CHECKLIST
COMPILING A
LEGISLATIVE HISTORY
CHECKLIST FOR COMPILING A LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

A. Obtain the Public Law Number and Statutes at Large Number for the Legislation

1. Recently Passed Legislation
   (a) Congressional Index
       _____ Know Subject of the Bill but not the Popular Name
       _____ Gives the Public Law Number, Statutes at Large Cite
   (b) Shepard's Acts and Cases by Popular Names
       _____ know the name of the Act
       _____ Gives the Public Law Number, Statutes at Large Number, and
       _____ U.S.C. cite

2. If the Legislation has been codified and you have the cite to the U.S.C., you use the
   following steps to find the P.L. number and the Statutes at Large cite.
   (a) U.S.C. and U.S.C.S.
       _____ Find the Statute in the U.S.C.
       _____ Go to the end of the code section.
       _____ You will be given the Public Law Number and the Statutes at Large
cite
   (b) U.S.C.A.
       _____ Find the Statute in the U.S.C.A.
       _____ At the end of the code section, you will be given the date of
       _____ enactment, the public law number, and the Statutes at Large cite.
       _____ Find the "Historical and Statutory Notes," and look for the sub-topic
       _____ "Legislative History."
       _____ If there is a legislative history reference, you will be given the cite to
       _____ the legislative history in the U.S.C.C.A.N.

B. Compiled Legislative Histories

1. Determine if a legislative history has been compiled by someone else. Check the
   public catalog or a publication which references compiled legislative histories. If you
   are lucky enough to locate a compiled legislative history, a major part of your task
   has been done.

2. Compiled Legislative Histories are indexed in three excellent sources

   Sources of Compiled Legislative History - Johnson
   Sources of Compiled Legislative History - looseleaf service with coverage
   from the first Congress to the present
   Union List of Legislative Histories - 1881 to present
C. Compiling Your Own Legislative History

1. If there isn’t a compiled legislative history, then you must find a list of the documents which make up the legislative history for the bill, and then locate the actual documents. The best starting point for this exercise is the United States Code Congressional and Administrative News.

2. United States Code Congressional and Administrative News
   • This is a series of books published by West Publishing Company
   • It is indispensable in keeping abreast of current federal legislative documents and is an excellent source for locating earlier legislative histories
   • The purpose of this series is to supply in one place verbatim copies of federal legislative materials less easily found in official form
   • It is issued semimonthly during each session of Congress in the form of advance sheets, and the annual volumes covering a session are bound.

   (a) Compiling the History
      ______ Obtain the Public Law Number and/or Statutes at Large number for the Act
      ______ Pull the USCCAN volume which contains the Public Law Number for the Act you are researching
      ______ Turn to the page on which your Public Law Begins
           • the Public Law number appears in the upper right-hand corner of the page
           • the Statutes at large number appears at the bottom of the page
      ______ The Bill as enacted begins on this page, the publication gives some notes in the margin
      ______ On the first page under the name of the act, you will be told where the Legislative History for the act is located.
      ______ Go to the volume and page given for the Legislative History.
      ______ On the first page of the Legislative History, you are given a complete list of the documents which make up the legislative history.
           • date the statute was enacted
           • Statutes at Large Citation
           • Committee Report Numbers for House and Senate
           • Names of the Committees Reporting on the bill
           • Congressional Record Volume and dates when the house and senate considered the bill
   (b) Locating the Documents
      ______ Some, but not all, of the documents are reprinted in the U.S.C.C.A.N.
      ______ Full text of the Public Laws are reprinted in the volumes labeled “Laws.”
      ______ House or Senate Committee Reports are reprinted in the volumes labeled “Legislative History.”
      ______ Conference Committee Reports are reprinted in the “Legislative History” volume for the bill.
      ______ Presidential Signing Statement is found at the end of the Legislative History for the bill.
4. Statutes at Large Approach

_____ Take the Statutes at Large cite.

_____ Find the volume of the Statutes at Large which contains the document you need.

_____ If the volume is 88 or lower, there will be a Table in the back entitled “Guide to Legislative History of Bills Enacted into Public Law”

_____ Look up the Public Law Number on the table, and it will list references to the legislative documents for the Public Law

_____ If the volume is 89 or higher, the legislative history is printed with the statute

D. Locating Documents Not Housed in the Law Library

1. Government Depository Libraries

_____ If the documents you need aren’t located in the law library, go to the nearest Government Documents Library.

_____ Carrie Rich Memorial Library, the undergrad library, is a selective Government Depository Library which houses many government documents.

