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Federal and State Cases, Legislation and Regulations

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Federal and State Cases, Legislation and Regulations

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Federal and State Cases, Legislation and Regulations

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Federal and State Cases, Legislation and Regulations

I. Federal Legislation and Related Resources

A. U.S. Constitution

You can find the text of the U.S. Constitution at many web sites. Some of these sites have better formatting and are much easier to read than others. However, the two sites listed below are the only two sites that also include U.S. Supreme Court case law annotations for the U.S. Constitution. Other sites that you visit may include historical documents or hypertext links between sections of the Constitution, but only these two sites include U.S. Supreme Court case law annotations.

1. GPO Access

<http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/senate/constitution/toc.html>

In addition to a literal print of the text of the Constitution, GPO Access includes an analysis and interpretation of the U.S. Constitution prepared by the Library of Congress' Congressional Research Service. This analysis and interpretation was published in 1992 as Senate Document 103-6. This site also includes 1996 (Senate Document No. 104-14), 1998 (Senate Document No. 106-8) and 2000 (Senate Document No. 106-27) supplements to the 1992 publication. The non-cumulative supplements include annotations of U.S. Supreme Court cases decided through June 2000.

2. FindLaw

<http://www.findlaw.com/casecode/constitution>

The FindLaw version of the Constitution is more easily navigated than the GPO Access site. As described above, the supplements at the GPO Access site are non-cumulative. Therefore, you must view each supplement to update your research. FindLaw has incorporated the 1996, 1998 and 2000 Supplements into the 1992 Edition text. Findlaw has also added hyperlinks between the sections of the Constitution, as well as links to Supreme court cases cited in the annotations.

B. U.S. Code

The text of the U.S. Code is made available by the Office of Law Revision Counsel of the U.S. House of Representatives. The best site for searching and viewing the U.S. Code is the Cornell web site listed below. None of the web sites listed below offer a full text up-to-date version of the U.S. Code. The House of Representatives site contains citations for public laws that have updated any code section that you are interested in. Once you have a public law citation, you must then visit a site that has the full text of public laws such as Thomas or GPO Access in order to update your code section. Note, the U.S. House of Representatives version is the source for

the printed official version of the U.S. Code.

1. Cornell Law School's Legal Information Institute

<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode>

This site contains the most recent version of the U.S. Code made available by the U.S. House of Representatives. This site offers a well-formatted, easily searchable and navigable version of the U.S. Code. Cornell has added links within code sections. For example if a code section refers to Section 106 of the Copyright Act, Cornell has added a link to Section 106. To update code sections you must look up your code section in the table of amendments for each session of Congress to determine if any public laws have been enacted that affect your code section. If so, note the public law citations and visit the Thomas web site to update your code section.

2. Office of the Law Revision Counsel

<http://uscode.house.gov/usc.htm>

Each section of the Code database contains a date in the top-right corner indicating that laws enacted as of that date and affecting that section are included in the text of that section. When a search is made for a specific section of the Code, as opposed to a search for certain words appearing in the Code, the hit list will include an "Update" item listing any public law amendments not already reflected in the text of that section. Note, however, that you still must go to another web site and search for any public laws that update your code section. The public laws are not hyperlinked from the House Internet Library.

3. GPO Access

<http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/cong013.html>

The GPO Access site contains archived versions of the 1994 U.S. Code and annual supplements through 2000. Additionally the 2000 version of the U.S. Code is available as well. This site is particularly useful for historical research since you can search U.S. Code supplements for any year subsequent to 1994.

C. U.S. Public Laws

While Thomas has more extensive historical coverage of public laws than the GPO Access, the public laws at GPO Access are easily searched by keyword. Thomas provides more detailed information about the legislative action at each step in the passage of public laws. GPO Access formats the public law text exactly as it appears in *U.S. Statutes at Large*.

