



Federal Legislative Research using *LexisNexis™ Congressional*

LexisNexis™ Congressional is a tool which is extremely useful for tracing Federal (U.S.) legislation through the many phases of the legislative process, and provides access to hearings, reports, and other forms of documentation for individual bills and Public Laws from 1999 to the present.

To begin, go to the Library home page: <http://www.umsl.edu/library/>

Choose “Databases, Sorted Alphabetically”.

Select the letter “L”.

Select <*LexisNexis™ Congressional*> and click on <Search *LexisNexis™ Congressional*>.

The screen which appears begins with a “**Basic Search**” search. This search is by keyword and retrieves a mix of *any Congressional* materials (including hearings, reports, *and* laws) which match the requested keywords.

To search for the legislative history of *specific* bills or laws, select *Legislative Histories, Bills & Laws* from the left-hand column.

Searching LexisNexis™ Congressional by Public Law Number

Searching by the Public Law (P.L.) number (which is a unique identifier) is the most direct form of search. From the <Legislative Histories> (on the left of the screen) main page, select the “**Get a Document**” tab. The default is to retrieve legislative histories. If you have the Public Law number, select the appropriate Congress number from the drop-down box (Congresses 91 through current), then fill in the P.L. number in the second box.

{Example: to search for P.L.107-239, change the drop-down box to 107, and fill in the second box with 239:

Public Law Number: -

Click on the “Search” button. The record for the Public Law will be retrieved. Click on the link to view the available information.

This link provides the number of the House or Senate bill that was the basis of the Law (e.g., [107 S. 1325](#)), a brief summary, a list of related bills, descriptors which may be used to find related materials (in a new search), links to the *Congressional Record*, and listings of reports, documents, and hearings related to the Law.

There is also a link, “[Retrieve Bill Tracking report](#)”, which will provide information about the sponsor, all steps in the legislative process (when introduced, passed, signed, etc.), co-sponsors, links to the *Congressional Record* showing when actions were taken, and, in some cases, links to any Presidential remarks made at the time of signing. There may also be a longer digest (summary) at the end of the record.

Searching LexisNexis™ Congressional by Bill Number

When searching by bill number, you must have the Congress number (e.g. 91 – 109) to distinguish bills from different years. (Bill numbers start over with each new Congress number.) If you only have a year, please ask a Librarian to help you determine the correct Congress number. You must also know whether the bill originated in the House of Representatives or the Senate.



Using the instructions above, go to the “Get a Document” screen. In the “1. Select document type” box, change “Legislative Histories” to “Bill Tracking”. For “2. Bill number”, in the first drop-down box select the desired Congress number; in the second box, select “H.R.” (House of Representatives) or “S” (Senate); in the third box, fill in the bill number.

Example: to search for H.R. 1515 from the 106th Congress, change the first box to “106”, leave the second box as H.R. and type 1515 in the third box:

Bill Number:

Click on the “Search” button. Select the bill to retrieve the available information. This will give the same information as the “Bill Tracking” link described in the section above entitled “Searching *LexisNexis*TM *Congressional* by Public Law Number”. If the bill made its way through to final passage and signature by the President, that will be reflected in the “Actions” and a link will be provided back to the Public Law information. Most bills do not make it to the stage of becoming a Public Law. More often, the list will end with referral to a committee or with the last action taken.

Finding Committee Information using LexisNexisTM Congressional

To determine which Senators or Representatives are members of a committee* to which a current bill has been referred, return to the *LexisNexis*TM *Congressional* main search screen, select “Members and Committees” from the left of the screen, then select the “Committees” tab. You may do a combined search, but if you know with which “Chamber” (House or Senate) the committee is affiliated, you may select the appropriate chamber from the drop-down box. In the “Name” box you may type in a keyword from the Committee title, the complete Committee name, or you may use the “Look up a [Committee](#)” function to select a committee to be pasted into the search. The default search is for the roster of the current Committee. Click “Search”. A list of profile reports will appear. The main Committee roster is the first profile, followed by any Subcommittees. Each profile includes the names of the members, with their state and party affiliation, in seniority ranking; names, addresses and phone numbers of Committee staff; and the charter, composition and jurisdiction of the Committee.

*If you need rosters for previous years’ Committees, please ask at the Reference Desk for assistance. *LexisNexis*TM *Congressional* only provides information on current Committees.