

# THURGOOD MARSHALL SCHOOL OF LAW LIBRARY

## *Pathfinder Series*

Richard Clark, Government Documents Librarian

April 2015

## Federal Legislative History

Legislative history is a term that refers to the documents that are produced by Congress as a bill introduced, studied and debate. These legislative documents are often used by attorneys and courts in an attempt to determine Congressional intent or to clarify vague or ambiguous statutory language. Examples of these documents are committee reports, committee hearing, committee prints, floor debates, bills drafted in aid of the legislation and presidential signing statement. There are a number of resources available for compiling legislative histories. Here are some of them.

- U.S. Code Congressional and Administrative News (U.S.C.C.A.N.)
- Westlaw
- ProQuest Congressional
- HeinOnline
- The Library of Congress Thomas
- FDsys

None of these resources is complete. They should be treated as complementary.

### **U.S.C.C.A.N.**

In order to carry out a basic legislative history research, five pieces of information must be borne in mind.

- Is there a compiled legislative history on the law?
- In what year was the law or amendment in question made?
- What is the Public Law or Statute at Large citation?
- Which Congress passed the law and what is the bill number?
- What is the popular name of the statute?

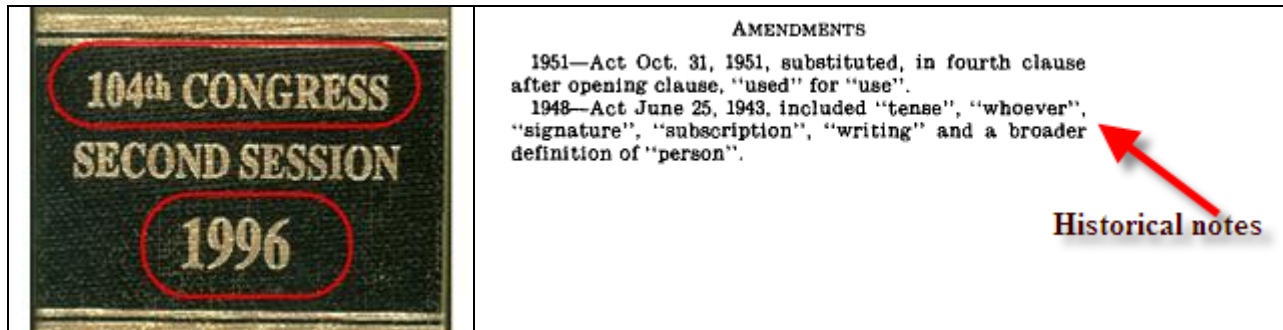
We shall explore these issues in turn, using appropriate illustrations to drive home our points

#### *a. Finding compiled legislative histories*

There is quite a large body of compiled legislative histories in existence. If the publisher is reputable, take advantage of these resources

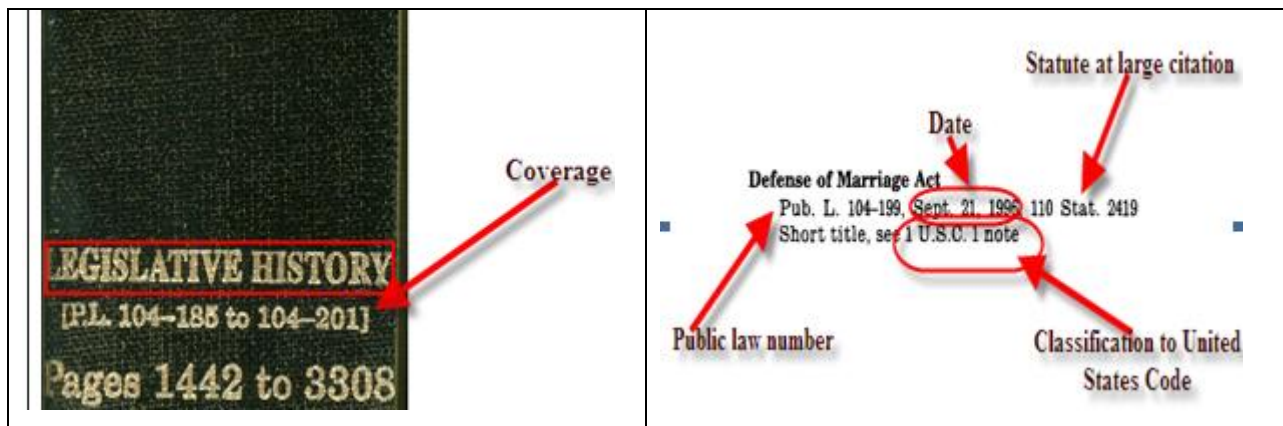
#### *b. Determining the date of the law or amendment in question*