1. Thomas - U.S. Public Laws

<http://thomas.loc.gov/home/bdquery.html>

The full text of public laws can be accessed by public law number from the 101st Congress (1989) to present. Summaries of public laws are provided for the 93rd Congress (1973) to the 100th Congress(1988). Thomas provides additional information

about each public law such as Congressional Record page references, legislative tracking information, and a summary of each public law.

2. GPO Access - U.S. Public Laws

<http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/nara005.html>

The GPO Access database of public laws can be accessed by public law number and is keyword searchable. This database contains the full text of public laws from the 104th Congress (1995) to present in .pdf and text format. The format of the GPO Access site is the same as the *U.S. Statutes at Large* and includes page references to the *U.S. Statutes at Large*. In fact, if you view the .pdf format of a public law, it looks exactly like at page from *U.S. Statutes at Large*.

D. Tracking Current Federal Legislation

There are many watchdog political sites devoted to providing public information about pending federal legislation. Thomas and GPO Access, however, are the most reliable and comprehensive site for obtaining information about current federal legislation. If you are interested in legislative information, Thomas and GPO Access should be your first Internet stops.

1. Thomas

<http://thomas.loc.gov/>

Named for Thomas Jefferson, this excellent web site from the Library of Congress contains bill summaries and status, the full-text of bills, roll call votes, House and Senate schedules and much more.

2. GPO Access - United States Congress

<http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/index.html>

GPO Access provides the full text of congressional bills, documents, hearings, reports, Congressional Record, and committee prints.

3. U.S. House of Representatives

<http://www.house.gov/>

The U.S. House of Representatives web site includes schedules such as a weekly list of items that the House intends to consider, matters currently on the House floor and up-to-date events on the House floor as they happen.

4. U.S. Senate

<http://www.senate.gov/>

Like the House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate web site includes detailed schedules of events and issues of the Senate.

5. FedNet

<http://www.fednet.net/>

FedNet is an Internet news company that provides live or real-time audio and video coverage of floor debates, White House briefings, regulatory hearings, and press conferences via the Internet.

6. C-Span.org

<http://capwiz.com/c-span/home/>

In addition to coverage of the House and Senate floor activities, C-Span tracks current major legislation. This site even provides an opportunity for you to enter your zip code and find out how your congressional representatives voted on current legislation.

E. Legislative History

There are very few web sources that have compiled legislative histories. Occasionally when you are researching a topic that ignites a special interest group, you might stumble across compiled legislative history information. For the most part, you will have to compile your own legislative history piece by piece using the following web sites:

1. Thomas

<http://thomas.loc.gov/>

Thomas is maintained by the Library of Congress and is the best source for federal legislative information available on the Internet. This web site contains legislative histories, *Congressional Record* (from the 101st Congress, 1989 to present), the full text of bills and public laws, roll call votes, and committee reports. Because this site was designed by librarians at the Library of Congress, it is easily navigable.

2. GPO Access - United States Congress

<http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/index.html>

GPO Access provides the full text of congressional bills, documents, hearings, reports, Congressional Record, public laws and committee prints.

3. Legislative Histories - University of Michigan Documents Center

<http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/legishis.html>

Begun in 1993 as a teaching guide for University of Michigan students, this site not only includes a guide to researching legislative histories, but links to available web resources and describes print resources as well.

II. Federal Regulations and Administrative Agencies

A. Code of Federal Regulations

Choosing whether to use GPO Access or Cornell to search the CFR is a mostly a matter of personal preference. While searching and screen formatting is different at each site, the text of

the current CFR is that same at both sites. Note, however, that GPO Access has archived superseded volumes of the CFR. If you need to research a federal regulation as it was worded in at an earlier point in time, GPO Access is an excellent resource.

1. GPO Access - Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) -

<http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/index.html>

The GPO Access CFR may be searched by keyword and is also browsable by title. Note that the GPO Access site includes superseded volumes of the CFR while the Cornell site mentioned below only contains the most recent version of the CFR. The GPO Access CFR is not heavily formatted.

