

Chapter 7

FEDERAL LAW

The U.S. federal government system consists of executive, legislative, and judicial branches, each of which creates information that can be the subject of legal research. This chapter provides brief descriptions of the legislative process, the federal judiciary, and the primary sources of federal law, i.e., cases, statutes, and regulations. Included are references to print and Internet sources.

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U.S. Constitution

The United States Constitution is the preeminent government document for Americans. It creates the framework for the system of the U.S. government and its powers, the American political structure, and the guarantee that citizens have fundamental freedoms. The U.S. Supreme Court is the highest court in the land and, as such, interprets the meaning and scope of the Constitution.

While the actual text of the Constitution can be printed in twenty pages or less, legal research sources such as cases and treatises, which offer analysis and interpretation of

this basic document, number in the millions of pages.¹ The text of the Constitution appears in many standard reference sources that are available in public libraries, e.g., dictionaries, almanacs, and encyclopedias, and even more places on the Internet. For a historical perspective, one may view a signed copy of the Constitution on the National Archives [America's Historical Documents](#) Web page. For constitutional commentary and analysis, the GPO (U.S. Government Publishing Office) makes available editions and supplements (from 1992 forward) of the [Constitution of the United States of America: Analysis and Interpretation](#), prepared by the Library of Congress's Congressional Research Service.² Constitutional analysis is also available on Cornell University Law School's Legal Information Institute (LII) Web site as part of the [CRS Annotated Constitution](#).

Federal Legislation

*The Legislative Process*³

Legislative powers provided by the Constitution in Article I are vested in the House and Senate. A majority of Congressional bills originate in the House of Representatives. Therefore, the following discussion traces the progress of a bill originating in the House. Senate procedures are very similar.

Ideas for bills come from varied sources including constituents, members of the President's Cabinet, and members of Congress. Proposed legislation may take one of four forms: bills, simple resolutions, joint resolutions, or concurrent resolutions. The designated bill number (e.g., H.R. 1 or S. 1) that a proposed piece of legislation receives remains the same as the bill progresses from one house to the next. In the federal system, "H.R." designates a bill which originated in the House of Representatives and "S." signifies a bill which originated in the Senate. In contrast, in the California legislative system "S. B." designates a Senate bill and "A.B." identifies an Assembly bill. Measures proposed in Congress other than bills are called resolutions.

¹ An excellent six-volume set, *Encyclopedia of the American Constitution*, 2nd ed. Leonard W. Levy, Kenneth Karst, and Adam Winkler, eds. Macmillan Reference USA, 2000, includes articles on constitutional doctrines, landmark court opinions, individuals, and historical periods.

² This is an extensive and authoritative source published by the Congressional Research Service. The Centennial Editions are several thousand pages.

³ For background articles about the federal legislative process, consult the following: Charles W. Johnson, Parliamentarian, United States House of Representatives, [How Our Laws Are Made](#) (July 24, 2007) and Robert B. Dove, Parliamentarian, United States Senate, [Enactment of a Law](#) (February 1997).

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The first and second readings of a House bill are accomplished by publication of its title in the *Congressional Record*, which is available as far back as 1873 (depending on the format) on govinfo.gov, and from 1989-present on Congress.gov. In the Senate, the bill title is read aloud. Once introduced, bills are assigned to the appropriate committees for consideration. Each committee has jurisdiction over particular types of proposed legislation. These committees may opt to route a bill to a specialized subcommittee.

Committees schedule public hearings for important bills so that witnesses for and against the proposed measure may present testimony. The subcommittee that has been assigned the bill then decides whether to table (take no further action on) the bill, or to report the bill favorably out to the full committee. The bill may be reported out favorably either with or without amendments. An appointed committee member will prepare a detailed report if the committee decides to report the bill favorably to the House. All reports issued, beginning with the 91st Congress, are numbered with a prefix designating the issuing Congress, followed by the report number (e.g., [H. Rpt. 110-513](#)). Read more about the legislative process in the [Resources](#) section of Congress.gov.

