

John J. Ross - William C. Blakley Law Library

Arizona State University College of Law

Federal Legislation

The first issuance of an enacted law passed by the United States Congress is a **slip law**. This pamphlet contains the text of a single act and is individually paginated. At the end of each legislative session, the slip laws are consolidated and arranged chronologically into a permanent set of bound volumes called **session laws**. **Codes** are the subject arrangement of session laws. **Codes with annotations** provide citations to law reviews, legal encyclopedias and other reference sources as well as abstracts of cases decided on that point of law.

SLIP LAWS

Each enacted law is assigned a **public law number** or a **private law number**. Public laws are intended to be for wide application whereas private laws are intended for individuals or small groups of people. Private laws and public laws have their own numbering. Few private laws are passed during a legislative session.

The **heading** of a slip law contains the public law number, the date it was approved and the session law cite. Below that is the text of the enacted law. **Marginal notes** provide the bill number that introduced the law, the date of approval, the name of the act, and the *United States Code* citation. Also in the margins are headings that direct to specific points in the law. At the end of the slip law is a brief legislative history. It provides references to House and Senate reports as well as Congressional debates.

Slip laws are slow to appear and researchers often use privately published resources to obtain current and timely information on recently enacted legislation.

Location: AE 2.110: Main Reading Room on the Indexing and Citators Table with the Code of Federal Regulations

Citation: P.L. 106-101 OR Private Law 105-10

The first number designates in which Congress the law was enacted. The second number represents the chronological sequence of enactment by Congress.

UNITED STATES STATUTES AT LARGE (Session Laws)

The *United States Statutes at Large* is an **official publication** of the United States and is the permanent bound collection of slip laws. It is issued at the end of each legislative session. The *Statutes at Large* is published slowly and there is a lag time of two to three years from the end of the legislative session to the time that they are published.

Currently, session laws are the authoritative binding text of federal law or **positive law** of legislation. However, Congress is currently engaged in a project to enact each title of the Code as positive law. For more information, please refer to the preface in the 2000 edition of the *United States Code* (page vii.).

Although publication did not begin until 1846, the *Statutes at Large* retrospectively covers public and private laws enacted since 1789 and treaties since 1778. Until 1951, **ratified treaties** were included in the *Statutes at Large*. This was discontinued when the government began publishing *U.S. Treaties and Other International Agreements* (Gov. Docs. S 9.12:). Ratified treaties now appear in this separate publication.

Since 1938, each volume of *Statutes at Large* contains laws enacted during a legislative session. Before that, several legislative sessions had been combined into one volume. *Statutes at Large* is arranged with the text of the public laws first, followed by private laws, concurrent resolutions and proclamations. The layout for the text of the enacted laws is the same as discussed in the above slip laws section. One exception is **bill numbers**, which did not appear in *Statutes at Large* until 1904. Bill numbers for these years can be located in the following title, *Legislative Reference Checklist: the Key to Legislative Histories from 1789-1903*. [Law Ref. KF49 .I43 1982].

Features:

- Subject Index
- Popular Names Table (since 1991)
- List of bills enacted into public and private law
- List of public laws
- List of private laws
- List of concurrent resolutions
- List of proclamations
- List of treaties (prior to 1950)

Location: Law Core

Citation: [volume number] Stat. [page number]

Ex. 114 STAT. 1055

UNITED STATES CODE (Code)

The *United States Code* is a subject or topical arrangement of all public laws in effect at the time of printing. The code only contains the permanent laws that are in force at the time of publication and removes repealed laws and revised laws that have been amended by Congress.

The *United States Code* is the **official federal code** and is published by the United States Government. The current format for the Code was established in 1926. It has 50 titles that are generally arranged in alphabetical order. Each title is divided into chapters and further subdivided into sections. A new edition is reissued every six years and is updated annually with cumulative bound supplements. The *United States Code* is published slowly and can be from eight months to four years out of date.

The *United States Code* does not reflect judicial decision-making. If a court declared a statute unconstitutional, no indication of this would appear until the legislature either amended or repealed the statute.

At the end of each section of the code is **historical information** on the statute. It states when the law went into effect and any amendments made to the act since then. It gives the date of enactment and provides references to the *Statutes at Large* cite and the public law number, which enables the user to locate the original text and to locate any legislative history materials relating to the enactment. Codification and amendment sections follow providing information about the statute.

Features:

- Subject Index
- Popular Names Table
- Table of Titles and Chapters at the beginning of each volume
- Revised Titles Table
- Statutes at Large conversion table from
- Executive Orders table- lists executive orders that implement general and permanent laws as contained in the U.S. Code
- Proclamations table – lists proclamations that are set out in the U.S. Code
- Internal References Table- lists sections of the U.S. Code that are referred to by other sections of the U.S. Code with citations to referring sections.