2. Cornell Law School's Legal Information Institute

<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/cfr/>

This web site provides an well-formatted and improved front-end to the most recent version of the CFR placed on the Internet by the GPO Access. At this site, you can search the CFR from this site by citation, a detailed table of contents, an index of all section headings or the Government Printing Office search engine. Like all of the materials provided at the Cornell site, the CFR is easy to read, search and navigate.

B. Federal Register

1. Federal Register Online via GPO Access

http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/aces/aces140.html

The GPO's database includes the 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003 Federal Register (Volumes 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67 and 68). The volumes are searchable by keyword or date. GPO Access provides the ability to browse the latest Federal Register without having to search for a relevant section first.

C. Federal Government Agencies

The U.S. government is a major content web provider. You can find a wealth of resources by searching the following web sites which provide many links to federal government web servers.

1. FirstGov

<http://firstgov.gov/>

FirstGov is the award-winning official U.S. gateway to all government information. FirstGov is an interagency initiative administered by the U.S. General Services Administration. Customer feedback is the driving force for how information is organized. On FirstGov.gov, you can search more than 51 million web pages from federal and state governments, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories.

2. The Federal Web Locator

<http://www.infoctr.edu/fwl/>

The Federal Web Locator is a service provided by the Center for Information Law and Policy and is intended to be the one stop shopping point for federal government information on the Internet. The structure of this web site matches the one found in *The United States Government Manual*.

3. FedWorld

<http://www.fedworld.gov/>

FedWorld was established by the National Technical Information Service (NTIS). NTIS is the U.S. central source for scientific, technical, engineering, and related business information produced by or for the Federal government.

4. Federal Citizen Information Center

<http://fic.info.gov/>

The Federal Citizen Information Center (FCIC) is maintained by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) as a single point of contact for people who have questions about federal agencies, programs, and services. The principal reference tool is the FIC's electronic database, which lists more than 100,000 points of contact (telephone numbers, addresses, web sites) by agency and subject.

III. Federal Case Law and Judicial Information

A. Meta-Indexes for Federal Court Opinions

1. Federal Court Locator

<http://vls.law.vill.edu/Locator/fedcourt.html>

The Federal Court Locator is maintained by the Villanova Internet Legal Research Compass. It is intended to give net citizens a means to access information related to the federal judiciary, including slip opinions. This site offers easy connection to the U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals, U.S. District Courts, U.S. Bankruptcy Courts, United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, U.S. Court of Federal Claims, U.S. Court of International Trade, Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, Federal Judicial Center, U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Sentencing Commission.

2. Federal Courts Finder

<http://www.law.emory.edu/FEDCTS/>

Emory Law Library provides links to the following courts: U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, U.S. Court of Federal Claims, Federal Circuit, D.C. Circuit, First Circuit, Second Circuit, Third Circuit, Fourth Circuit, Fifth Circuit, Sixth Circuit, Seventh Circuit, Eighth Circuit, Ninth Circuit, Tenth Circuit and

Eleventh Circuit. Links are arranged by Circuit or accessed by a clickable map of the United States

3. U.S. Courts - The Federal Judiciary

<http://www.uscourts.gov/index.html>

The U.S. Courts home page is maintained by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. It is intended to be a clearinghouse from and about the judicial branch of the U.S. government. This site links to U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals, U.S. District Courts, U.S. Bankruptcy Courts, U.S. Court of International Trade, Federal Judicial Center, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, U.S. Sentencing Commission, and other sites of interest. This site also provides other judicial-related documents such as statistics, annual reports, FAQs and other resources.

B. U.S. Supreme Court

Because of its comprehensive coverage, FindLaw is the best source for searching the full-text of U.S. Supreme Court opinions since 1863. You can find selected pre-1863 historical decisions at the Cornell site. Related useful sites for information about the U.S. Supreme Court are Oyez and Lawsource. Oyez has oral arguments from some U.S. Supreme Court cases. ALSO is notable for its collection of amicus curiae briefs from the U.S. Supreme Court.