If this is known, proceed to the corresponding years in U.S.C.C.A.N. If unknown, consult the historical note or summary accompanying the provision in the United States Code.



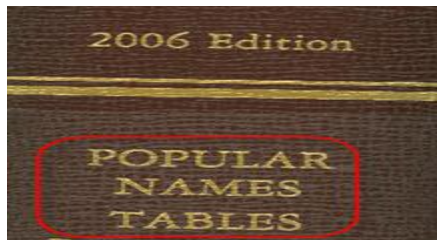
*c. Statutes at Large Citation*

If the Public Law citation is known, proceed to the appropriate section in the U.S. C.C.A.N. volume. This is set out on the spine. Alternatively consult the popular name table



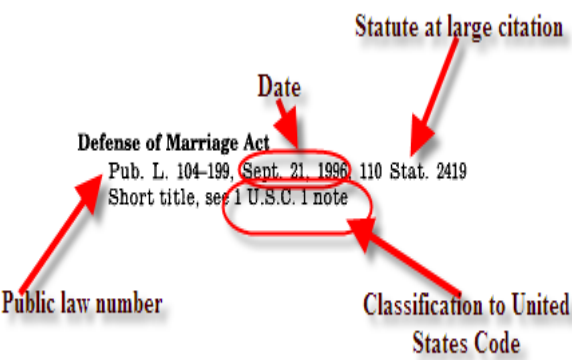
*d. Popular name*

As may sometimes happen, all that is available to the researcher is the popular name of the statute. Popular names are names assigned to legislation- examples are McCain-Feingold Act or Defense of Marriage Act. Use United States Code (United States Code Annotated or United States Code Service) to locate the name. Other information provided with the “Popular Name” are: Public Law number, Statute at Large citation, date of the law, and, section of United States Code to which the law is classified. Classification is the process by which a piece of legislation transition from the chronological order in Statutes at Large to the appropriate topic or chapter in United States Code.



