

Search Strategies for www.congress.gov

A note about Congress.gov and its contents:

- **NOTE:** for a video introduction to Congress.gov, visit <http://youtu.be/8EKS7rrOblQ>. For more in-depth training, you can register for a free webinar (held bimonthly) through [the LOC's Law Library](#).
- Congress.gov is the official site for U.S. federal legislative information, maintained by the Library of Congress. The site is designed to provide accurate, timely information for members of Congress, legislative agencies, and the public. Congress.gov is usually updated the morning after a session adjourns. (via *Congress.gov*)
- Congress.gov is an update and continuation of THOMAS, which was created in 1995 (104th Congress). **Currently, records are only digitized back to the 93rd Congress (1973-75).** However, Congressional documents from the first 100 years of the U.S. Congress (1774-1875) can also be accessed through the collection [A Century of Lawmaking](#).
- Unlike LOC.gov, creating an account on Congress.gov will allow users to save searches and information.
- LOC.gov legislation results will redirect to their corresponding Congress.gov result.

Navigating Congress.gov from the homepage:

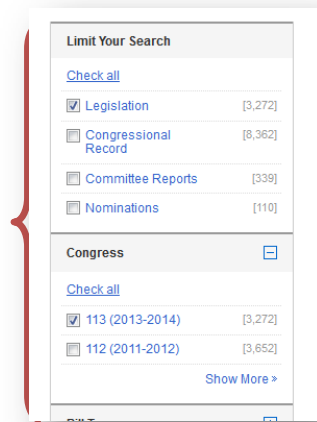
You can search the Congress.gov website from the main page using **Search box** or browse using the **toolbar** above it. Searches default to the current Congress and format of legislation, but filters can be applied manually.

The screenshot shows the Congress.gov homepage with several red annotations and boxes highlighting key features:

- Navigation Toolbar:** A red box at the top highlights the navigation menu with links: Legislation, Congressional Record, Committees, Members, Browse, About, Glossary, The Legislative Process, and Help / Contact.
- Search:** A red box highlights the search area, including a dropdown menu set to "Current Legislation" and a search input field containing "Examples: hr5, sres9, 'health care'".
- Share/Save:** A red box at the bottom right highlights the "Share/Save" button, along with other options: Print, Subscribe, and Give Feedback.
- Current Legislative Information:** A red box on the bottom left highlights the "Current Legislative Activities" section for the 113th Congress (2013-2014), which includes links for House of Representatives and Senate, next meeting dates, and various calendars and schedules.
- Legislative History and Tools:** A red box on the bottom right highlights the "The Legislative Process" section, which includes a diagram of the legislative process, links to "Nine videos explain each of the common legislative stages", and a link to "The U.S. Founding Documents".

Searching Congress.gov:

1. Type a search term in the **Search** box.
2. Select a **Format** from the drop down and click **GO**
3. Refine your results using the left column of the Search results page.
(Congress, Type, Status, Subject, Chamber, Committee, Sponsor, Cosponsor, and Party)



Searching and understanding legislation results:

Search results are displayed in a list using the following format:

The screenshot shows a search result for 'H.J.Res.80'. Red boxes and lines highlight specific parts of the result, with labels pointing to them:

- RESOLUTION**: A red box highlights the document type at the top left.
- Type of document**: A red line points from this label to the 'RESOLUTION' box.
- Designation and Title**: A red line points from this label to the title 'H.J.Res.80 — 113th Congress (2013-2014) Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Indian Education, and Indian Health Service Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2014'.
- Sponsor**: A red line points from this label to the 'Sponsor: Rep. Simpson, Michael K. [R-ID-2] (Introduced 10/03/2013)' line.
- Current Status and Action**: A red line points from this label to the 'Tracker' section, which shows a progress bar with steps: Introduced, Passed House, Passed Senate, To President, and Became Law.

Users can also search by legislation numbers, but must include the prefix and number (with or without spaces and periods and in upper or lowercase). Remember that bills, resolutions, and amendments include an alphabetical prefix and number; committee reports include an alphabetical prefix, Congress number, and report number; and public laws include an alphabetical prefix, Congress number, and law number.

Using quotation marks around words will help find an exact match. Whenever searching using multiple words, use boolean operators (AND, OR).

The proximity operator (~) can be used to find two or more words within a specified distance of each other. Enter your search terms enclosed in quotation marks, followed by ~ and a number, to indicate how many intervening words may occur between your search terms. For example, "john kennedy"~3

Don't forget documents can be browsed via the homepage (via subjects/policy area, statuses, etc.)!

For more help, visit: <https://beta.congress.gov/help/search-tips-overview/>

Understanding individual items:

The screenshot shows the legislative page for H.J.Res.80. Annotations include:

- Title:** Points to the main title "H.J.Res.80 - Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Indian Education, and Indian Health Service Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2014".
- Overview:** Points to the "JOINT RESOLUTION" label and the "Sponsor" information.
- Subject and Links:** Points to the "More on This Bill" section, which includes links for "Constitutional Authority Statement", "CBO Cost Estimates", and "View subjects >".
- Item Section Navigation:** Points to the "Summary (2)" tab in the navigation bar.

The page content includes:

- Navigation:** Home > Legislation > 113th Congress > H.J.Res.80. Links for Print, Subscribe, Share/Save, and Give Feedback.
- Title:** H.J.Res.80 - Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Indian Education, and Indian Health Service Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2014. 113th Congress (2013-2014).
- JOINT RESOLUTION**
- Sponsor:** [Rep. Simpson, Michael K. \[R-ID-2\]](#) (Introduced 10/03/2013)
- Committees:** House - Appropriations
- Latest Action:** 10/16/2013 Read the second time. Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 221.
- Major Recorded Votes:** 10/14/2013 : [Passed House](#)
- Tracker:** Introduced > **Passed House** > Passed Senate > To President > Became Law
- More on This Bill:** [Constitutional Authority Statement](#), [CBO Cost Estimates](#), [View subjects >](#)
- Subject — Policy Area:** Native Americans
- Navigation Bar:** Summary (2), Text (3), Actions (23), Titles (4), Amendments (1), Cosponsors (0), Committees (1), Related Bills (1)
- Summary:** H.J.Res.80 — 113th Congress (2013-2014)
- There are 2 summaries for this bill.** Passed House without amendment (10/14/2013) [GO] [Bill summaries](#) are authored by [CRS](#).
- Shown Here:** Passed House without amendment (10/14/2013)
- (This measure has not been amended since it was introduced. The summary of that version is repeated here.)**
- Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Indian Education, and Indian Health Service Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2014 - Makes appropriations for FY2014 for**

Educational Materials:

From the homepage (congress.gov), the section for Legislative history and tools contains many resources for teachers including:

US Founding Documents: A gallery that highlights resources designed to study select documents such as the Constitution, Declaration of Independence, Bill of Rights, and Federalist Papers. Also contains an annotated Constitution resource. (<https://beta.congress.gov/legislative-process>)

The Legislative Process: A section of nine videos and various images chronicling how a bill becomes a law. (<https://beta.congress.gov/founding-documents>)