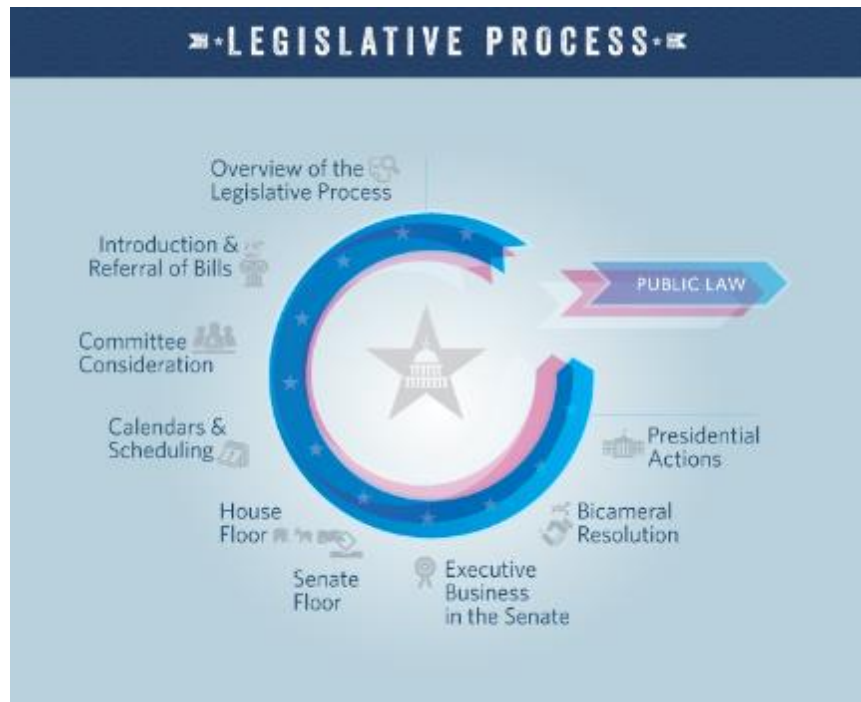
Bills of a noncontroversial nature may be placed on a consent calendar, where they will quickly be passed without debate. Other bills, not on the consent calendar, may be debated on the floor, and amendments to the text may be offered.

Following passage in the House, a bill moves to the Senate where the procedure is more formal. If the bill is noncontroversial, it may be considered at the time of introduction and passed without delay. Other bills are read a second time and are subject to the debate/amendment procedure. A majority of votes is required for the bill to pass. The version of the Senate bill that has passed is returned to the House with a request for concurrence in the amendments. Conference committees will be appointed by each house to resolve differences in proposed, disputed amendments. If an appointed conference committee is unable to agree on the amendments, it will be discharged and a new conference committee appointed. Both the House and the Senate must vote to accept the conference committee report and the identical text of amendments, or a bill will not become law.

Bills that pass both houses are enrolled and sent to the President for approval. The bill will become law either by Presidential approval and signature, or by the lapse of ten days in which no action is taken. If the President disapproves of a bill, the President vetoes the bill and returns it to the originating house with his or her objections. A two-thirds majority in each house is required to override a Presidential veto.

LOCATING THE LAW, SIXTH EDITION, 2018

"The passage of a bill is rarely predictable." Source: Congress.gov



(Image from Congress.gov, or <https://tinyurl.com/y7w8497k>)



(Image from Congress.gov or <https://tinyurl.com/ycet7a4b>)

Federal Statutes

Bills approved through the federal legislative process become statutes and are known as Public Laws. [Public Laws](#) are numbered sequentially by Congressional session and chronological number designation (e.g., [Pub. L. 107-236](#)), and published in chronological order in the [United States Statutes at Large](#). This large set is published by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives, and is available in print, and online on [govinfo.gov](#). Federal statutes are legal evidence of the laws, concurrent resolutions, Presidential proclamations, and proposed and ratified amendments to the Constitution. Researchers who wish to read a law in its entirety as Congress passed it (before it is arranged by subject in the U.S. Code) should refer to the *Statutes at Large*. The laws are arranged by their Public Law numbers (e.g., Pub. L. 108-262) and may be cited by volume and page number (e.g., 118 Stat. 696) in the United States Statutes at Large.⁴ In addition, one may find selected statutes in a set published by Thomson Reuters called *United States Code Congressional and Administrative News (USCCAN)*.