ACTS CITED BY POPULAR NAME

<p><b>Defense Contract Bond Act</b> Apr. 29, 1941, ch. 81, 55 Stat. 147</p> <p><b>Defense Conversion, Reinvestment, and Transition Assistance Act of 1992</b> Pub. L. 102-484, div. D, Oct. 23, 1992, 106 Stat. 2658 Short title, see 10 U.S.C. 2500 note</p> <p><b>Defense Conversion, Reinvestment, and Transition Assistance Amendments of 1993</b> Pub. L. 103-160, div. A, title XIII, Nov. 30, 1993, 107 Stat. 1783 Short title, see 10 U.S.C. 2500 note</p> <p><b>Defense Conversion, Reinvestment, and Transition Assistance Amendments of 1994</b> Pub. L. 103-397, div. A, title XI, Oct. 5, 1994, 108 Stat. 2862 Short title, see 10 U.S.C. 2500 note</p> <p><b>Defense Department Overseas Teachers Pay and Personnel Practices Act</b> Pub. L. 86-91, July 17, 1959, 73 Stat. 213 (20 U.S.C. 901 et seq.) Short title, see 20 U.S.C. 901 note</p> <p><b>Defense Dependents' Education Act of 1978</b> Pub. L. 95-561, title XIV, Nov. 1, 1978, 92 Stat. 2365 (20 U.S.C. 921 et seq.) Short title, see 20 U.S.C. 921 note</p> <p><b>Defense Drug Interdiction Assistance Act</b> Pub. L. 99-570, title III, subtitle A (§3051 et seq.), Oct. 27, 1986, 100 Stat. 3207-74 Short title, see 10 U.S.C. 371 note</p> <p><b>Defense Economic Adjustment, Diversification, Conversion, and Stabilization Act of 1990</b> Pub. L. 101-510, div. D, Nov. 5, 1990, 104 Stat. 1848 (10 U.S.C. 2391 note)</p> <p><b>Defense Eight-Hour Day Act</b> Oct. 10, 1940, ch. 836, 54 Stat. 1092</p> <p><b>Defense Entry and Departure Act</b> June 21, 1941, ch. 210, 55 Stat. 202</p> <p><b>Defense Highway Act of 1941</b> Nov. 19, 1941, ch. 474, 55 Stat. 705</p> <p><b>Defense Housing Act of 1942</b> Jan. 21, 1942, ch. 14, 56 Stat. 11</p> <p><b>Defense Housing and Community Facilities and Services Act of 1951</b> Sept. 1, 1951, ch. 378, 65 Stat. 293 Short title, see 42 U.S.C. 1501 note</p> <p><b>Defense Housing Appropriation Act</b> Oct. 14, 1940, ch. 857, 54 Stat. 1115</p> <p><b>Defense Industrial Reserve Act</b> July 2, 1948, ch. 811, 62 Stat. 1225 (50 U.S.C. 451 et seq.) Short title, see 50 U.S.C. 451 note</p> <p><b>Defense of Marriage Act</b> Pub. L. 104-199, Sept. 21, 1996, 110 Stat. 2419 Short title, see 1 U.S.C. 1 note</p> <p><b>Defense Officer Personnel Management Act</b> Pub. L. 96-483, Dec. 12, 1980, 94 Stat. 2835 Short title, see 10 U.S.C. 101 note</p>	<p><b>Defense Officer Personnel Management Act Technical Corrections Act</b> Pub. L. 97-22, July 10, 1981, 95 Stat. 124 Short title, see 10 U.S.C. 101 note</p> <p><b>Defense Offsets Disclosure Act of 1989</b> Pub. L. 106-113, div. B, §1000(a)(7) [div. B, title XII, subtitle D (§1911 et seq.)], Nov. 29, 1999, 113 Stat. 1536, 1501A-500 (50 U.S.C. App. 2059 note)</p> <p><b>Defense Patents Act</b> June 16, 1942, ch. 415, 56 Stat. 370</p> <p><b>Defense Procurement Improvement Act of 1985</b> Pub. L. 99-165, title IX, Nov. 8, 1985, 99 Stat. 682 Short title, see 10 U.S.C. 2302 note</p> <p><b>Defense Procurement Reform Act of 1984</b> Pub. L. 98-628, title XII, Oct. 19, 1984, 98 Stat. 2588 Short title, see 10 U.S.C. 2302 note</p> <p><b>Defense Production Act Amendments of 1951</b> July 31, 1951, ch. 373, 65 Stat. 131 Short title, see 50 U.S.C. App. 2061 note</p> <p><b>Defense Production Act Amendments of 1952</b> June 30, 1952, ch. 530, 66 Stat. 296 Short title, see 50 U.S.C. App. 2061 note</p> <p><b>Defense Production Act Amendments of 1953</b> June 30, 1953, ch. 171, 67 Stat. 129 Short title, see 50 U.S.C. App. 2061 note</p> <p><b>Defense Production Act Amendments of 1955</b> Aug. 9, 1955, ch. 659, 69 Stat. 580 Short title, see 50 U.S.C. App. 2061 note</p> <p><b>Defense Production Act Amendments of 1974</b> Pub. L. 93-426, Sept. 30, 1974, 88 Stat. 1166 Short title, see 50 U.S.C. App. 2061 note</p> <p><b>Defense Production Act Amendments of 1975</b> Pub. L. 94-152, Dec. 16, 1975, 89 Stat. 810 Short title, see 50 U.S.C. App. 2061 note</p> <p><b>Defense Production Act Amendments of 1980</b> Pub. L. 96-284, title I, part A (§101 et seq.), June 30, 1980, 94 Stat. 617 Short title, see 50 U.S.C. App. 2061 note</p> <p><b>Defense Production Act Amendments of 1984</b> Pub. L. 98-265, Apr. 17, 1984, 98 Stat. 149 Short title, see 50 U.S.C. App. 2061 note</p> <p><b>Defense Production Act Amendments of 1986</b> Pub. L. 99-441, Oct. 3, 1986, 100 Stat. 1117 Short title, see 50 U.S.C. App. 2061 note</p> <p><b>Defense Production Act Amendments of 1992</b> Pub. L. 102-558, Oct. 28, 1992, 106 Stat. 4198 Short title, see 50 U.S.C. App. 2061 note</p> <p><b>Defense Production Act Amendments of 1995</b> Pub. L. 104-64, Dec. 18, 1995, 109 Stat. 689 Short title, see 50 U.S.C. App. 2061 note</p> <p><b>Defense Production Act Amendments of 2001</b> Pub. L. 107-47, Oct. 5, 2001, 115 Stat. 260 Short title, see 50 U.S.C. App. 2061 note</p> <p><b>Defense Production Act Extension Amendments of 1977</b> Pub. L. 95-37, June 1, 1977, 91 Stat. 178 Short title, see 50 U.S.C. App. 2061 note</p>
---	---



