

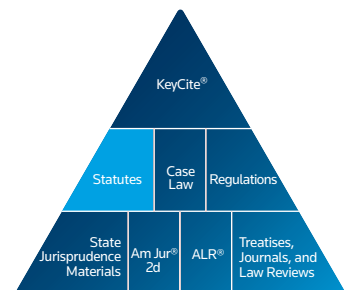
PROFESSIONAL LEGAL RESEARCH

The federal legislative process—what happens to a bill as it wends its way through Congress—is a complex process. Nevertheless, it is important to understand each step in the process in order to piece together the legislative history of a statute. The Legislative History—Federal tabbed page on Westlaw contains a graphical presentation of the congressional lawmaking process with links to useful databases. This quick reference guide shows you how to use this tabbed page to research the legislative history of a federal law.

Category:

Research Fundamentals

For research assistance 24 hours a day, seven days a week, call the West Reference Attorneys at 1-800-850-WEST (1-800-850-9378) or click **Help** on Westlaw® for a live help session.



The Westlaw Research Pyramid

**Using the Westlaw
Research Pyramid**

Statutes are the second category of primary legal sources.

Statutes on Westlaw are annotated to help you find relevant case law that interprets or applies the statutes.

Congressional Lawmaking Process Databases

The names and identifiers of selected databases pertinent to each step in the lawmaking process are listed below.

Law School

Legislative History - Fed

Congressional Lawmaking Process

1. Preliminary congressional inquiry—hearings
Congressional Testimony (CONGTMY)
U.S. Congressional Testimony (USTESTIMONY)
U.S. Political Transcripts (USPOLTRANS)

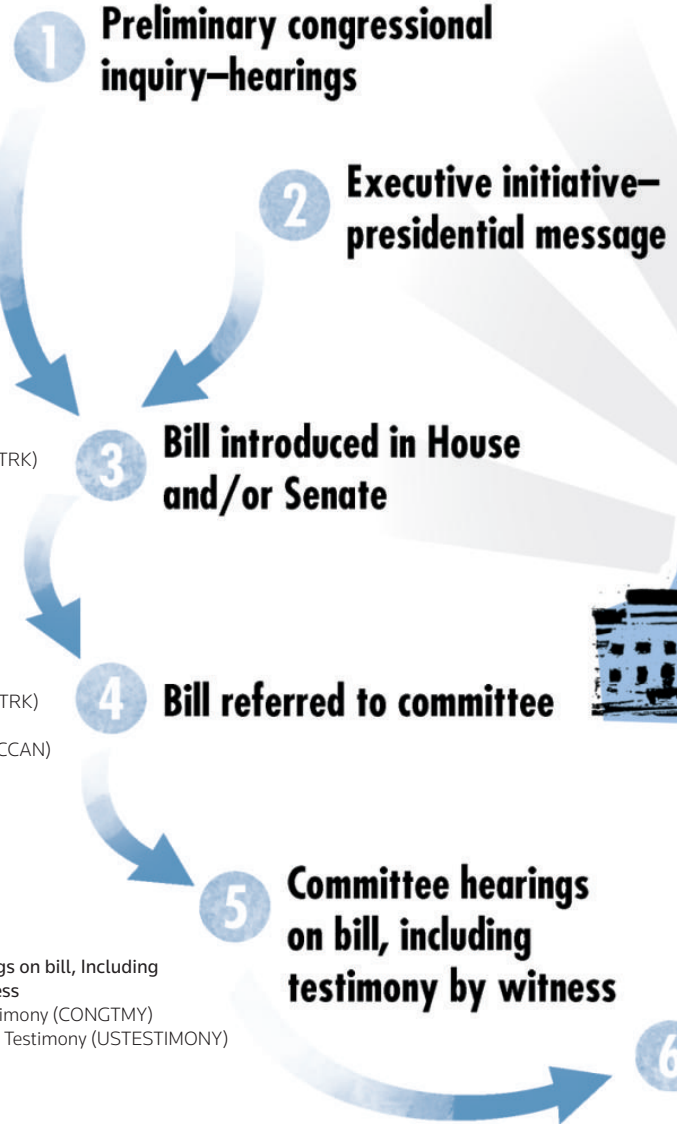
2. Executive initiative—presidential message
Daily Presidential Documents (PRES-DAILY)
Presidential Documents (PRES)
U.S. Code Congressional and Administrative News®—Executive Orders (USCCAN-EO)

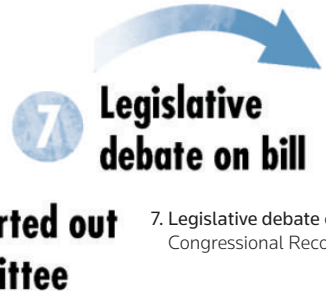
3. Bill introduced in House and/or Senate
Bill Tracking—Federal—Summaries and Status (US-BILLTRK)
Congressional Bills (CONG-BILLTXT)

4. Bill referred to committee
Bill Tracking—Federal—Summaries and Status (US-BILLTRK)
Congressional Record (CR)
U.S. Code Congressional and Administrative News (USCCAN)

5. Committee hearings on bill, including testimony by witness
Congressional Testimony (CONGTMY)
U.S. Congressional Testimony (USTESTIMONY)

6. Bill reported to committee
Bill Tracking—Federal—Summaries and Status (US-BILLTRK)
Legislative History (LEGIS-HIS)
U.S. Congressional Testimony (USTESTIMONY)





12 Law is codified if it has general and permanent applicability

12. Law is codified if it has general and permanent applicability
 United States Code Annotated® (USCA)
 USCA® Popular Name Table (USCA-POP)
 United States Code Annotated–Tables (USCA-TABLES)

11 President signs bill and it becomes law

11. President signs bill and it becomes Law
 Presidential Documents (PRES)
 U.S. Code Congressional and Administrative News–Presidential Messages and Signing Statements (USCCAN-MSG)
 U.S. Code Congressional and Administrative News–Public Laws (USCCAN-PL)

10 Bill passed by both houses ("enrolled")

10. Bill passed by both houses ("enrolled")
 Bill Tracking–Federal–Summaries and Status (US-BILLTRK)
 Congressional Bills (CONG-BILLTXT)
 U.S. Code Congressional and Administrative News –Public Laws (USCCAN-PL)

9 Bill referred to conference committee if House and Senate versions differ

9. Bill referred to conference committee if House and Senate versions differ
 Bill Tracking–Federal–Summaries and Status (US-BILLTRK)
 Legislative History–U.S. Code, 1948 to Present (LH)
 U.S. Code Congressional and Administrative News –Legislative History Table (USCCAN-TABLE)

8 Bill passed ("engrossed"); if passed in only one chamber, bill is introduced in the other and process is repeated

8. Bill passed ("engrossed"); if passed in only one chamber, bill is introduced in the other and process is repeated.
 Bill Tracking–Federal–Summaries and Status (US-BILLTRK)
 Legislative History–U.S. Code, 1948 to Present (LH)
 U.S. Code Congressional and Administrative News (USCCAN)

7 Legislative debate on bill

7. Legislative debate on bill
 Congressional Record (CR)

6

6. Report of committee
 Bill Tracking–Federal–Summaries and Status (US-BILLTRK)
 Legislative History–U.S. Code, 1948 to Present (LH)
 Congressional Testimony (USTESTIMONY)

For assistance using Westlaw, call 1-800-850-WEST (1-800-850-9378).
For free reference materials, visit west.thomson.com/westlaw/guides.