However, the most helpful compilation of federal laws is the subject arrangement found in the official [United States Code](#), which is prepared and published by the [Office of the Law Revision Counsel of the U.S. House of Representatives](#). The *U.S. Code* is arranged in 53 numbered Titles (e.g., Title 11 contains U.S. bankruptcy laws, Title 15 deals with commerce and trade). The U. S. Code is available in print at some law libraries, for free on the internet ([U.S. House](#), GPO's [govinfo.gov](#), and Cornell Law School's [LII](#)), and on fee-based commercial databases like Lexis Advance and Westlaw. New editions of the official version of the *U.S. Code* are published every six years, with cumulative supplements published annually to update the bound volumes. Because laws are passed throughout a Congressional session, currency is a concern for researchers using the official *U.S. Code*. Fortunately, [LII](#) integrates the date listings on the House servers with [Congress.gov](#) to notify searchers of any updates to sections that have changed.

The two largest commercial publishers of the Code in print and online are *United States Code Annotated* (U.S.C.A.) published by Thomson Reuters and available on Westlaw, and *United States Code Service* (U.S.C.S.) published by Reed Elsevier and available on Lexis Advance. These commercial versions are updated more frequently than the official *United States Code*. If available to researchers, these resources should be consulted, not only because they are more current, but because of their added content.

Both offer the same subject arrangement and reproduce the same statutory language as

⁴ The example in this sentence is a law passed by the 108th Congress and assigned the number 262. You will find this law in the *U.S. Statutes at Large* (abbreviated as Stat.) in volume 118 and starting on page 696.

the *U.S. Code*, but they also provide annotations. Annotations are notes of court decisions, regulations, and other sources that interpret or discuss the text of the laws. The same U.S. Code section will be referred to as follows: i.e., the Consumer Product Safety Act will be cited as 15 U.S.C. § 2051 et seq., 15 U.S.C.A. § 2051 et seq., or 15 U.S.C.S. § 2051 et seq. Each citation refers to the same statutory language, which appears in Title 15 (Commerce and Trade) and begins at section 2051. Following the statutory language and notes, the annotations for this section may include references to relevant sections in the *Code of Federal Regulations* (discussed at the end of this chapter), law review commentaries and other secondary sources, and cases that discuss this section of the Consumer Product Safety Act. For other examples of code citations, please see Chapter 2: How to Read a Legal Citation.

Each version of the U.S. Code includes a general subject index and other finding tools such as classification tables, and a particularly useful *Table of Popular Names of Acts* also known as a Popular Names Table. Often, researchers know only the name of the act as it is referred to in the press; e.g., Family and Medical Leave Act. To find the citation to the act in the *U.S. Code* or the *Statutes at Large*, one may look up the popular name of the act in either the U.S.C.A. or U.S.C.S. popular name table or use an online source such as the U.S. House of Representative's [Popular Name Tool](#) or LII's [Table of Popular Names](#).

Researching Federal Legislative History

Legislative history traces the legislative process of a particular bill for the purpose of (1) locating the current status of a bill and monitoring its progress, or (2) determining the legislators' intent behind the enactment of a law to explain or clarify ambiguities in the language or the perceived meaning of that law. The work of compiling a legislative history involves searching for the documents generated during the legislative process such as the versions of the House or Senate bill; House and Senate committee hearings and reports, committee prints, and Presidential messages. While there are many sources to aid a researcher in locating these documents, this discussion highlights readily available Internet sources as well as print sources commonly found in law libraries and in larger public libraries. See [*Selected Legislative History Sources*](#) at the end of this section for additional sources.

- ***Tracking Current Legislation***
[Congress.gov](#), the official Web site for U. S. Federal legislative information, provides the text, status (including the last major action), and a summary of each bill. It offers links to a directory of the current session's Congressional members, the [Congressional Record](#) (a daily transcript of Congressional proceedings),

committee actions, and, once a bill is passed, the Public Law number. The Library of Congress launched this tracking service in 1995 as “Thomas” to make federal legislative information available to the public. In 2016, Congress.gov replaced Thomas with the goal of providing a more comprehensive search with filterable results. See [Congress.gov coverage dates](#) for a list of legislative titles available and their corresponding dates of coverage.