THE CODE OF LAWS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TITLE 1—GENERAL PROVISIONS

This title was enacted by act July 30, 1947, ch. 388, §1, 61 Stat. 833

TABLE SHOWING DISPOSITION OF ALL SECTIONS OF FORMER TITLE 1—Continued

Title / Former Sections	Revised Statutes Statutes at Large	Title / New Sections
30a	R. S. §99	113
31	R. S. §9	114
32a	Mar. 2, 1929, ch. 586, §1, 45 Stat. 1549	201
32b	May 29, 1928, ch. 590, §2, 45 Stat. 1907	202
33	Mar. 2, 1929, ch. 586, §2, 45 Stat. 1549	203
34	May 29, 1928, ch. 590, §1, 45 Stat. 1907	204
35	Mar. 2, 1929, ch. 586, §3, 45 Stat. 1549	205
36a	Mar. 2, 1929, ch. 586, §1, 47 Stat. 1603	206
36b	June 13, 1954, ch. 403, §§1, 2, 48 Stat. 948	206
37	Mar. 2, 1929, ch. 586, §5, 45 Stat. 1542	207
38	Mar. 2, 1929, ch. 586, §4, 45 Stat. 1542	207
39a	June 13, 1954, ch. 403, §§1, 2, 48 Stat. 948	208
39b	Mar. 2, 1929, ch. 586, §7, 45 Stat. 1542	208
40	May 29, 1928, ch. 590, §4, 45 Stat. 1907	209
41	May 29, 1928, ch. 590, §5, 45 Stat. 1907	210
42	May 29, 1928, ch. 590, §1, 45 Stat. 1908	211
43	May 29, 1928, ch. 590, §1, 45 Stat. 1908	212
44	May 29, 1928, ch. 590, §10, 45 Stat. 1908	213
45	Mar. 3, 1933, ch. 202, §2, 47 Stat. 1497	Rep.

Section 23 of act July 30, 1947, provided that the sections or parts thereof of the Statutes at Large or the Revised Statutes covering provisions codified in this Act are repealed insofar as the provisions appeared in former Title 1. and provided that any rights or liabilities now existing under the repealed sections or parts thereof shall not be affected by the repeal.

CHAPTER 1—RULES OF CONSTRUCTION

TABLE SHOWING DISPOSITION OF ALL SECTIONS OF FORMER TITLE 1

Title / Former Sections	Revised Statutes Statutes at Large	Title / New Sections
1	R. S. §1	1
2	R. S. §2	2
3	R. S. §3	3
4	R. S. §4	4
5	R. S. §5	5
6	June 11, 1940, ch. 325, §1, 54 Stat. 305	6
7	R. S. §7	7
8	R. S. §8	8
9	R. S. §9	9
10	R. S. §10	10
11	R. S. §11	11
12	R. S. §12	12
13	R. S. §13	13
14	R. S. §14	14
15	R. S. §15	15
16	Nov. 1, 1893, 28 Stat. App. 5	16
17	Mar. 2, 1895, ch. 177, §1, 28 Stat. 759	17
18	Mar. 6, 1929, ch. 94, §1, 41 Stat. 529	18
19	R. S. §19	19
20	R. S. §20	20
21	R. S. §21	21
22	R. S. §22	22
23	R. S. §23	23
24	R. S. §24	24
25	R. S. §25	25
26	Jan. 12, 1895, ch. 22, §73, 28 Stat. 615	26
27	June 20, 1938, ch. 598, §2, 49 Stat. 1531	27
28	June 16, 1933, ch. 477, §1, 52 Stat. 790	28