1. U.S. Supreme Court

<http://www.supremecourtus.gov/>

On April 17, 2000, the U.S. Supreme Court established its own web site for delivering court opinions and other judicial information. In addition to providing timely releases of bench opinions, the Supreme Court promises to make available via their web site, slip opinions on the day of release. Currently, only the 2000 and 2001 opinions are available, but since this site is also part of the GPO Access system, look for exciting future developments.

2. FindLaw - U.S. Supreme Court Decisions

<http://www.findlaw.com/casecode/supreme.html>

FindLaw's database of the Supreme Court decisions since 1893 (US Reports 150-) is browsable by year and U.S. Reports volume number. FindLaw is also searchable by citation, case title and full text. While the Cornell web site splits parts of U.S. Supreme Court opinions such as the syllabus, dissenting and concurring opinions into separate web documents, the FindLaw site displays all of the documents related to one case as a single web document. FindLaw includes U.S. Reports page breaks.

2. Cornell Law School's Legal Information Institute

<http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/>

The Legal Information Institute offers Supreme Court opinions under the auspices of Project Hermes, the court's electronic-dissemination project. This archive contains all opinions of the court issued since May of 1990. This site also has a collection of over 600 of the court's most important historic decisions. This comprehensive site also includes the court calendar, current schedule of oral arguments, a gallery of the current justices, including pictures, biographies, and lists of decisions by the current members of the Court, a gallery of former justices, including biographies of all former members of the Court, the Supreme Court's rules, including the amendments to those rules that took effect in May 1999 and information about the court's organization, authority, and jurisdiction. When you retrieve a U.S. Supreme Court case from Cornell, a pop-up dialogue box appears with links to related documents such as the syllabus, dissenting and concurring opinions. WordPerfect formatted versions of these documents are available as well.

3. FedWorld - FLITE - Federal Legal Information Through Electronics

<http://www.fedworld.gov/supcourt/index.htm>

FedWorld's FLITE database consists of over 7,000 Supreme Court opinions dating from 1937 through 1975, from volumes 300 through 422 of U.S. Reports. Opinions from the FLITE database are comprehensive yet sometimes difficult to read because text is displayed in all capital letters.

4. The OYEZ Project - Northwestern University

<http://oyez.nwu.edu/>

At the innovative OYEZ site, you can listen to oral arguments of the U.S. Supreme Court delivered via streaming audio. The OYEZ Project aims to include all leading constitutional law cases.

5. American Law Sources Online (ALSO) - Amicus Curiae Briefs filed in the U.S. Supreme Court

<http://www.lawsource.com/also/usa.cgi?usb>

ALSO has declared that maintaining links to amicus curiae briefs is impractical. Briefs are numerous and transitory on the Internet, and finding new links is inordinately time-consuming. Therefore, while the links on ALSO are preserved for as long as they are viable, new links are not being added. However, ALSO maintains a search box with suggested search strategy for searching for amicus curiae briefs on the web.

C. Federal Circuit Courts

1. Findlaw - Federal Circuit Court Opinions

<http://www.findlaw.com/casecode/courts/index.html>

Findlaw provides a search engine for searching all of the Circuit Court decisions available via the web.

2. Cornell – Legal Information Institute

<http://www.law.cornell.edu:9999/USCA-ALL/results.html?search=>

Cornell’s Legal Information Institute also provides a search engine for searching all of the Circuit Court decisions available on the web.

