I. Using Search Terms to Find a Legislative History or Congressional Documents

If you do not have a citation or a Popular Name for a law, you can use search terms to find relevant legislative histories and Congressional documents using the Quick Search and Guided Search Forms.¹

A. Using the Quick Search Form

You can get to the Quick Search Form by clicking “Quick Search” on the main Legislative Insight page.

When you type your search terms into the search box, Legislative Insight will provide suggested search terms to help you with your search.

B. Quick Search Form Search Example

The following examples will give you a better idea of how to use the Quick Search Form.

• **EXAMPLE 1:** A medical researcher is looking for all available Congressional publications about “Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome” or “AIDS.”

  1. In this case, the medical researcher may get drastically different results depending on

how he searches Legislative Insight. If the researcher enters “Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome” in the search box, he will get only 16 results.2

2. However, if the researcher searches for “AIDS,” he will get many more results, most of which are irrelevant to the topic of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. Therefore, you must be careful when using acronyms to search for information. However, subject terms and other documents listed when the researcher types in the acronym “AIDS” could help the researcher target his results to more relevant documents.

Quick Search

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2 Search results are current as of March 2012.
C. Using the Guided Search Form

Using the Guided Search Form, you can create a more detailed search for legislative histories. The Guided Search Form can be accessed by clicking “Guided Search” at the top of the main Legislative Insight page, and then entering search terms into the form.

Guided Search

Within each search box, you can enter search terms that can be searched within “All Fields excluding Full Text,” the “Title” of the Legislative History, or “Subject/Index Terms.” These options can be selected by highlighting the appropriate choice in the drop-down box.
• “All fields excluding Full Text” – Searches the summary information for a document for the search terms, instead of the entire text of a document.

• “All fields including Full Text” – Searches the summary information and the entire text of the document for the search terms.

• “Title” – Searches for the search terms in the title of the document.

• “Subject/Index Terms” – Searches for subject or index terms that can be selected through Legislative Insight. Selecting this option opens a window that allows you to select subject and index terms in either the “Subject View” or “Thesaurus View”.

1. Enter term or part of term to search
2. Click the select checkboxes for all terms to select
3. Apply to create a new search

You may also view or select subject terms using the Thesaurus View.

The thesaurus view provides a tree style representation of a term and all its dependent use terms. A selected term returns all documents containing this term and all its use terms, for example selecting “Fish and Fishing Industry” will also return documents containing terms “Crabs”, “Salmon”, “Tuna” etc.

When multiple terms are selected, the search will return documents that contain all of the selected terms. Please note that after each term is selected, the remaining terms that can be combined with the already selected terms will be reduced.
In the “Subject Term List,” view, you can type a word contained in a subject term or phrase in the “Search Subject Terms” box or view an alphabetical list of subject and index terms by choosing “Begins with.” You can also use the “Thesaurus View”, which helps you find related subject terms to add to a search.

D. Guided Search Form Search Examples

The following examples will help you better understand how to use the Guided Search Form.

• **EXAMPLE 1**: A user wants to research legislative histories related to federal civil rights laws, and is particularly interested in information on how literacy tests were used to prevent voting.
1. First, the user could enter “civil rights” in quotation marks in the first search box because she wants to retrieve legislative histories containing the exact phrase “civil rights.” She decides to search “All fields excluding Full Text” so that she retrieves only results where “civil rights” is a major subject of the document instead of just mentioned in the document.

2. In the second search box, the user types “literacy test” in quotation marks to include the phrase in the search. However, she selects “All fields including Full Text” for this box because she wants all documents that contain the phrase.

3. In the third search box, the user types the term “voting” and again selects “All fields including Full Text.” Because she is not sure exactly which dates or Congressional sessions would have the legislative histories she is looking for, she uses the default “Any Congress” option. Her completed search box looks like the one below, and yields 51 legislative histories. To find the most relevant results first, she selects “Relevance” as the sorting option.

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3 Search results are current as of March 2012.
4. If the user wanted to focus only on certain types of Congressional documents associated with the legislative histories she found, she could check the box next to the type of publication she wanted to focus on. For example, if she wanted to focus on the Congressional hearings related to her original search, she would check the box next to “Hearing” to narrow her original search.
Example 2: A researcher would like to review Congressional hearings addressing the diamond trade in Sub-Saharan Africa.

1. Using the Guided Search Subject/Index Terms, the researcher could search by subject and Index Terms related to the search. When the researcher selects “Subject/Index Terms” from the drop-down box next to the first search box, the Subject/Index term window opens.
2. Next, the researcher can type the word “Africa” into the search box to find subject terms and phrases containing that word. The subject term “African, Sub-Saharan” is a subject term listed in four documents.
Once the researcher checks the box next to the subject term and clicks “Apply,” the subject term will appear in the first search box.

3. Next, the researcher adds the term “diamond” as the second part of the search.

4. The researcher’s search yields 8 Congressional hearings, which can be narrowed as the researcher desires.4

Search results are current as of March 2012.
E. Additional Features Available Through the Quick Search and Guided Search Forms

Legislative Insight also provides a variety of additional features that help you retrieve information that is more precise. These features are discussed in detail in our ProQuest Legislative Insight Advanced Research Guide.

- Using Connectors and Wildcard Characters

  Legislative Insight allows you to use the connectors “AND,” “OR,” or “NOT” to create a search.\(^5\) These connectors **must be typed in uppercase** to be properly processed within the search box.\(^6\) You can also use the term “NEAR” to search for records with two search terms that are within ten words of each other.\(^7\) A specific number can be entered to retrieve results with search terms closer or farther apart than ten words (e.g., “housing NEAR/20 discrimination”).\(^8\)

  Additionally, you can use asterisks (*) and question marks (?) as wildcard characters in your search.\(^9\) An asterisk (*) will replace more than one character and a question mark (?) will replace only one character within a word included in a search term, except for the first letter of the word. Asterisks can be used more than once in a word or at the end of a word.

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EXAMPLE 1: Typing “m*n” will retrieve results containing both “men” and “mountain.”

EXAMPLE 2: Typing “explor?” will find results containing the word “explore”, but not “explorer” or “exploration.”

- **Narrowing Results by Session of Congress**

  When you retrieve your search results, you have the option to narrow the search results by Congressional session. In the below results list, narrowing the results by the 107th Congressional session yields seven results, all of which have publications from the 107th Congress included as part of their legislative histories.¹⁰

- **Narrowing Results by Start and End Dates**

  Instead of narrowing results by Congressional session, you could narrow

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¹⁰ Search results are current as of March 2012.
results by specific start and end dates by clicking “Start and End Dates.” Legislative Insight automatically populates these dates, but they can be changed by clicking on each date and selecting another date from the calendar.

- **Narrowing Results by Subject Terms and Areas of Practice**

  Subject terms and areas of practice can be used to narrow results from the Search. Each of these categories is listed on the left-hand side of the search results list.

  o **Subject Terms** – You can click on a subject term to open only those results that are related to that subject term.
Areas of Practice – Similar to narrowing results by Subject Terms, you can narrow results by area of practice to see only results associated with a specific area of law.