§ 1. Words denoting number, gender, and so forth

§ 1. Words denoting number, gender, and so forth  
In determining the meaning of any Act of Congress, unless the context indicates otherwise—

<sup>1</sup>So in original. Does not conform to section caption.

SHORT TITLE OF 1996 AMENDMENT  
 Pub. L. 104-199, §1, Sept. 21, 1996, 110 Stat. 2419, provided that: "This Act [enacting section 7 of this title and section 1738C of Title 28, Judiciary and Judicial Procedure] may be cited as the 'Defense of Marriage Act.'"

This law affects two provisions - § 7 U.S.C. 1 & § 1738C U.S.C. 28

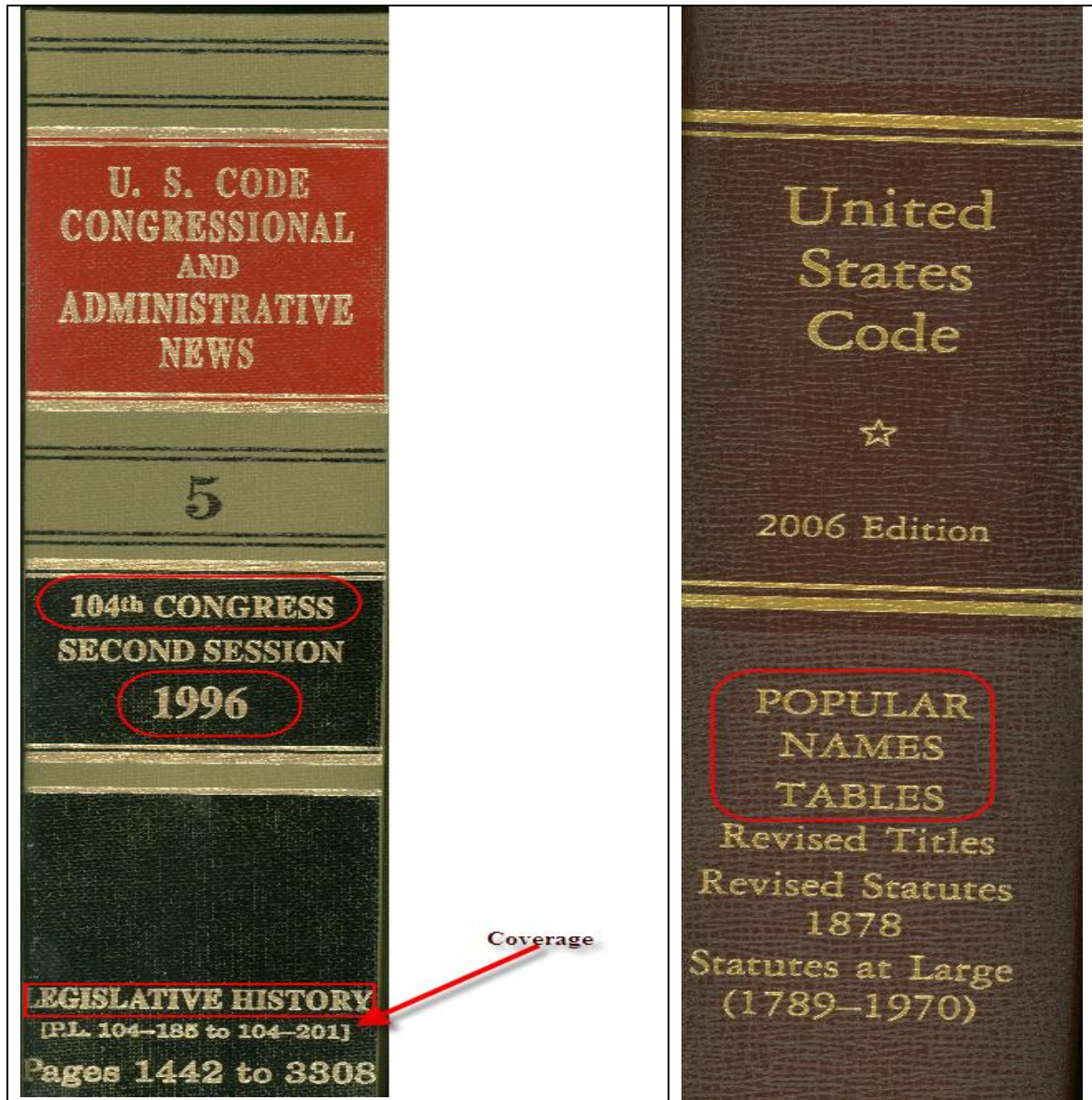
<p><b>§ 7. Definition of "marriage" and "spouse"</b></p> <p>In determining the meaning of any Act of Congress, or of any ruling, regulation, or interpretation of the various administrative bureaus and agencies of the United States, the word "marriage" means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word "spouse" refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife.</p> <p>(Added Pub. L. 104-199, §3(a), Sept. 21, 1996, 110 Stat. 2419.)</p>	<p><b>§ 1738C. Certain acts, records, and proceedings and the effect thereof</b></p> <p>No State, territory, or possession of the United States, or Indian tribe, shall be required to give effect to any public act, record, or judicial proceeding of any other State, territory, possession, or tribe respecting a relationship between persons of the same sex that is treated as a marriage under the laws of such other State, territory, possession, or tribe, or a right or claim arising from such relationship.</p> <p>(Added Pub. L. 104-199, §2(a), Sept. 21, 1996, 110 Stat. 2419.)</p>
--	--