- ***Determining Legislative Intent***

Compiling a legislative history to determine intent can be a daunting task, especially if you are unfamiliar with this type of legal research. Once you know the steps, however, legislative history research can be straightforward and, at the federal level, much easier than compiling a state legislative history due to the availability of research resources. Many law libraries offer detailed guides to federal legislative history research.⁵

The first step in legislative history research is to determine whether someone has already compiled the legislative documents. Some libraries have legislative histories in print and microform. Search in the library catalog by title (e.g., legislative history housing act 1961), by subject (e.g., United States Laws, etc. Bankruptcy law of the United States), or by committee name (e.g., U.S. Congress House (or Senate) Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs Sub-committee on Indian Affairs Menominee Restoration Act).

*Sources of Compiled Legislative Histories, a Bibliography of Government Documents, Periodical Articles and Books, 1st Congress-113th Congress, Third Edition*⁶ offers a good starting point for locating completed histories. The Law Librarians' Society of Washington, D.C. (LLSDC)'s [Legislative Source Book](#) is another excellent resource. Some of its material has been published in print for years, and is also on its Web site. Resources within it include *Federal Legislative History Research: A Practitioner's Guide to Compiling the Documents and Sifting for Legislative Intent*, *A Research Guide to the Federal Register and the Code of Federal Regulations*, and *Selected Congressional Research Service Reports on Congress and Its Procedures*. The Sourcebook also includes

⁵ UCLA Law Library has a detailed [Federal Legislative History Research Guide](#). In addition, Jennifer Bryan Morgan, Documents Librarian, Indiana University School of Law Library —Bloomington, has compiled a list of legislative history research guides by state in [State Legislative History Research Guides Inventory](#).

⁶ *Sources of Compiled Legislative Histories* by Nancy P. Johnson is published by Hein (AALL Publications Series No. 14). It is updated online by Hein Online, a subscription service available at some libraries. *Sources* is also available in print at some law school and larger county public law libraries.

links to Legislative Histories of Selected U.S. Laws on the Internet, available through [Free Sources](#) and [Commercial Sources](#).

Other services that provide complete histories include ProQuest (a subscription database) starting in 1929 (with selective histories from 1789) and CIS (Congressional Index Service) since 1970. ProQuest provides the most comprehensive access to federal legislative histories. ProQuest's Legislative Insight A, B, and annual collections subscription database is a collection of U. S. public laws and the history behind them, including the full text of the law; related bills; Congressional Record excerpts; and House and Senate documents, committee hearings, and reports. The CIS index and abstract volumes bring together bills, hearings, reports, etc., as well as related bills from the same or prior sessions of Congress. All the documents (except full text of debates) are available in microfiche in law libraries. The same libraries may have the full text of debates from the Congressional Record.

Compiled legislative histories are not always available. Researchers of legislative intent are best served in a law library or a depository library which maintains some of the legislative materials described above.

Consider the following steps to identify and locate relevant federal legislative documents, based on your research needs:

1. Read the code section in the *U.S.C.A.* or *U.S.C.S.*
2. Look at the "Historical Note" which follows the code section. In the *U.S.C.A.* look for a citation to the *U.S. Code Congressional and Administrative News* (USCCAN) for legislative history and purpose.
3. Review the annotations for references to cases and law review articles that discuss legislative intent.
4. Note the Public Law number (e.g., Pub. L. 90-325).
5. Consult one of the following publications to identify relevant documents:
 - a. [Congress.gov](#)
 - b. *CIS/Annual's* Index of Bill, Report and Document Numbers
 - c. *USCCAN's* Table of Legislative History
 - d. *Sources of Compiled Legislative Histories* by Nancy P. Johnson.

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6. Read the statute's history (list of actions on the bill) at Congress.gov
 - a. Identify Committee hearings and reports

*Finding aids: CCH Congressional Index, CIS/Annual, CIS U.S. Congressional Committee Hearings Index, Monthly Catalog/Cumulative Subject Index*⁷
 - b. House and Senate Conference Reports

Finding aids: CCH Congressional Index, CIS/Annual, [Congressional Record](#), [Catalog of U.S. Government Publications](#), USCCAN, U.S. Serial Set Index
 - c. Debates in Congress

Finding aid: [Congressional Record Index](#) (1983-present)
 - d. Roll call votes

