

Quick Tips for Using THOMAS and FDSys Websites

THOMAS

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



Tip: Remember to go to the correct Congress (*e.g.*, current, 109th, etc.)

Tip: Use “Bill Summary & Status” page

Tip: Use “All Congressional Actions” or “All Congressional Actions with Amendments” page

Tip: Does not have congressional hearings or presidential documents

Finding Information When You Have the Public Law Number:

1. Under “More Legislative Information” (middle column), click on “Public Laws”
2. Select the Congress you need (defaults to current Congress)
3. Select the appropriate “Range of Public Laws”
4. Laws are in chronological order, by the second part of the Public Law number (*i.e.*, the bolded black numbers at the beginning of each listing)
5. Click on the bill number (blue link) to bring up the “Bill Summary & Status” page

Finding Information When You Have the Bill Number (Current Congress):

1. Under “Legislation in Current Congress”, choose “Bill Number” option
2. Put bill number in the search box, but MUST use “hr” or “s”, *e.g.*, “hr1234”
3. Takes you to the “Bill Summary and Status” page

Finding Information When You Have the Bill Number (Previous Congresses):

1. Under “Legislation in Current Congress”, click on “More Search Options”
2. Under “Bills and Resolutions”, click on “Bill Summary and Status”
3. Select appropriate Congress
4. In “Enter Search” area, use down arrow to change from “Word/Phrase” to “Bill Number”
5. Put bill number in the search box, but MUST use “hr” or “s”, *e.g.*, “hr1234”
6. Takes you to the “Bill Summary and Status” page

The screenshot shows the FDSys website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: About GPO, Newsroom/Media, Congressional Relations, Inspector General, Careers, Contact, askGPO, and Help. Below this is the GPO logo and the text 'U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE | Keeping America Informed'. The main content area is divided into several sections: 'Home' with links to 'FDsys: GPO's Federal Digital System', 'Customers', 'Vendors', and 'Libraries'; a search bar for 'Search Government Publications' with a 'SEARCH' button and links to 'Advanced Search' and 'Retrieve by Citation'; a featured item for 'S. 1947 Government Publishing Act of 2014 Legislation to Change the Name of GPO' with PDF, Text, and XML links; and a 'Browse' menu on the right with categories like 'Code of Federal Regulations', 'Compilation of Presidential Documents', 'Congressional Bills', 'Congressional Documents', 'Congressional Hearings', 'Congressional Record', 'Congressional Reports', 'Constitution of the United States of America: Analysis and Interpretation', 'Economic Indicators', 'Federal Register', 'Public and Private Laws', 'United States Code', and 'United States Courts Opinions'. Below the 'Browse' menu is a 'Moments in History' section with links to 'Post-JFK Assassination Audio Tape Recordings', 'President Nixon's Watergate Grand Jury Testimony Transcripts', 'The 9/11 Commission Report', and 'The Financial Crisis Inquiry Report'. At the bottom, there is a 'GPO Quick Links' section with links to 'XML Bulk Data Repository', 'U.S. Government Bookstore', 'Berry's Guide to U.S. Government for Kids', and 'Catalog of U.S. Government Publications'. A featured item for 'Benghazi Report Report of the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Review of the Terrorist Attacks on U.S. Facilities in Benghazi, Libya, September 11-12, 2012' is also visible.

Tip: From the Government Printing Office (GPO); has the PDF versions that THOMAS links to

Tip: Unlike THOMAS, has congressional hearings and presidential documents

Tip: For “drill down” browsing access, go to the “Browse” navigation menu on the right

Finding a Known Congressional Hearing:

1. In “Browse” navigation menu (on right), click on “Congressional Hearings”
2. Select appropriate Congress
3. Select appropriate chamber (House or Senate)
4. Select committee
5. Are in chronological order, by date

Finding a Known Presidential Document:

1. In “Browse” navigation menu (on right), click on “Compilation of Presidential Documents”
2. Select appropriate year
3. Select appropriate month
4. Are in chronological order, by date