e. Congress where the law originated

It's often helpful to translate Congress number to year. The 104<sup>th</sup> Congress sat in what year(s)? See <http://history.house.gov/Congressional-Overview/Profiles/104th/>. From this website, 104<sup>th</sup> Congress covered 1995-1997.

The screenshot shows the 'History, Art & Archives' website for the United States House of Representatives. The main navigation bar includes 'INSTITUTION', 'PEOPLE', 'EXHIBITIONS & PUBLICATIONS', 'COLLECTIONS', 'ORAL HISTORY', 'EDUCATION', and 'RECORDS & RESEARCH'. The page title is 'Congress Profiles'. A dropdown menu is set to '104th (1995-1997)'. The selected option '104th Congress (1995-1997)' is highlighted with a red box and a red arrow. Below this, the 'Congressional Profile' section lists 'Total Membership' (435 Representatives, 4 Delegates, 1 Resident Commissioner) and 'Party Divisions' (204 Democrats, 230 Republicans, 1 Independent). A note states 'Party division totals are based on election day results.' and a link for 'Election Statistics, 1994 [PDF]' is provided. A 'Congress Overview' section at the bottom notes that Republicans swept the 1994 elections and won control of both the House and Senate.

Finally, proceed to U.S. Code Congressional and Administrative News (U.S.C.C.A.N.) for volumes covering 104<sup>th</sup> Congress or the period of 1995-1997. Focus is on the volume(s) dealing with legislative history. The spines of the volumes provide guide to coverage.



## Westlaw

Westlaw also provides resources for legislative research. The salient ones are:

Database	Abbreviation	Suggested query format
Popular name table	USCA-POP	“defense of marriage”
Public law	US-PL	us pl 104-199
All versions of Congressional bill	CONG-BILLTXT (add the Congress number e.g. 104 <sup>th</sup> Congress will be CONG-BILLTXT104) – searches various versions of bills introduced in Congress	"defense of marriage"
Arnold & Porter Compiled Legislative History	Scope is wide – search for “Arnold & Porter legislative history” in the database selection query box	

## ProQuest Congressional

<http://congressional.proquest.com/profiles/gis/search/basic/basicsearch>

ProQuest Congressional offers access to congressional publications dealing with the wide variety of topics addressed by Congress.

0 Recent searches | 0 Selected items | Exit

Help ?