Finding aid: CCH Congressional Index, [Congressional Record Index](#), [Roll Call Votes](#) (U.S. House of Representatives), [Roll Call Votes](#) (U.S. Senate), and [Roll Call Votes by the U.S. Congress](#) (Congress.gov).
7. Look at Presidential statements and veto messages
 - a. [Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States](#). GPO Web site includes papers from George H. W. Bush – Barack Obama. Series is available in print at law libraries from 1957 to the present.
 - b. [Public Papers of the President](#). National Archives Web site includes papers from Ronald Reagan – Barack Obama.
 - c. [Compilation of Presidential Documents](#). 1992-present.
 - d. [The American Presidency Project](#). 1929-present.
8. Find the Congressional votes on vetoes
 - a. CCH Congressional Index
 - b. [Congressional Record](#)

⁷ For legislative publications issued prior to 1976, consult the printed *Monthly Catalog of the United States Government Publications*. The *Monthly Catalog*, which had been printed since the passage of the Printing Act of 1895, was discontinued with the December 2004 edition. The print editions were distributed to [federal depository libraries](#) through the [Federal Depository Library Program](#). For legislative publications issued after 1976, use the online [Catalog of U.S. Government Publications](#) (CGP), which provides descriptive records for historical and current publications and provides links to those that are available online.

- *Selected Legislative History Sources*

Below is a chart of reliable sources for federal legislative materials.

Name	govinfo	Congress.gov	LII
Link	govinfo.gov	Congress.gov	Legal Information Institute
Selected Contents	U.S. Constitution and analysis; U.S. Code; Statutes at Large; bills, hearings, and reports; Congressional Record, etc.	Bills, resolutions, Bill Summary and Status, roll call votes, committee reports, Congressional Record, etc.	U.S. Constitution, CRS Annotated Constitution, U.S. Code, Table of Popular Names (for the U.S. Code), etc.

Print Sources:

1. *Commerce Clearing House (CCH). Congressional Index* (1938-current)
Lists each bill by number and all the pages in that year's Congressional Record on which the bill is mentioned.
2. *CIS/Index* (LexisNexis) (1970-current)
Lists each public law in the annual abstracts volume chronologically and references hearings, reports, documents, and prints.
3. *Digest of Public General Bills and Resolutions* (GPO) (1971-1990)
Contains summaries of each Public Law. Gives dates of reports, debates, roll call votes, and passage. Ceased with final issue for 101st Congress, 2nd session.
4. Nancy P. Johnson. *Sources of Compiled Legislative Histories: A Bibliography of Government Documents, Periodical Articles, and Books, Third Ed.: 1st Congress to 113th Congress* (AALL Publication No. 14, 2014)
Arranged by Public Law number. Includes an author, title, and act indices.
5. Bernard D. Reams, Jr. *Federal Legislative Histories: An Annotated Bibliography and Index to Officially Published Sources* (Greenwood Press, 1994)
6. *United States Code, Congressional and Administrative News (USCCAN)* (Thomson Reuters) (1952-current)
Reprints what editors believe are the most important House, Senate, and Conference Reports for most Public Laws.

Federal Case Law

Case law, which consists of the written opinions of judges, is one of the most important sources of U.S. legal authority. While cases involve a specific dispute between parties, judges, in their written decisions, shape legal doctrine by interpreting statutes and regulations. Statutes, however clearly worded, must be read in conjunction with court decisions that construe and apply their provisions. Cases can also “create” law in areas where there are no governing statutes or regulations.

*The Federal Judiciary*⁸

The judicial power of the United States is vested in the Supreme Court of the United States and the various inferior or lower federal courts. Federal courts hear cases based on the U.S. Constitution, cases dealing with treaties or federal law, and certain other conflicts. Examples of issues based on federal law are immigration, bankruptcy, and federal taxation. Although the U.S. Supreme Court does have original jurisdiction (i.e., it may be the first court to hear a particular case), for some matters such as disputes between states, it is predominantly an appellate court. The U.S. Supreme Court is compelled to hear certain cases, but in most situations it is within the Court's discretion whether or not to hear an appeal. Cases come to the U.S. Supreme Court from both lower federal courts and state courts; wherever the case originates, a federal question must be involved for the Supreme Court to hear it. Ordinarily, cases are appealed from the highest state appellate court (e.g., the California Supreme Court) or from one of the U.S. Courts of Appeals.