_____ Tell the librarian what you need, and she will find it for you.

2. Internet Access to Federal Documents (Non-Subscription Based)

_____ If you don’t want to go to the Undergrad Library to look for information, you can always “surf the net.” There are several web sites which give access to many of the documents needed to compile a legislative history.

_____ University of Michigan Documents Center

• http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/
  • Legislative Process
  • Bill Indexes
  • Congressional Research Service Reports
  • Bill Texts and Status
  • Published and Unpublished Hearings
  • Reports and Documents
  • Floor Debates in the Congressional Record

_____ Internet law Library

• http://www.lectlaw.com/inll/1.htm
  • Chose the option for U.S. Federal Laws (by original published source)
  • Chose the option for the Congressional Record, Hearings of Congressional committees, or House and Senate Documents.

_____ United States Government Printing Office

• http://www.access.gpo.gov/
Thomas - legislative Information on the Internet
- http://thomas.loc.gov/
  - Congress this week
  - Bills (101st and 107th Congress)
  - Congressional Record (101st - 107th Congress)
  - Committee Information (104th - 107th Congress)
  - Historical Documents
  - Legislative Process

North Carolina Legislative Library
- http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/LegLibrary/
  - Click on link to Research Guide.
  - Click on Link to Compiling a Legislative History

3. Internet Access to Federal Resources (Subscription Based)

Westlaw
- www.lawschool.westlaw.com
  - Database: USCCAN
  - Public Laws
  - All Congressional Committee Reports (1990 - present)
  - Legislative Histories 1948 - present
  - Presidential Proclamations
  - Executive Orders

Lexis
- http://www.lexisnexis.com/lawschool/
  - Bill Text & Tracking
  - Legislative Histories
  - Congressional Record Materials

ProQuest Congressional
- http://web.lexis-nexis.com/congcomp
  - Reports
  - House and Senate Documents
  - Committee Prints
  - Bills
  - Congressional Record
  - Testimony in Congressional Hearings
  - Bill Tracking
  - Legislative Histories
PROPER CITATION FORM FOR LEGISLATIVE MATERIALS

A. 

**BILLS**

1. **Unenacted Federal Bills**
   **Rule 13.2**


   1. If relevant, include the name of the bill in regular type.
   2. Give the abbreviated name for the house
      a. H.R. = House of Representatives
      b. S. = Senate
   3. Give the number of the bill
   4. Give the Congress (abbreviate Congress = Cong.)
      Note: Unless the documents were published in the late 1800's or early 1900's, you do not give the session of Congress. ([Rule 13](#))
   5. Give the § of any
   6. Give the year of publication
      **Rule 13.2(a)**

2. **Enacted Federal Bills**

   1. General Rule - cite as Statutes
      **Rule 13.2(b)**
      **Rule 12**
   2. Exception - if the bill is used to document Legislative History, cite as an unenacted bill.
      **Rule 13.2(b)**

B. 

**HEARINGS**

**Rule 13.3**


1. Give the title as it appears on the cover of the Report. Uncerscore or italicize the title.
   a. Include the bill number
   b. Give the subcommittee and/or committee name which conducted the hearings
2. Give the Congress
3. Give the page number for the materials being cited
4. Year of publication
5. If you are citing a specific statement, indicate the information in parenthesis.
   a. Give the speaker's full name
   b. Give the speaker's title
      **Rule 13.3**
C. **REPORTS**  
**Rule 13.4**


1. Give the Name of the House  

2. Give the number of the Congress and the Report number. Separate the two numbers with a hyphen.

3. Give the page number on which the material appears preceded by the word "at."

4. Give the year of publication.


1. For documents published after 1974, give a parallel cite to the *United States Code* and *Congressional News*

2. Give the name of the house, the number of the Congress and Report Number, the page number, and the year of publication.

3. Indicate the report is a reprint by preceding the USCCAN cite with the words "reprinted in." "Reprinted in" is either underscored (use a continuing line for the phrase) or italicized.


D. **DEBATES**  
**Rule 13.5**


1. Cite Congressional Debates to the Congressional Record.

2. Cite to the daily edition only if the debates do not yet appear in the bound edition.

3. Give the volume number of the Congressional Record, Indicate it is the Cong. Rec. you are citing, and give the page number on which the statement appears. If you are citing to the daily edition, you must indicate whether the page is in the House or Senate section of the issue.

4. Give the date of the issue (month, day, year)

5. If you are citing to a specific statement, give the information in parenthesis.

144 Cong. Rec. 18,800 (1998)

1. Cite to the bound volume if available

2. Give the volume number and the page in the bound volume. In the bound volume, there is no separate pagination for the House or Senate; therefore, the page number will not require a prefix.

3. Give the year of publication