ProQuest Congressional Publications  
Advanced Search

Bookmark this form

Search Types

- Congressional Publications
  - Basic Search
  - Advanced Search**
  - Search By Number
- Congressional LibGuide
- Statistical Abstracts US

All fields except full text Improve using [Index Terms](#)

AND

All fields except full text Improve using [Index Terms](#)

Add a row | Remove a row Search tips Search Clear form

Limit to:

Match In:

- Select all
- Committee Prints & Misc. Publications 2004-Present
- CRS Reports 2004-Present
- Hearings 2004-Present
- House & Senate Documents 2004-Present
- House & Senate Reports 2004-Present
- Serial Set 2004-Present

Restrict By Date or Congress:

Date: All Available Dates

Congress: Any Congress  
1(1789 - 1791) to 114(2015 - 2016)

Search tips Search Clear form

Contact Us | Privacy Policy | Accessibility | Sitemap

How Advanced Search Works

Use this form to retrieve congressional materials and legislative histories by searching abstracts, titles, indexing information and other bibliographic data.

How do I ?

Do you want to search Legislative Histories by [Public Law Number](#) or by [Keyword](#)?

Do you have a [Bill Number](#) you would like to lookup?

Legislative History Documents

**HeinOnline: U.S. Legislative History Library** <http://heinonline.org/HOL/Welcome>

There are two collections

- a. Sources of Compiled Legislative History Database
- b. U.S. Federal Legislative History Title Collection

**U.S. Federal Legislative History Library**

**Sources of Compiled Legislative History Database**  
 The Sources of Compiled Legislative Histories Database is derived from the looseleaf publication *Sources of Compiled Legislative Histories: A Bibliography of Government Documents, Periodical Articles, and Books* by Nancy P. Johnson, Law Librarian and Professor of Law Georgia State University College of Law. All compilations for major laws are included in the database with the following exceptions: appropriations measures; ceremonial matters; laws that extend the life of an agency or authority; and laws that affect small numbers of persons or specific regions of the country. The sources for these compilations include congressional documents, legal periodicals, treatises and looseleaf services.

**U.S. Federal Legislative History Title Collection**  
 The Legislative History Title Collection is a collection of full-text legislative histories on some of the most important and historically significant legislation of our time. In addition to major complete legislative histories this collection includes texts related to legislative histories. A legislative history is the collection of documents that are produced in Congress during the enactment of a law.

- Sources of Compiled legislative history database – options:
  - browse by Congress
  - browse by public law

**Legislative History Library – View List of Public Laws**

Name	Public Law/ Bill Number	Statute	Congress
Browse by: <a href="#">Congress</a>   <a href="#">List of Public Laws</a>			
<a href="#">A</a>   <a href="#">B</a>   <a href="#">C</a>   <a href="#">D</a>   <a href="#">E</a>   <a href="#">F</a>   <a href="#">G</a>   <a href="#">H</a>   <a href="#">I</a>   <a href="#">J</a>   <a href="#">K</a>   <a href="#">L</a>   <a href="#">M</a>   <a href="#">N</a>   <a href="#">O</a>   <a href="#">P</a>   <a href="#">Q</a>   <a href="#">R</a>   <a href="#">S</a>   <a href="#">T</a>   <a href="#">U</a>   <a href="#">V</a>   <a href="#">W</a>   <a href="#">X</a>   <a href="#">Y</a>   <a href="#">Z</a>			
We select this option for "Defense of Marriage Act"			
Defense of Marriage Act Of 1996	104-199/H.R. 3396	110 Stat. 2419	104th Congress (1995-96)

- U.S. Federal Legislative History Library – this are landmark legislation – Civil Rights Act, Sarbanes-Oxley Act, etc.