The U.S. Courts of Appeals are the primary federal appellate courts. The United States is divided geographically into twelve circuits.⁹ California is in the Ninth Circuit, which is based in San Francisco. In the Ninth Circuit, bankruptcy appeals can be made either to the Bankruptcy Appellate Panel or to the Circuit Court. There is also a special Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. Cases from all fifty states based on patent appeals and appeals from the Court of International Trade, United States Court of Federal Claims, the Merit System Protection Board, and other specified cases are appealed to the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

District Courts are the trial courts for the federal system. California is divided into four districts. The Northern District is based in San Francisco; the Central District sits in Los Angeles and Santa Ana; the Southern District has offices in San Diego; and the Eastern District sits in Sacramento and Fresno. District courts are courts of first instance for most federal questions. There is also a bankruptcy court in each district.

In addition to the regular court system, there are several administrative agencies with judicial or quasi-judicial powers. The U.S. Tax Court and the National Labor Relations Board (NRLB) are two examples. Appeals from these agencies go to the Courts of Appeals.

⁸ See also the U.S. Courts [Federal Courts & the Public](#) page, which provides an introduction to the federal judicial system.

⁹ The United States Courts Web site provides a [Geographic Boundaries](#) map of the Circuits, as well as a [Court Locator](#) to find federal courts in a particular area.

Federal Case Law Publications

Cases are published chronologically in multi-volumes sets called “reporters” or “reports.” When the volumes reach a certain number (e.g., 100 or 999) the publisher will start over with volume one and designate it as the start of the publication’s second series. For example, the *Federal Reporter* began in 1880 and is currently in its third series. Hence, there is more than one volume with the number 1 in the *Federal Reporter* series: volume 1 of the first series (cited as F.), volume 1 of the second series (cited as F.2d.), and volume 1 of the third series (cited as F.3d).

Please note that while all decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court are published, only some of the U.S. Courts of Appeals and U.S. District Courts’ decisions are published. Also note that there are separate reporters for specialized subject fields of federal law. For example, the decisions of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces (formerly U.S. Court of Military Appeals) are published in Thomson Reuters’s *Military Justice Reporter* (1978 to current). The *Bankruptcy Reporter* (1980-current) contains the decisions of the U.S. Bankruptcy Courts and the bankruptcy decisions from the U.S. District Courts. For a complete list of federal court reporters, see Table 1.1: United States Jurisdictions, Federal of *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation*, 19th ed. (Harvard Law Review Association, 2010). This chart indicates where federal cases are published.

COURT	PUBLICATION TITLE
U.S. Supreme Court	<i>United States Reports</i> (Official) <i>West’s Supreme Court Reporter</i> (Unofficial) <i>LexisNexis’ Supreme Court Reports, Lawyers’ Edition</i> (Unofficial) ¹⁰
U.S. Courts of Appeals	<i>West’s Federal Reporter</i> (Unofficial) <i>West’s Federal Appendix</i> (Unofficial) ¹¹
U.S. District Courts	<i>West’s Federal Supplement</i> (Unofficial) <i>West’s Federal Rules Decisions</i> (Unofficial) ¹²

¹⁰ Although only the printed bound volumes of the *United States Reports* contain the final, official opinions of the Supreme Court, the time lag between issuance of an opinion and its final publication in a bound volume is about four years. For this reason, print researchers must consult one of the unofficial, commercial publications, which are far more current.

¹¹ Cases not selected for publication (by West’s editors) in the *Federal Reporter* series are published in the *Federal Appendix*.

¹² This set began publication in 1940 and contains a selected number of U.S. District Court decisions dealing with procedural issues under the *Federal Rules of Civil Procedure* and the *Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure*.

This chart lists some free Internet sources where one may find federal cases.

FEDERAL CASES ON THE INTERNET (without paid subscription)		
<i>U.S. Supreme Court</i>	<i>U.S. Courts of Appeals</i>	<i>U.S. District Court*</i>
<p>Official Web site of the U.S. Supreme Court (for latest opinions and U.S. Reports starting with volume 502)</p> <p>govinfo.gov (date coverage varies by district)</p> <p>The Public Library of Law (1754 - present)</p> <p>FindLaw (1893 - present)</p> <p>Cornell's LII (1990 - present, plus 600+ historic decisions)</p>	<p>govinfo.gov (date coverage varies by district)</p> <p>The Public Library of Law (1950 - present, except 11th Circuit (1981 - present) and Federal Circuit (1982 - present))</p> <p>OpenJurist (U.S. Court of Appeals opinions from 1880 - present)</p> <p>Cornell's LII (date coverage varies by circuit, earliest opinions are dated 1992)</p>	<p>govinfo.gov (date coverage varies by district)</p> <p>Justia's Federal District Court Cases (2002 - present)</p> <p>Cornell's LII, by state or circuit (date coverage varies by district)</p> <p>*District court opinions are not readily available for free on the Internet. Consider asking your local academic or public law library about access to LexisNexis Academic Universe or public access Westlaw or LexisNexis to find these opinions online.</p>

