The legislative branches of federal and state governments make the law. Two good sources for a detailed explanation of the legislative process and associated documents are

- **How Our Laws are Made** (via Congress.gov)

The above diagram outlining the federal legislative process is from ProQuest Congressional.

For the state legislative process see From Idea to Law in LexisNexis State Capital.

For the process in Pennsylvania, see the General Assembly's Making Law in Pennsylvania.
Public online resources

**FDsys**

**Congress.gov & THOMAS**
*Congress.gov*, the official website for U.S. federal legislative information, will supersede Thomas, the federal legislative information service from the Library of Congress, in late 2014.

**Other government web sites**
Legislative information and documents can also be found on the web sites of many federal and state legislative bodies and elected officials.

**Organization/advocacy sites**
These sites may provide information and documents related to federal and state legislation involving their areas of interest.

Subscription online resources

**Hein Online**
*Hein Online* is a searchable database of full text legal periodicals that also includes U.S. Congressional documents, U.S. presidential library, U.S. Statutes at large, and more.

**LexisNexis Academic**
*LexisNexis Academic* contains full-text newspapers, magazines, news transcripts, and reference works as well as extensive primary and secondary legal materials.

**ProQuest Congressional**
*ProQuest Congressional* is a comprehensive online collection of congressional publications and resources for federal legislative research.

**LexisNexis State Capital**
*LexisNexis State Capital* is similar to *ProQuest Congressional* but at the state level.

*These sites often contain or give access to the same documents or information. Why choose one over another?*
- Can differ in coverage
- Can differ in ease of use and/or search capabilities
- You may only have access to the FREE database
The legislative process and its documents:

1. Members of Congress propose legislation by introducing bills in the House or Senate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Pennsylvania</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bill tracking reports/legislative histories</strong> allow you to follow a bill through the legislative process, identifying associated documents and significant actions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Online:** *ProQuest Congressional.* In the Congressional Publications advanced search, select only Legislative Histories (1969-present). Search results will have links to many full-text congressional publications.

**Online:** *Hein Online.* Click on U.S. Federal Legislative History Library (1800s-present). Search or browse by Title, PL#, or Popular Name.

**Online:** *FDsys.* To browse, click on Browse Government Publications and then on History of Bills (1983-present). To search, click on Search Government Publications ➔ Advanced Search and select Collections: History of Bills.

**Online:** *Congress.gov.* Search Current or All Legislation, or click Browse to browse by Congress.

**Online and In print:** Compiled legislative histories can be found in books and law review articles. Try a Tripod Subject or Keyword search for the name of a law or a subject, looking for the Subject subdivision Law and legislation or Legislative history.

Try similar searches for law review articles in LexisNexis Academic. Click on Look up a Legal Case, then click the Law Reviews link. Focus your searches by Relevance sorting or by adding the term legislative history.

**In print:** Legislative History section of *CIS Annual* (1970-1998, KF 49 FC62).

**In print:** Status of House/Senate Bills sections of *Congressional Index* (1975-2000, JK 1001 C73).

**In print:** History of Bills and Resolutions section of the Index volumes of the *Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the … Congress* (1873-date, US Docs X.Cong./session) in US Documents on Canaday Floor B.

**In print:** Villanova Law Library *United States Code Congressional & Administrative News (USCCAN)* (1952-date). USCCAN contains public laws, legislative histories for selected bills, and the full text of important committee reports.

**In print:** Final Issue of the *History of House Bills and Resolutions* (1967-1996, PA Docs PGA 96/H) and *History of Senate Bills, Resolutions, and Executive Communications in the Senate* (1963-1996, PA Docs PGA 204/H) in PA Documents on Canaday Floor B.

**Online:** *LexisNexis State Capital.* Click on Bills, then Bill Tracking by Keyword or Bill Tracking by Bill Number. Use the pull down menu to limit your search to Pennsylvania (1990-date).