**U.S. Federal Legislative History Library**

Browse by: [Publication Title](#) | [Public Law No.](#) | [Popular Name](#)

We browse for "Sarbanes-Oxley Act"

---

☐ [Sarbanes-Oxley Act Of 2002 \(Corporate And Criminal Fraud Accountability Act Of 2002\) \(White-Collar Crime Penalty Enhancement Act Of 2002\)](#)  
 Pub. L. Num. 107-204

- ✚ A very important part of the Heinonline database is the option to search across both collections



- ✚ Searching for specific document. To use this option, select “Field search” and select the specific field



**The Library of Congress Thomas <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/thomas.php>**

THOMAS was launched in January of 1995, at the inception of the 104th Congress. The leadership of the 104th Congress directed the Library of Congress to make federal legislative information freely available to the public. Since that time THOMAS has expanded the scope of its offerings to include the features and content listed below. Congress.gov will eventually replace The Library of Congress Thomas in the future.

- Bills, Resolutions
- Activity in Congress
- Congressional Record
- Schedules, Calendars
- Committee Information
- Presidential Nominations
- Treaties
- Government Resources



The LIBRARY of CONGRESS THOMAS

The Library of Congress > THOMAS Home

**THOMAS**  
In the spirit of Thomas Jefferson, legislative information from the Library of Congress

- THOMAS Home
- About THOMAS
- Bills, Resolutions**
- Congressional Record
- Presidential Nominations
- Treaties
- Committee Reports
- Government Resources
- For Teachers
- Help

Print | Subscribe | Share

Legislation in Current Congress | Current Activity

Search Bill Summary & Status

Word/Phrase | Bill Number

SEARCH

Try the Advanced Search

Browse Bills by Sponsor

The LIBRARY of CONGRESS THOMAS

The Library of Congress > THOMAS Home > Bills, Resolutions

**Bills, Resolutions**

Print | Subscribe | Share/Save

THOMAS Home

About THOMAS

**Bills, Resolutions**

Congressional Record

Presidential Nominations

Treaties

Search Bill Text | **Search Bill Summary, Status** | Search Multiple Congresses

THOMAS provides many options for finding legislation and information about legislation. These options are described below.

Select Congress:  
111 | 110 | 109 | 108 | 107 | 106 | 105 | **104** | 103 | 102 | 101 | View 100-99

Select a Range of Public Laws

- 104-1 - 104-150
- 104-151 - 104-300**
- 104-301 - 104-333

Looking for Pub. L. 104-199  
"Defense of Marriage Act"

View Public Laws by Type in Bill Number Order

- House Joint Resolutions
- House Bills
- Senate Joint Resolutions
- Senate Bills

199. [H.R.3396](#) : To define and protect the institution of marriage.  
 Sponsor: [Rep Barr, Bob](#) [GA-7] (introduced 5/7/1996) [Cosponsors](#) (117)  
 Committees: House Judiciary  
 House Reports: [104-664](#)  
 Latest Major Action: Became Public Law No: [104-199](#) [GPO: [Text](#), [PDF](#)]

Full Display | Related Information

[PDF](#) | [Printer Friendly Display](#) | **[Bill Summary and Status](#)** | [Full Text of Bill](#)

**H.R.3396**  
**Title:** To define and protect the institution of marriage.  
**Sponsor:** [Rep Barr, Bob](#) [GA-7] (introduced 5/7/1996) [Cosponsors](#) (117)  
**Related Bills:** [H.RES.474](#), [S.1740](#), [S.1999](#)  
**Latest Major Action:** Became Public Law No: 104-199 [GPO: [Text](#), [PDF](#)]  
**House Reports:** [104-664](#)

Congressional Research Service Summary

<a href="#">All Information</a> (except text)	<a href="#">Text of Legislation</a>	<b><a href="#">CRS Summary</a></b>	<a href="#">Major Congressional Actions</a>
<a href="#">Titles</a>	<a href="#">Cosponsors</a> (117)	<a href="#">Committees</a>	<a href="#">All Congressional Actions</a>
<a href="#">Related Bills</a>	<a href="#">Amendments</a>	Related Committee Documents	<a href="#">All Congressional Actions with Amendments</a> With links to <i>Congressional Record</i> pages, votes, reports
CBO Cost Estimates	<a href="#">Subjects</a>		

FDsys <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/search/home.action>

FDsys Access is a repository of Conference reports, Congressional bills, Congressional record, Public laws, United States Code, and Presidential documents or signing statements, among others. All of these resources are slated for migration to FDsys which is a modern database containing digitally signed materials

<http://www.gpoaccess.gov>