Federal Regulations & Regulatory Decisions

Federal regulations are rules and procedures promulgated by the executive and administrative agencies, which are delegated power by Congress. Agencies have both quasi-legislative power and quasi-judicial power. Hence, agencies may promulgate binding regulations and issue decisions involving particular parties on a case-by-case basis. Agencies may also issue advisory opinions or decisions, which may be called orders or releases. This area of executive authority is often called administrative law. Researchers new to this area of law may consult the [United States Government Manual](#), which provides comprehensive information on the agencies of the legislative, judicial, and executive branches.

Regulations

Regulations often supply detailed explanations and interpretations for the broad mandates of Congressional acts. Regulations are a binding source of law similar to statutes and cases. Regulations from all federal agencies can be found in two publications issued by the government. The [Federal Register](#) is a daily publication that contains the text of new and proposed regulations.¹³ The [Code of Federal Regulations](#) (CFR) is the codification (subject arrangement) of the general and permanent rules published in the Federal Register. Consult Appendix C of the [U.S. Government Manual](#) for a list of agencies and where they appear in the CFR.

Research for federal regulations should begin with the [Code of Federal Regulations](#). The CFR is divided into 50 titles that represent the broad areas subject to federal regulation. Each title is divided into chapters, usually bearing the name of the issuing agency, which are divided further into parts that cover specific regulatory areas. CFR parts are further subdivided into subparts and finally into sections. Each title, along with an index, is published annually, with the new edition replacing the old. The publication schedule divides the CFR into fourths, with one-fourth of the titles being published in the spring, one-fourth in the summer, etc. A typical citation reads 23 C.F.R. § 750.308, where 23 is the title number and 750.308 is the section number.

The daily Federal Register prints proposed and final amendments to the CFR, and provides cross-reference tables to allow the researcher to determine whether a particular CFR section has been amended since the last annual edition was published. The [e-CFR](#) is a current daily edition of the CFR. Please note that it is not an official, legal edition of the CFR. It is a review of material in the Federal Register by the National Archives, Office of the Federal Register and the Government Publishing Office. Another monthly publication, which is part of the CFR, the [List of CFR Sections Affected](#) (LSA) lists proposed, new, and amended federal regulations that have been published in the *Federal Register* since the most recent revision of a CFR title.

Regulatory Decisions

Federal agencies such as the National Labor Relations Board and the Federal Maritime Commission often have judicial or quasi-judicial authority and may issue administrative

¹³ Also available is a prototype edition of the Federal Register at <http://www.federalregister.gov/>. In addition, the Office of the Federal Register's [Public Inspection Desk](#) provides access to documents that will appear in the next days' Federal Register, as well as selected documents scheduled for later issues.

decisions. The decisions of many agencies are not published officially by the agency.

Electronic database and loose-leaf law publishers are the main sources for this information. However, an increasing number of administrative decisions are available on the Internet, although there is little consistency in how agencies provide access to them. The University of Virginia Library's [Administrative Decisions & Other Actions – By Agency](#) provides links to administrative actions that are outside the scope of the CFR or the Federal Register. Another way to obtain these decisions and rulings is to make a request to the appropriate agency.

Presidential Materials

Materials that emanate from the President's lawmaking function include executive orders for officers in departments and agencies and proclamations for announcing ceremonial or commemorative policies. Executive orders and proclamations may be found in the *Federal Register*, *Code of Federal Regulations*, and the Web sites listed below.

Presidential materials available on [govinfo.gov](#) include the [Budget of the U.S. Government](#), the [Economic Report of the President](#), and [Compilation of Presidential Documents](#).

[Presidential Actions](#) (White House official Web site). Includes recent Executive Orders, Memoranda, and Proclamations.