**Online:** *Pennsylvania General Assembly* web site. Click on the Legislation tab and search by bill number, keyword, topic, etc. Or scroll down to the Tracking Report search and use the pull down menu to browse by legislative session. Coverage is 1969-date.
## LEGISLATIVE BRANCH materials, accessible at Bryn Mawr and on the web

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Pennsylvania</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text of bills</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbered by Congress and a sequentially assigned bill number. Thus 101 S. 538 is the 538th Senate bill introduced in the 101st Congress of 1989-90. And 105 H.R. 38 is the 38th House bill introduced in the 105th Congress of 1997-98.</td>
<td>Numbered by legislative session and a sequentially assigned bill number. Thus 1999 H.B. 250 is the 250th House bill introduced in the 1999 legislative session. Also identified by Printer's Numbers that allow you to track versions of a bill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online: ProQuest Congressional. In the Congressional Publications advanced search, select only Bills &amp; Laws (1987-present). The full text of Senate introduced bills also appears in the Congressional Record (1985-date), another search limit.</td>
<td>Online: LexisNexis State Capital, click on Bills, then Bill Text by Keyword or Bill Text by Bill Number. Use the pull down menu to limit your search to Pennsylvania (1991-date).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online: Congress.gov. Search Current or All Legislation, or click Browse to browse Bills.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. The numbered bill is usually referred to a committee, which may hold hearings and gather background documentation -- or may do nothing, effectively killing the bill. If the bill remains under consideration, it may be amended (in a “mark up” session), sometimes causing it to be released with a new number. If approved, the committee reports the bill back to the full chamber.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Pennsylvania</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Committee Prints</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prints can vary widely in content, but usually contain research on proposed legislation by committee staff or the Congressional Research Service.</td>
<td>Documents similar to US Congressional committee prints are not always published at the state level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online: ProQuest Congressional. Click on Congressional Publications, Advanced Search, then select Committee Prints &amp; Misc. Publications. (Indexing, 1789-date; some full text 1993-date).</td>
<td>Online: Background information may sometimes be found in the Pennsylvania Legislative Journals [see entry in Floor Debate section below] or in the searchable Committee Transcripts and Reports on the Pennsylvania General Assembly web site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online: Hein Online. Click on U.S. Congressional Documents. Search or browse for Committee Prints (1919-present) and Congressional Research Service (CRS) Reports (1925-present).</td>
<td>In print: The State Archives in Harrisburg collects the records of the Pennsylvania General Assembly and the papers of committees may include background information on legislation considered by that committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online: FDsys To browse, click on Browse Government Publications and then on Congressional Committee Prints (1995-date). To search, click on Search Government Publications → Advanced Search and select Collections: Congressional Committee Prints.</td>
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</table>

If you cannot find a full text Committee print on documents similar to US Congressional committee prints are not always published at the state level.

Online: Background information may sometimes be found in the Pennsylvania Legislative Journals [see entry in Floor Debate section below] or in the searchable Committee Transcripts and Reports on the Pennsylvania General Assembly web site.

In print: The State Archives in Harrisburg collects the records of the Pennsylvania General Assembly and the papers of committees may include background information on legislation considered by that committee.

