

USING LEXISNEXIS CONGRESSIONAL FOR FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Prepared by Diane Murley, SIU Law Library — February 2007

COMPONENTS OF LEXISNEXIS CONGRESSIONAL

LexisNexis Congressional provides the following types of information for Congressional publications:

- indexes to Congressional publications from 1789 to current;
- summaries of Congressional publications from 1970 to current; and
- full-text online access to:
 - bills (1989-current);
 - committee reports (1990-current);
 - *Congressional Record* (1985-current);
 - Congressional testimony, including prepared statements and transcripts of testimony before Congressional committees and subcommittees (1988-current);
 - House and Senate documents (1995-current); and
 - selected committee prints (1993-current).

As you can tell from the description above, the type of information available in this database depends upon the date. For very old Congressional documents, LexisNexis Congressional only provides citation information, which you can use to find the actual documents in print or micro-format. Beginning with 1970, summaries of the documents are also available, but full-text documents did not become available electronically until the 1980s or 1990s, depending upon the type of item.

HOW TO USE LEXISNEXIS CONGRESSIONAL TO FIND CONGRESSIONAL PUBLICATIONS

On the LexisNexis Congressional Home page, you can choose from six Congressional Search Forms linked in the left column. The two that you are most likely to use for legislative history research are "Congressional Publications" and "Legislative Histories, Bills & Laws."

The most efficient way to find Congressional publications about a bill that became law is to retrieve a legislative history by bill or public law number. On the "Congressional Publications" search form, choose the **Search by Number** tab, and use the drop-down menu to select **Find a legislative history by number**. Use the menus and boxes to fill in your Enacted Bill, Public Law, or Statute at Large number, then **Search**.

The screenshot shows the LexisNexis Congressional Publications search interface. The 'Search By Number' tab is selected. The '1. Select task' dropdown is set to 'Find Congressional publications related to a bill or law'. The '2. Search on' section has 'Bill Number' selected. A dropdown menu is open showing a list of bill numbers from 110 to 91. The 'Search within' section has 'Committee Prints (1970-present)' and 'Hearings (1970-present)' checked. The 'House & Senate Documents (1970-present)' and 'House & Senate Reports (1970-present)' are also checked. A 'Search' button is visible. The left sidebar shows 'Congressional Search Forms' with 'Congressional Publications' selected. The top navigation bar includes 'Home', 'How Do I?', 'Site Map', and 'Help'.

In the alternative, on the "Legislative Histories, Bills & Laws" search form, choose the **Get a Document** tab, and use the drop-down menu to select **Legislative Histories**. Use the menus and boxes to fill in your Public Law or Enacted Bill number, then **Search**. These searches will retrieve the Legislative History for the public law or bill number you entered. On the Legislative History page retrieved, you will find descriptions and citations to bills, debates, reports, hearings, prints, and other documents – with links to summaries or full-text documents available on LexisNexis Congressional.

The screenshot shows the LexisNexis website interface for the "Legislative Histories, Bills & Laws" search form. The "Get a Document" tab is active. Under "1. Select document type", a dropdown menu is open, showing "Legislative Histories" selected. Under "2. Enter number", the "Public Law Number" radio button is selected, and a dropdown menu is open showing "110" selected. A "Search" button is located to the right of the form. The left sidebar contains navigation links for "Congressional Search Forms" and "Search for Other Information".

If you want to find Congressional publications related to a bill that did not become law, or publications that do not relate to any particular bill, you will need to use one of the "Congressional Publications" forms, which search legislative histories, House and Senate reports, hearings, and other Congressional documents. Use **Basic** or **Advanced Search** to search by keyword or index term; use **Search by Number** if you know the number of the Congressional publication. Your search results will include citations, with links to summaries or full-text documents if available.

The screenshot shows the LexisNexis website interface for the "Congressional Publications" search form. The "Advanced Search" tab is active. The "Enter search terms" field is empty. The "Search within" section has checkboxes for "Committee Prints (1970-present)", "Hearings (1970-present)", "House & Senate Documents (1970-present)", "House & Senate Reports (1970-present)", and "Legislative Histories (1969-present)". The "Restrict by" section has "Date" selected with "Previous 2 years" chosen, and "Congress" selected with "Any Congress" chosen. A "Search" button is located at the bottom right of the form. The left sidebar contains navigation links for "Congressional Search Forms" and "Search for Other Information".

Note: Although "Congressional Publications" searches retrieve legislative histories that link to bills and laws, they do not search the bills and laws themselves. To search the full text of bills and laws, use the "Legislative Histories, Bills & Laws" search form.