Aside from enacted legislation, the 1st volumes of the *United States Code* also contains:

- Declaration of Independence
- Articles of Confederation
- Ordinance of 1787: The Northwest Territorial Government
- Constitution of the United States of America and Amendments
- Analytical Index to the Constitution of the United States of America and Amendments

Location: Law Core

Citation: [Title] U.S.C. § [section #] (year) Ex. 5 U.S.C. §4301 (2000)

UNITED STATES CODE SERVICE AND UNITED STATES CODE ANNOTATED (Annotated codes)

Annotated codes are published by private publishers and are unofficial federal codes. Annotated codes have all of the same features of the *U.S. Code*, but also provide annotations to statutes and are updated more frequently. The *United States Code Service* (USCS) and *United States Code Annotated* (USCA) are two annotated codes.

The *USCS* and *USCA* maintain the same title and section numbering found in the *U.S. Code*. However, the *USCS* follows more closely the context and language used in the *Statutes at Large* (using notes for clarification), while the *USCA* follows the language of the *U.S. Code* more closely.

USCS and *USCA* provide annotations to supplement the statute. They provide **historical notes**, which can be used to research the language of the statute as it was enacted and its amendments. The notes give the date of enactment, the public law number, and the *Statutes at Large* cite. There are also brief comments about amendments, or revisions made to the statute.

If there is a complimentary *Code of Federal Regulations* section, it will be included in the annotations as well as any cross-references to other *USCS* or *USCA* citations. A **research guide** follows providing references to treatises, the *American Law Reports (ALR)*, law reviews and legal encyclopedias. The *USCS* cites to the legal encyclopedia, *American Jurisprudence 2d* and *USCA* cites to *Corpus Juris Secundum*.

A **Notes and Decisions section** follows which contains brief abstracts of cases discussing the particular statute. The *USCS* includes judicial and administrative decisions, while *USCA* contains judicial decisions only. *USCA* is more comprehensive in the judicial decisions it includes. The *USCS* does not include all decisions on the statute; it excludes those that are obsolete or repetitive.

USCS and *USCA* are updated more frequently than the *U.S. Code*. **Pocket parts and pamphlets** are issued yearly to update the main volume. Throughout the year, **advance annotation supplements** are issued containing the most current annotations. Monthly, **advance legislative services** are published which has the text of recently enacted laws, executive documents, court rules, and selected regulations with tables indicating which code sections have been affected by recent legislative action.

Features:

- Indexes- General index and title index
- Title outline
- Parallel Conversion Tables - *Statutes at Large*, Revised Statutes of 1878 and Revised titles
- Popular Names Table
- Index and Finding Aids to the CFR (*USCS* only)
- Index of Executive Documents – Proclamations, Reorganization Plans, and Executive Orders

Aside from enacted legislation and annotations, the *USCS* and *USCA* also include:

- Federal Rules of Court annotated
- United States Constitution annotated

- Selected International Agreements (*USCS* only)
- Notes to uncodified laws and treaties (*USCS* only)
- Multi-district litigation rules. (*USCS* only)
- Administrative Rules of Procedure annotated (*USCS* only)
- Federal Sentencing Guidelines (*USCA* only)

United States Code Service (USCS)

Location: Law Core

Citation: [Title] U.S.C.S. § [section #] (LexisNexis. [year]) Ex. 5 U.S.C.S § 4301 (LexisNexis 1994)

United States Code Annotated (USCA)

Location: Law Core and Reserve Reading Room

Citation: [Title] U.S.C.A. § [section number] (West year) 5 U.S.C.A. § 4301 (West 1995)

ELECTRONIC AND ONLINE SOURCES FOR FEDERAL LEGISLATION

GPO Access <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/uscode/index.html>

Full-text of the 1994 & 2000 editions (including supplements) of *United State Code*

Cornell Law School website <http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>

- Contains full-text of the *United States Code*

House of Representative website <http://uscode.house.gov/>

- Contains full-text of the *United States Code*

Congressional Universe (On-campus use. Remote access-ASU students & staff)

- Contains full text of *Statutes at Large* from 1789 to present

Lexis Nexis Academic Universe (On-campus use. Remote access-ASU students & staff)

- Contains full text of *United States Code Service*

Westlaw Patron Access (Law Library Access only)

*For links to work, you must open Westlaw Patron Access first.

United States Code (not annotated) - [USC](#)

United States Code Annotated - [USCA](#)

United States Code Annotated historical (1990-2006) USCAYY (where yy equals the year)

United States public laws (current) – [US-PL](#)

United States public laws - historical (1973-2004) – [US-PL-OLD](#)

Lexis (Available to law faculty and law students only)

USCS, constitution, rules – [Library:GENFED File:USCODE](#)

United States Public Laws (1988-present) - [Library: GENFED File: PUBLAW](#)

USCS Archives (1992-2005) - [Library: CODES File: USARCH](#)

Westlaw (Available to law faculty and law students only)

United States Code (not annotated) - [USC](#)

United States Code Annotated - [USCA](#)

United States Code Annotated historical (1990-2006) USCAYY (where y equals the year)

United States public laws (current) – [US-PL](#)

United States public laws - historical (1973-2004) – [US-PL-OLD](#)

United States Statutes at Large (1789-1972) – [US-STATLRG](#)