (DataStream Content Solutions) has most CRS reports from 2003
- [PennyHill.com](#) has abstracts of nearly all CRS reports from 1993 (fee to order document)
- [ProQuest Congressional Research Digital Collection](#) has nearly all CRS Reports from 1916

**Press Releases** (often on bill introductions or committee & floor passage)

- [Federal agency](#) & White House press releases that promote legislation
- [House.gov](#) Committee and Member pages have recent press releases
- [Senate.gov](#) Committee and Member pages have recent press releases
- [CQ Roll Call](#) has CQ Hot Docs file with press releases, reports, advocacy letters, etc. from 2000
- [LexisNexis](#) has CQ Congressional Press Releases file from 1993 to current

**Correspondence** (from agencies, private organizations, White House, dear colleague letters)

- [Federal agencies](#) & White House often communicate to Congress (may make FOIA request)
- [GPO FDsys Congressional hearings](#) often contain correspondence as requested by Congress (search)
- [GPO FDsys Congressional Record](#) often contains inserted correspondence from agencies & others
- [House.gov](#) & [Senate.gov](#) committee & member sites often publish letters to agencies & colleagues
- [CQ Roll Call](#) has CQ Hot Docs with selected correspondence from 2000

**News Media** (from various sources: Bloomberg BNA, CQ Weekly, Washington Post, etc.)

## How Federal Legislative Histories Are Generally Arranged

- **Chronological** (see, for instance, the [Truth in Lending Act](#) FRB legislative history)
- **Reverse Chronological** (see the [Digital Millennium Act](#) HRRC legislative history)
- **By Document Type or Size** (see the [Electronic Communications Privacy Act](#) DOJ history)
- **Other Arrangements or Combinations** (see the [Dodd-Frank Act](#) FRB legislative history)

## Options in Using Free and Commercial Electronic Sources

(possible problems in copyright, in license agreements, and changing URLs)

- **Free Congressional Document Downloading** (can freely build own history)
- **Free Linking to Documents in Public Domain** (build own linked history; beware of URL changes)
- **Link to Commercial Histories and Docs** (has advantage of search engines; possible URL changes)
- **Site or Multiple User License Agreements** (access for whole organization or certain users)
- **Have Commercial Source Digitize Your Histories** (free access to your histories, others may pay)
- **Purchase Electronic Database Products** (can build or link to histories on private Intranet)
- **Download to a Private Server** (construct your own private history electronically for own use)
- **Print and Compile a History in Paper** (can then put in file, in binders, or bind together)
- **Obtain Permission for Downloading to Your Intranet** (usually for limited number of docs)

## Some Bibliographic Sources for Federal Legislative Histories

- [\*CIS Legislative Histories of U.S. Public Laws\*](#) (annual abstracts of documents for each public law; available in hard copy and on ProQuest Congressional and LexisNexis, 1970/1984 to near present)
- [\*Federal Legislative Histories: An Annotated Bibliography and Index to Officially Published Sources\*](#) by Bernard Reams - an annotated bibliography of over 250 legislative histories compiled between 1862 and 1990 by Federal staff. It is indexed by public law number, popular name, and *Statutes at Large* citation. KF 42.2 1994. Out of print, but may be available on Amazon.
- [\*Sources of Compiled Legislative Histories\*](#) by Nancy Johnson, 2012, 2d ed. The work is organized by public law number and lists a variety of different types of available legislative histories, including books, journal articles, and online legislative history collections. Also available on HeinOnline's *U.S. Federal Legislative History Library*.

## Some Print and Microfiche Sources for Federal Legislative Histories

- **CCH Public Laws - Legislative Histories on Microfiche** by Commerce Clearing House (96<sup>th</sup> Congress through 105<sup>th</sup> Congress; 1979-1988). Out of Print.
- **IHS Legislative History Microfiche Program**. Information Handling Service. Contains histories of major laws from the 82<sup>nd</sup> Congress through the 96<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1951-1980 and internal revenue laws back to the 61<sup>st</sup> Congress (1909). Out of Print.
- [\*U.S. Code Congressional and Administrative News\*](#) by Thomson-Reuters (1941 to Current). Contains nearly all the text of laws and selected committee reports related to those laws. Also available on Westlaw – see USCCAN-PL file for laws (1973+) and USCCAN-REP or LH files for reports (1948+) and USCCAN-MSG for Presidential signing statements (1985+)