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any of these, try searching individual Committee web sites. See Congress.gov for convenient links to House and Senate Committee web sites.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Committee Prints (continued)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In print:</strong> Haverford and Swarthmore have paper copies of some committee prints. Search by title in Tripod. For pre-1977 prints, consult with a Reference Librarian. [Note: Tripod also links to online versions of many post-1977 Committee prints.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In print:</strong> Indexing of committee prints (1830-1969) is available in CIS US Congressional Committee Prints Index (Ref Z1223 fZ7 C66).</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Pennsylvania</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hearings</strong></td>
<td>Documents similar to US Congressional committee hearings are very rarely published at the state level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congressional committees or subcommittees may hold hearings on proposed legislation. Members of Congress and the executive branch, policy experts, interest groups, and members of the general public may offer testimony at hearings. Written or oral statements, committee and witness Q &amp; A transcripts, reports, exhibits, and other submitted materials might also be included in published hearings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online:</strong> ProQuest Congressional. Click on Congressional Publications, Advanced Search, then select Hearings. (Indexing, 1824-date; selected testimony transcripts and submitted statements, 1988-date).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online:</strong> Hein Online. Click on U.S. Congressional Documents. Search or browse for Congressional Hearings (1890s-present).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online:</strong> FDsys. To browse, click on Browse Government Publications and then on Congressional Hearings (1995-date). To search, click on Search Government Publications ➔ Advanced Search and select Collections: Congressional Hearings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online:</strong> Congress.gov. There are links to House and Senate Committee Hearings on the right-hand side of the Committees page.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In print:</strong> Swarthmore and Haverford have some hearings in print. Search by title in Tripod. For pre-1977 hearings, consult with a Reference Librarian. [Note: Tripod also links to online versions of many post-1977 Committee hearings.]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online:</strong> The Pennsylvania General Assembly web site has searchable Committee Transcripts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In print:</strong> The State Archives in Harrisburg collects the records of the General Assembly and may have transcripts of earlier committee hearings.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Congressional Reports

Congressional committees issue **reports** recommending passage of legislation. Reports can include discussions of changes made in committee and analyses of the content and intent of proposed legislation. Examining intent may help clarify the meaning of a statute.

**Online:** ProQuest Congressional. Click on Congressional Publications, Advanced Search, then select **House & Senate Reports**. (Indexing, 1789-date; selected full text 1990-date).

**Online:** Hein Online. Click on U.S. Congressional Documents. Search or browse for Congressional Reports.

**Online:** FDsys. To browse, click on Browse Government Publications and then on Congressional Reports (1995-date). To search, click on Search Government Publications → Advanced Search and select Collections: Congressional Reports.

**Online:** Congress.gov. Search Committee Reports, or go to the Committees page to see more browsing options.

**Online:** U.S. Congressional Serial Set. Can be searched by keyword, subject, Congress, Serial Set number, and more. (full-text, 1817-1994). See also: Volumes since 1994.

**In print:** Swarthmore and Haverford have some Committee reports in print. Search by title in Tripod. [Note: Tripod also links to online versions of many post-1977 Committee reports.]

**In print:** Reports are issued separately, and then cumulated in the United States Congressional Serial Set, available at Swarthmore. Indexed in CIS Serial Set Index (Ref Z1223 IZ9 C65 1975).

### Text or Summary of Floor Debate

3. A vote on a bill is held on the floor of Congress, sometimes preceded by floor debate.

**Online:** ProQuest Congressional. Click on Congressional Publications, Advanced Search, then select Congressional Record Daily Edition (full-text 1985-date).

**Online:** Hein Online. Click on U.S. Congressional Documents. Search or browse for Congressional Record (1873-present; CR Daily 1980-present).

**Online:** FDsys. To browse, click on Browse Government Publications and then on

**Online:** Pennsylvania General Assembly web site. Click on Senate or House then on the Legislative Journals link on the left hand-side (House 1949-date, or Senate 1963-date).

**In print:** Remarks of speakers in House and Senate debates are published in the Legislative Journal (1935-1959, PA Docs PGA 204.11/8); continued as Legislative Journal: Senate (1963-date, PA Docs PGA 204.11/8) and Legislative Journal: House of Representatives.
### Congressional Record
(1994-date). To search, click on Search Government Publications ➔ Advanced Search and select Collections: Congressional Record.

**Online:** Congress.gov. Click on Congressional Record (1995-date).

(1975-date, PA Docs PGA 98.11/8). Shelved in PA Documents on Canaday Floor B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Floor debate (continued)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In print:</strong> House and Senate debates are published in the Congressional Record (1873-date, US Docs X.Cong./session) in US Documents on Canaday Floor B.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. If bill passes, it goes on to other chamber and the process is repeated (bill, hearings, committee reports, vote, debate, etc.).

5. If bill passes second chamber, it goes to a joint committee of members of both the House and Senate to work out any differences. This is the Conference Committee. They may amend bill, write Conference Reports, etc. Bills and reports may be available as described above.