3. Individual Federal Circuit Courts:

1st U.S. Circuit, since 2000, official site

<http://www.ca1.uscourts.gov/>

1st U.S. Circuit, since November 1995, from Emory School of Law

<http://www.law.emory.edu/1circuit>

2nd U.S. Circuit, since February 2002, official site

<http://www.ca2.uscourts.gov/>

2nd U.S. Circuit since January 1995, from the Touro Law Center

<http://www.tourolaw.edu/2ndCircuit/>

2nd U.S. Circuit since September 1995, from Pace University School of Law

<http://www.law.pace.edu/lawlib/legal/us-legal/judiciary/second-circuit.html>

3rd U.S. Circuit, official site

<http://www.ca3.uscourts.gov/>

3rd U.S. Circuit, since May 1994, from Villanova University School of Law

<http://vls.law.vill.edu/Locator/3/index.htm>

4th U.S. Circuit, opinions since January 1, 1996, official site

<http://www.ca4.uscourts.gov/>

4th U.S. Circuit, since January 1995, from Emory School of Law

<http://www.law.emory.edu/4circuit>

5th U.S. Circuit, since 1992, official site

<http://www.ca5.uscourts.gov/>

6th U.S. Circuit, since 1994, official site

<http://ca6.uscourts.gov/>

6th U.S. Circuit, since January 1995, from Emory School of Law

<http://www.law.emory.edu/6circuit>

7th U.S. Circuit, since 1992, official site

<http://www.ca7.uscourts.gov/>

7th U.S. Circuit, since January, 1993, from Chicago-Kent College of Law

<http://www.kentlaw.edu/7circuit>

8th U.S. Circuit, since October 1995, official site

<http://www.ca8.uscourts.gov/>

9th U.S. Circuit, since 1995, official site

<http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/>

9th U.S. Circuit, since June 1995

<http://www.ce9.uscourts.gov/>

10th Circuit, since 1997, official site

<http://www.ck10.uscourts.gov>

10th U.S. Circuit, August 1995 to October 1997, from Emory School of Law

<http://www.law.emory.edu/10circuit>

10th U.S. Circuit, since October 1997, from Washburn University School of Law

<http://lawlib.wuacc.edu/ca10>

11th U.S. Circuit, since November 1994, from Emory School of Law

<http://www.law.emory.edu/11circuit/index.html>

11th Circuit since September 1998, official site

<http://www.ca11.uscourts.gov/opinions.htm>

Federal Circuit, since August 1995, from Emory School of Law

<http://www.law.emory.edu/fedcircuit>

Federal Circuit, since August 1995, from Georgetown University School of Law

<http://www.ll.georgetown.edu/Fed-Ct/cafed.html>

Federal Circuit, decisions since 1994 (download only)

<http://www.fedcir.gov>

D.C. Circuit, since September 1997, official site

<http://www.cadc.uscourts.gov>

D.C. Circuit, decisions since March 1995, from Georgetown University School of Law

<http://www.ll.georgetown.edu/Fed-Ct/cadc.html>

D. Federal District Courts

Most district court web sites primarily provide documents such as local court rules and court calendars. Gradually district courts are beginning to provide court opinions on their web sites.

1. Findlaw - Federal District Courts

http://www.findlaw.com/10fedgov/judicial/district_courts.html

Findlaw maintains an annotated list of district courts, detailing contents of each web site. Unfortunately FindLaw doesn't provide a search engine for searching all District Court opinions. You must go to each District Court web site to conduct research.

2. U.S. Courts - The Federal Judiciary

<http://www.uscourts.gov/index.html>

The Federal Judiciary page maintained by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts is another excellent resource that lists each district court.

E. Federal Rules

1. LLRX – Court Rules, Forms & Dockets

<http://www.llrx.com/courtrules/>

A good resource which links to more than 1,400 sources for federal rules and federal local rules. Note state rules and state local rules are also included.

2. Federal Rules of Civil Procedure - Cornell Law School's Legal Information Institute

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/rules/frcp/overview.htm>

At the Cornell site, you can keyword search the full-text of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure or you can access the Rules by a table of contents. For \$5 you can purchase a downloadable copy of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure from this site.

3. Federal Rules of Evidence - Cornell Law School's Legal Information Institute

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/rules/fre/overview.html>

At the Cornell site, you can keyword search of the full-text of the Federal Rules of Evidence or you can access the Rules by a table of contents. For \$5 you can purchase a downloadable copy of the Federal Rules of Evidence from this site.