[Codification of Presidential Proclamations and Executive Orders](#) (National Archives/ NARA). "Provides access to the edited and re-arranged text of Presidential Proclamations and Executive Orders from April 13, 1945 to January 20, 1989." This page includes a link to the [Executive Orders Disposition Tables](#), which begin with President Roosevelt's EO 7532, listing amendments and revocations, and a way to [search the codification](#) of proclamations and EOs.

[The American Presidency Project](#)

Established in 1999 as a collaboration between John Woolley and Gerhard Peters at the University of California, Santa Barbara, this site contains over 86,000 documents related to the study of the Presidency. The Document Archive includes the Messages and Papers of the Presidents (Washington to Taft, 1789-1913), the Public Papers of the President (Hoover to Bush, 1929-1993), as well as documents such as party platforms, candidates' remarks, formal farewell addresses, etc.

Selected Bibliography

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- *Legal Research Explained*, 2nd ed. Deborah E. Bouchoux (Aspen Publishers, 2010)
- *The Process of Legal Research*, 9th ed. Deborah A. Schmedemann et al. (Wolters Kluwer, 2016)



Internet Sources Cited in This Chapter

U.S. Constitution:

- America's Historical Documents: <http://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/>
- Constitution of the United States of America, Analysis and Interpretation: <https://tinyurl.com/yb8zwfcf>
- Cornell's Legal Information Institute (LII), Constitution with CRS annotations: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/anncon/>

Federal Legislation:

- Cornell's Legal Information Institute: <http://www.law.cornell.edu>
- How Our Laws Are Made: Learn about the Legislative Process: <https://tinyurl.com/h5ual9f>
- Popular Name Tables: <http://uscode.house.gov/popularnames/popularnames.htm>
<http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/topn/>
- Statutes at Large: <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/STATUTE>
- U.S. Code: <http://uscode.house.gov/>
- U. S. Congressional Bills: <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/BILLS>

Federal Legislative History Sources:

- Catalog of U.S. Government Publications: <http://catalog.gpo.gov/F>
- Congressional Calendars: <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/CCAL>
- Congressional Record: <https://www.govinfo.gov/help/crec#about>
- Congressional Record Index: <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/cri>
- Federal Depository Libraries: <https://tinyurl.com/yb33gvbc>
- How to Contact Your Elected Officials: <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>
- Indiana University, State Legislative History Research Guides: <https://tinyurl.com/3kqveb>
- Journal of the House of Representatives: <https://tinyurl.com/y9fu5wdf>
- LLSDC's Legislative Information Source Book: <https://www.llsdc.org/sourcebook>
- Legislative Histories of Selected U.S. Laws, Free Sources: <https://tinyurl.com/yb8gzqtv>
- Legislative Histories of Selected U.S. Laws, Commercial Sources: <https://tinyurl.com/yc9ua5tc>
- UCLA Federal Legislative History Research Guide: <https://tinyurl.com/ycl8sm4o>
- NARA's Finding Aids for Legislative Archives: <https://tinyurl.com/yaurpefu>

Federal Case Law:

- Cornell's LII, Federal Law: Judicial Opinions: <https://tinyurl.com/y8u89vj2>
- Federal Courts & the Public: <https://tinyurl.com/y7koytb7>
- FindLaw: <http://caselaw.findlaw.com/>
- govinfo.gov: <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/USCOURTS>
- OpenJurist: <http://openjurist.org/>
- The Public Law Library: <http://www.plol.org/Pages/Search.aspx>
- Supreme Court of the United States: <https://tinyurl.com/ybay3dsy>

Federal Regulations & Regulatory Decisions:

- United States Government Manual: <https://tinyurl.com/y8myw84o>
- Federal Register: <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/FR>
- Code of Federal Regulations: <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/CFR>
- e-CFR: <https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/ECFR?page=browse>
- Administrative Decisions & Other Actions—By Agency (University of Virginia): https://guides.lib.virginia.edu/administrative_decisions

Presidential Materials:

- American Presidency Project: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/index.php>
- Codification of Presidential Proclamations and Executive Orders: <https://tinyurl.com/y7bnfk4j>
- Compilation of Presidential Documents: <https://tinyurl.com/yayeukqz>
- Economic Report of the President: <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/ERP>
- Executive Orders Disposition Tables Index: <https://tinyurl.com/y8rh7v8y>
- Presidential Actions: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/>
- Public Papers of the President: <https://tinyurl.com/y7xj3wn3>
- News: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/news/>