6. After approval by both houses, the ‘enrolled bill’ goes to the chief executive (President or Governor) for signature or veto. If signed, the bill becomes law. The law is published in several forms.

<table>
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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Slip Laws</strong></td>
<td><strong>Slip Laws</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A <em>slip law</em> is the first printing of a law, issued as its own document. Individual federal <em>slip laws</em> are compiled in chronological order in the United States Statutes at Large. Pennsylvania <em>slip laws</em> are compiled in chronological order in the Laws of Pennsylvania.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Online:** ProQuest Congressional. In the Congressional Publications advanced search, select only Bills & Laws (1987-present), then limit by Public Laws.


**Online:** Congress.gov. Search All Legislation, or click Browse ➔ Laws.

**In print:** Slip laws are published in the Advance volumes of the United States Code Service shelved with the USCS on Floor A or at Swarthmore. [Note: Tripod links to online versions of many laws.]

**Online:** Pennsylvania Legislative Reference Bureau web site. Collected Slip Laws are available in Pamphlet Laws (1970-date).
### United States

**Statutes at Large/Laws of Pennsylvania**

The *Statutes at Large* and *Laws of Pennsylvania* are chronological collections of all bills that have been approved and become laws.

**Online:** *ProQuest Congressional*. In the Congressional Publications advanced search, select only *Bills & Laws* (1987-present), then limit by *Public Laws*.

**Online:** *Hein Online*. Click on U.S. Statutes at Large (1789-2011).

**Online:** *FDsys*. To browse, click on Browse Government Publications and then on United States Statutes at Large (1951-2011). To search, click on Search Government Publications ➔ Advanced Search and select Collections: Statutes at Large.

**In print:** *Statutes at Large* (1789-date, US Docs AE2.111:). Shelved in US Documents on Canaday Floor A with the *United States Code Service*.[see below].

### Pennsylvania

**Online:** *Pennsylvania Legislative Reference Bureau* hosts the *Statutes at Large*. Only volumes 1-18 (1682-1809) are currently available. The *Unofficial Purdon’s Pennsylvania Statutes* are now online.

**Online:** *LexisNexis State Capital*. Click on Statutes then State Statutes by Keyword or Citation to access current laws. Use the pull down menu to limit search to Pennsylvania.

**In print:** *Laws of Pennsylvania* (1700-1809, 1852-date, PA Docs PGA 1). Shelved in PA Documents on Canaday Floor A with *Purdon’s Pennsylvania Statutes Annotated*.[see below].

### Code

**Codes** are subject arrangements of laws and amendments in force. The subject categories that comprise the **Code** are called titles.

**Online:** *ProQuest Congressional*. In the Congressional Publications advanced search, select only *Bills & Laws* (1987-present), then limit by *U.S. Code*. Provides the codified current laws, updated monthly.

**Online:** *Hein Online*. Click on US Code (1925-).


**In print:** *United States Code Service*. (Canaday US Docs KF62 1972 L38). This commercial version of the *United States Code* contains the codified *Statutes at Large* with historical notes and annotations. Shelved in US Documents on Canaday Floor A.

**Online:** *LexisNexis State Capital*. Click on Statutes then State Statutes by Keyword or Citation. Use the pull down menu to limit search to Pennsylvania. Includes the Martindale-Hubbell Law Digest, where you can search for summaries of the state statutory code on a particular subject.

**In print:** *Purdon’s Pennsylvania Statutes Annotated* (PA Docs PGA1). This commercial version of the *Pennsylvania Code* contains the codified *Laws of Pennsylvania* with historical notes and annotations. Shelved in PA Documents on Canaday Floor A.

The following guides contain citation examples for the above resources:

- *ProQuest Congressional* [Help  How to Cite]
- *LexisNexis State Capital* [Help  Review of general principles of bibliographic citation]
- *The Bluebook: a uniform system of citation* (Canaday Reference KF245 U751 2010)
- *Cite right: a quick guide to citation styles* (Canaday Reference PN171 F56 L55 2011)