Legislative Histories

Introduction:

A legislative history is a compilation of the materials generated during the course of creating legislation, such as committee reports, analysis by legislative counsel, debates and histories of actions taken. Legislative history is used for discovering the legislative intent. The resources below should be considered when compiling a legislative history. This page will discuss Federal legislative history.

Overviews of the:

- Legislative Process (Library of Congress: Thomas)
- Legislative History (The Law Library): Information on creating a legislative history, locating compiled histories, etc.

Compiled Legislative Histories:

Sometimes legislative histories are collected as a book under one title. Check the Georgia State University Online Catalog, GIL, for your topic and include the phrase: legislative history. (e.g. bankruptcy reform and legislative history)

- History of Bills via GPO Access lists legislative actions on bills that are reported in the Congressional Record for v.129 (1983) to date, and provides a page number in the Congressional Record.

U.S. Code Congressional and Administrative News: Contains laws, legislative history, administrative regulations, lists of committees, proclamations, executive messages and orders. Located in print in the Law Library.
Resources for creating a legislative history:

**Hearings:** House and Senate Committee sessions in which sworn testimony is given can be found in:

- Thomas (1995-)
- GPO Access (1995-)
- Lexis-Nexis Congressional

**Congressional Reports** (1995/96-Current): "originates from congressional committees and deal with proposed legislation and issues under investigation. There are two types of reports House and Senate Reports and Senate Executive Reports."

**Slip Laws** (1995/96 - Current): Laws being prepared for publication are first issued in pamphlet form as a slip law which is "an official publication of the law and is admissible as 'legal evidence' (1 U.S.C. 113). The Office of the Federal Register assigns the permanent law number and legal statutory citation of each law and prepares marginal notes, citations, and the legislative history (a brief description of the Congressional action taken on each public bill), which also contains dates of related Presidential remarks or statements)."

Print copies of the slip laws are located in the University Library Collection (LN 5) at KF70.U54a, they are kept for one congressional session and replaced by the Statutes at Large.

Statutes at Large: This resource provides text of bills and resolutions passed into public law. It is organized by public law number.

- Volumes 1 - 18 (Library of Congress)
- Volumes 96 - 1982 - are in print and are located in the University Library Collection (LN5) at KF50 .U54a

**Floor Proceedings or the Debate:**
Are found in the, Congressional Record (1994- Present)
Bound Volumes and Microfiche - Located in College of Law (Periodicals U585.C749)

**Bills and Resolutions:**
- Thomas (101st Congress, 1990-)
- GPO Access (103rd Congress, 1993-)

United States Code is the "consolidation and codification by subject matter of the general and permanent laws of the United States." Thomas provides 1988 to present and GPO Access provides access to 1994 to present. See also Lexis-Nexis.
Bill Tracking:
CQ Weekly
GovTrack
GPO Access
House.gov & Senate.gov
Lexis-Nexis Congressional
Thomas

General Congressional News & Information:
House.gov & Senate.gov

National Journal: "Coverage and analysis of the people, issues and trends that drive the policy-making process in Washington."
Electronic: 1996 – Current is available via Factiva.

Roll Call: "The newspaper of Capitol Hill" (bi-weekly)
In Print: The Library retains three months. Issues are shelved in Current Periodicals, Library North Floor 1.
Electronic: 1989- current is available via Lexis-Nexis Academic.