F. In The News

These sites cover high profile trials or provide links to news sources regarding judicial decisions.

1. Washington Post – Courts

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/nation/courts/>

The Washington Post maintains a page which archives all news stories about newsworthy

judicial activities and actions.

2. CourtTV Online

<http://www.courtstv.com>

Many people overlook this web site, but it provides a vast amount of information about famous court cases, including upcoming, historical and ongoing trials. Cases range from O.J. to Microsoft.

3. JURIST - Legal News

<http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/issues/index.htm>

JURIST provides coverage of U.S. legal news, Supreme Court legal news and world legal news. The goal of JURIST is to provide an authoritative non-commercial forum in which law professors, students, lawyers, judges, journalists and citizens can share a wide range of legal information. Most of the news summaries on JURIST link to other Internet news sources such as Yahoo, Excite, etc.

IV. State Law

A. Meta-Indexes for State Legislative, Judicial and Administrative Information

1. Cornell Law School's Legal Information Institute

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/states/index.html>

This site gathers state by state a list of Internet sources of the constitutions, statutes, judicial opinions, and regulations for the fifty states, plus D.C., and the U.S. territories and affiliated jurisdictions.

2. FindLaw - State Resources

<http://www.findlaw.com/11stategov/index.html>

FindLaw has a well-organized index of resources from each of the 50 states including categories such as government, bar associations, courts, law schools, news, and law firms.

4. Hieros Gamos - State Law, Government and Commercial Sites

<http://www.hg.org/usstates.html>

Hieros Gamos links to state agencies, but also attempts to provide a compendium of all state laws and cases. Hieros Gamos includes links to uniform laws, regional regulatory bodies, associations dealing with state and municipal governments and a search engine.

B. State Courts

1. The Piper Letter - State Court Directory

<http://www.statelocalgov.net/index.cfm>

The Piper Letter provides links to existing judicial web sites for all 50 states and identifies sponsors for the web sites such as the state court systems, law schools, state bar associations, libraries, commercial entities, etc. Each listing in the directory includes sponsor, site address, courts covered, dates covered, contact, and notes. States that have no web sites are noted. Links to fee-based commercial sites include subscription information.

2. Courts.Net

<http://www.courts.net/>

Courts.net is a centralized directory providing pointers and links to every trial-level court in the United States which currently has a web site. This site is maintained by Superior Information Services, Inc., which assists law firms, professional offices, businesses and individuals in information systems and Internet communications technologies.

3. The State Court Locator

<http://vls.law.vill.edu/Locator/statecourt/index.htm>

This site is maintained by Villanova University School of Law. This site links to court opinions, state administrative agency decisions, local courts and bar associations. Coverage seems to be uneven. For example, some states include bar associations, but there is no link to the State Bar of Georgia within the Georgia links.

4. National Center for State Courts – State Court Web Sites

http://www.ncsconline.org/D_KIS/info_court_web_sites.html

The National Center for State Courts links to state trial and appellate courts from each of the 50 states.

C. State Administrative Materials

1. Internet Access to Rules

<http://www.nass.org/acr/internet.html>

This thorough resource provides a table of each of the 50 states with links to the state administrative agency responsible for promulgating rules and regulations and the state code of rules and regulations if they exist on the Internet. This site is maintained by the Administrative Codes and Registers (ACR) Section of the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS). This site links to administrative codes, registers of proposed rules and regulations, secretary of state offices, and any guidance manuals for rule-making agencies for each state.

D. State Statutes and Legislative Information

1. State Legislative Presence on the Internet

<http://www.multistate.com/site.nsf/state?OpenPage>

Maintained by Multistate Associates Inc., this site provides of chart of legislative links for each state. The chart indicates whether full text legislative information is available and provides qualitative comments on each site. Multistate Associates, Inc. is a state and local government relations lobbying firm.