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Helpful Hints For Searching Congressional Documents Online Via *GPO Access*

Content and file format: The **Congressional Documents** database contains selected **House, Senate and Treaty Documents** for the 104th Congress (1995-1996). Documents are available as ASCII text and Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format (PDF) files.¹ Graphics, including scanned images of camera ready copy are omitted from the ASCII text version but are contained in the PDF files. When documents are printed entirely from camera copy, the text is not searchable. Approximately, 85% of *Congressional Documents* are produced from camera copy. Since this database contains only documents printed at the GPO, a "Catalog of Available Documents" is provided online which lists all documents currently available via *GPO Access*. Documents are listed by report number. The database will be updated irregularly as electronic versions become available.

Fields: The FIELD "reptype" can be used to limit your search to a particular type of document.

When searching via SWAIS (dial-in or telnet session) or a WAIS client, a field can be searched by typing the field name (reptype), followed by an equals sign (=), followed by the type of document (Senate, House or Treaty). All queries that do not specify a field search the entire database.

Identification Code: Each document in the *Congressional Documents* database online via *GPO Access* will be displayed in the results list with an identification code followed by the initial words of the title. For example: H.Doc 104-20 95th National Convention of the American Legion. In this example, **H** stands for House (**S** stands for Senate and **T** stands for Treaty) and **Doc.104-20** is the document number.

Maximum Responses: The default settings for SWAIS and for the WAIS and Web client software is to return a maximum of 40 responses to a query. To locate a larger number of documents, you will need to change the setting. In SWAIS type a lower case **o** at the *Source Selection* menu to change your options. In WinWAIS, select *Edit* and then *Preferences* from the pull-down menu. In MacWAIS, select *File* and then *Preferences* from the pull-down menu. On the *GPO Access* Web Searching Pages a box is provided in which you may change the number of documents returned.

Good sample searches for the *Congressional Documents* database are: ²

Subject (DEFERRAL.ASK)³

Query: (recissions OR deferrals) AND "September 1995"

Result: H.Doc. 104-112 Cumulative Rpt. on Recissions and Referrals Aug. 1, 1995

H.Doc. 104-115 Cumulative Rpt. on Recissions and Referrals Sept. 1, 1995

This search demonstrates how to search by topic in the *Congressional Documents* database. This search retrieves Congressional documents mentioning the terms recessions or deferrals during the month of September 1995. It also demonstrates the use of multiple boolean operators (ADJ, AND or NOT) in a single query. Also, this search demonstrates the use of parenthesis. The WAIS server will process the information in parenthesis first.

Document Number (DOCNO.ASK)**Query:** "104-11"**Result:** T.Doc. 104-11 Exchange of Notes relating to tax convention
H.Doc. 104-11 Status of Iraq

This search illustrates how to search by document number. You may limit your search to a specific type of document by using the reptype field. For example, to search for a treaty document type the following: reptype=treaty AND sweden. The search below illustrates a fielded search.

Fielded Search (NUCLEAR.ASK)**Query:** reptype=treaty AND "nuclear safety"**Result:** T.Doc. 104-6 Convention, Nuclear Safety
T.Doc. 104-14 Investment Treaty with Trinidad

This search demonstrates how to use a field as well as boolean operators in a single search.

Treaty Document and Corresponding Executive Report (JORDAN.ASK)**Query:** jordan**Result:** T. Doc. 104-3 Extradition Treaty with Jordan
E. Rpt. 104-2 Extradition Treaty with Jordan

The above search illustrates how to find a treaty document and the corresponding executive report. To search for a treaty document and its corresponding executive report, choose both the *Congressional Documents* and *Congressional Reports* databases and search by topic.

A Senate Treaty Document contains the text of a treaty as submitted to the Senate by the President of the United States for ratification. The corresponding Executive Report from the Committee on Foreign Relations provides the committee's recommendations on the treaty.

ENDNOTES:

1. Users with SWAIS access will not be able to retrieve the PDF files. Users with WAIS or Web access and the free Adobe Acrobat Reader software can view and print the typeset copy.
 2. The results of these sample searches are described as they will appear using SWAIS, WAIS or Web client software customized for *GPO Access*. The searches can be performed with other WAIS client software, but the display of the results may vary.
 3. When a file name, such as DEFERRAL.ASK, appears in brackets at the beginning of a sample search, there is a saved search with that file name available for use with the *GPO Access* WinWAIS and MacWAIS client software. The saved searches are available on The Federal Bulletin Board /FTP site at fedbbs.access.gpo.gov/win.ask or [mac.ask](http://fedbbs.access.gpo.gov/mac.ask).
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