Federal Legislative Research Using ProQuest Congressional

ProQuest Congressional (Formerly Lexis/Nexis Congressional) is a tool which is extremely useful for tracing Federal (U.S.) legislation through the many phases of the legislative process. It provides access to hearings, reports and other forms of documentation for individual bills and Public Laws from 1969 to the present.

To search ProQuest Congressional:

- Go to the libraries’ homepage.
- Click the "Articles/Databases" tab in the center of the page.
- Click “By Name.”
- Select the letter “P.”
- Click “ProQuest Congressional” and then click “Search ProQuest Congressional.”

Once you enter the database, you can choose to complete either a basic or advanced search. The basic search is by keyword and retrieves a mix of any Congressional materials (including hearings, reports, and laws) which match the requested keywords.

To do a more specific search, such as for a public law, bill number, legislative history or committee information, you will want to choose the “Advanced Search” option.

Searching by Public Law Number:

Searching by the Public Law (P.L.) number (which is a unique identifier) is the most direct form of search.

To search by Public Law number:

- On the left side of the screen, choose “Search By Number” (located under “Congressional Publications”).
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.

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., 104 H.R. 2288), 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.

Searching by Bill Number:

When searching by bill number, you must have the Congress number (e.g. 104 – 2288) 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.

To find a bill:

- On the left side of the screen, choose “Search By Number” (located under “Congressional Publications”).
- 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.

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 ProQuest 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

To determine which Senators or Representatives are members of a committee* to which a current bill has been referred, return to the *ProQuest Congressional* advanced search screen.

- Select “Members and Committees” from the left of the screen.
- Choose the “Committees” link.
- Use the “Name” box or the keyword box to type in a keyword from the Committee title or a complete Committee name. You can also 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.
- 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.
- 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. *ProQuest Congressional* only provides information on current Committees.

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