

TRIO User's Guide

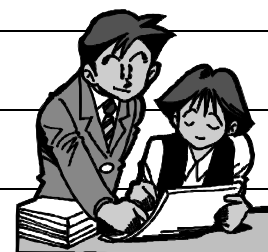
NATIONAL **TRIO** CLEARINGHOUSE

Compiling a Legislative History

A legislative history consists of all of the documents produced in the process of a bill becoming a law. A legislative history of Talent Search, for example, includes the Higher Education Act of 1965 (its authorizing legislation), each set of HEA amendments, as well as the congressional documents that correspond to each law.

Overview of the Legislative Process and Legislative History Documents

Legislative Action	Document Produced
Congressperson(s) introduces bill in Senate or House.	Bill
Bill is referred to a committee and a subcommittee, who may gather testimony from experts and constituents.	Hearing
If the committee decides to proceed with the bill, it explains the reason why and the changes it made to the original bill.	Committee Report(s)
The bill is discussed by Congresspersons in the Senate or House who then vote on it.	Congressional Debates in the Congressional Record
Bill is sent to the other chamber, which repeats the same process beginning with the bill's introduction.	Bill, Hearings, Committee Reports, Debates (in Congressional Record) from other chamber.
If the House and Senate pass two different versions of the bill, a committee, called a Conference committee, made up of members of both chambers meets to create one version.	Conference Report
The bill is sent to both chambers for approval.	Congressional Record
This is sent to the President for approval. If he decides to sign it, he may also issue a brief statement explaining the significance or reason for the new law.	Public Law, Presidential Statement(s) (Presidents may also issue statements containing recommendations for new laws, which then begin the legislative process.)



Where to Find Legislative History Documents

Document	Library 	Major Sources 
Bills	U.S. Statutes at Large (1776+), CIS Serial Set (1933+), USSCAN (1941+)	LexisNexis Congressional Universe (1989+), THOMAS (1989+), GPO Access (1993+)
Hearings	CIS Serial Set (1833+) – select hearings only	GPO Access (1997+) – select hearings only
Reports	CIS Serial Set (1789+), U.S. Congressional Serial Set (1817+), USSCAN (1941+)	THOMAS (1995+), GPO Access (1995+)
Debates	Congressional Record (1873+)	THOMAS (1989+); GPO Access (1994+)
Public Laws	U.S. Statutes at Large (1776+), USSCAN (1941+), U.S. Code (1926+)	LexisNexis Congressional Universe (1989+), THOMAS (1989+), GPO Access (1995+)
Presidential Statements	USSCAN (1941+), Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents (1965+)	GPO Access (1993+)

See reverse for information on each source.

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1025 Vermont Ave. NW, Suite 1020, Washington, DC 20005 • 202.638.2887 <http://www.trioprograms/clearinghouse>

Web Version at <http://www.trioprograms.org/clearinghouse/faq.html>

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Book and/or Microfiche Sources (available in libraries):



U.S. Code Congressional and Administrative News (USCCAN) – Bound reprints of all federal public laws and selected reports and presidential statements from 1941. Volumes are organized by congressional session. Select congressional reports are reprinted in the legislative history volumes. The bill number, report number(s) and dates of consideration and passage for each public law are listed in the final volume of each session.

Congressional Record – The official record of the U.S. Congress. Provides the text of congressional floor debates from 1873. Published daily while Congress is in session, it is then cumulated annually with an index. Access to the indexes is by subject, names of legislators, and titles of legislation.

U.S. Congressional Serial Set – Bound series of over 14, 000 volumes that contains nearly all of the numbered Congressional reports and documents produced since 1817 (15th Congress, 1st session) including House and Senate Documents and House and Senate Reports. Congressional hearings have not been collected systematically, but sometimes appear in the collection. Serial Set publications are indexed in the *CIS Serial Set Index* and available in microfiche from the *CIS Serial Set Microfiche Collection*.

CIS (Congressional Information Service) US Serial Set Index and Microfiche Collection – An index to congressional publications produced from 1789 to 1969 and accompanying microfiche collection of the indexed documents, including Senate and House reports and miscellaneous documents. Select congressional hearings are included in some volumes. *CIS/Index*, a separate index and microfiche collection, provides access to Congressional publications produced since 1970, and also provides abstracts to the indexed documents.

U.S. Statutes at Large – Provides the text of public laws from 1776. A brief summary of the legislative history including House and Senate report citations, dates of consideration and passage and presidential communications is listed at the end of each public law beginning with the 94th Congress (1975). The legislative history of each public law prior to 1975 is provided in a table at the end of each volume.

U.S. Code – The codification of laws passed since 1926 listed by broad subjects divided into 50 titles. The U.S. Code shows how a law has been integrated into other existing laws and is published every six years.



Electronic Sources (available on-line):

THOMAS @ <http://thomas.loc.gov> -- A service of the Library of Congress containing several databases of federal legislative information. The full text of laws is available from 1973, bills and congressional debates from 1989 and Congressional Reports from 1995. For help using THOMAS, see 'A TRIO User's Guide to THOMAS' at <http://www.trioprograms.org/clearinghouse/faq.html>.

GPO Access @ <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/index.html>. A free on-line electronic document service of the U.S. Government Printing Office. Publications, available in both PDF and text formats, include bills and public and private laws, the U.S. Code, the Congressional Record, committee reports, House and Senate documents, congressional hearings, and presidential statements.

LexisNexis Congressional Universe @ <http://www.lexisnexis.com/>. A fee-based subscription database service of congressional indexes and documents, including the index portion of CIS from 1789-1969 and the index and abstract from 1970 forward. Many universities maintain subscriptions. Non-subscribers can pay for daily or weekly access, to view specific documents, or to order prints from the CIS Microfiche collection.