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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 Other sites that you visit may include historical documents or hypertext links between sections of the Constitution, but only these two sites include U.S. Supreme Court case law annotations. Note that case annotations at the GPO Access site are more current than the FindLaw site while the FindLaw site is more easily navigated.

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 a 1996 supplement (Senate Document 104-14) to the 1992 publication. More recently, a 1998 supplement has been added. The supplements include annotations of U.S. Supreme Court cases decided through June 1998.

2. FindLaw
   http://www.findlaw.com/casecode/constitution
   The FindLaw version of the Constitution is more easily navigated than the GPO Access site. FindLaw has added links between the sections of the Constitution, as well as links to Supreme Court cases through 1996 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. House Internet Library
   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 1999. 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 for public laws 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.

   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 provides via the Internet, live audio and video coverage of the floor of the United States Senate and House of Representatives along with gavel to gavel coverage of key Congressional Hearings.
6. C-Span.org
http://congress.nw.dc.us/c-span

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. However, the low frills approach means that this site is accessed and searched much faster than the Cornell site described below.

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 and 1999 Federal Register (Volumes 60, 61, 62, 63 and 64). The volumes are searchable by keyword or date. The newest feature of this web page is 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. 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.

2. 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.
3. Federal Information Center
http://fic.info.gov/

The Federal Information Center (FIC) is 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.

http://lcweb.loc.gov/global/executive/fed.html

The Library of Congress provides a well-organized list of executive and independent government agencies.

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. 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. The Federal Judiciary Home Page - Court Links
http://www.uscourts.gov/allinks.html

The Federal Judiciary 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 page 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.
http://www.courts.net/fed/index.html

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 1999 term 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 580 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 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. FLITE - Federal Legal Information Through Electronics
   http://www.fedworld.gov/supcourt/index.htm
   FLITE 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 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 provides an outstanding collection of links U.S. Supreme Court amicus curiae briefs.

6. Washington Post - The Supreme Court Special Report
   A compilation of news articles regarding the current term as well as archives of 1996-97 terms and 1997-98 terms.

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. Individual Federal Circuit Courts:

   1st U.S. Circuit since November 1995, from Emory School of Law
   http://www.law.emory.edu/1circuit
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

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, since January 1995, from Emory School of Law
http://www.law.emory.edu/4circuit

5th U.S. Circuit, since 1992
http://www.ca5.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 January, 1993, from Chicago-Kent College of Law
http://www.kentlaw.edu/7circuit

8th U.S. Circuit, since October 1995
http://www.ca8.uscourts.gov/index.html

9th U.S. Circuit, since June 1995
http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/

10th Circuit, official site (no opinions)
http://www.ca10.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, pilot project
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, official site, opinions since September 1997
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.

E. Federal Rules

1. Litigator's Internet Resource Guide: Rules of Court by Genie Tyburski
http://www.llrx.com/columns/litigat.htm
A good resource which links to more than 400 sources for federal rules and federal local rules. Note state rules and state local rules are also included.

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. CourtTV Online
   http://www.courttv.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.

2. JURIST - Legal News
   http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/morenews.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. Yahoo - Law - U.S. States
   http://dir.yahoo.com/Government/Law/U_S__States/
   Yahoo has listings for each of the 50 states although within each state Yahoo is not as well-organized as some of the meta-indexes.

3. 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.piperinfo.com/pl03/statedir.html
   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 within the Georgia links.

4. National Center for State Courts – State Court Web Sites
   http://ncsc.dni.us/court/sites/courts.htm#state
   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/acrdir.htm
   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
Maintained by Multistate Associates Inc., this site provides 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.