

Congressional Record Helpful Hints

Congressional Record

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Congressional Record

Content and File Format

The [Congressional Record](#) is the official record of the proceedings and debates of the United States Congress. It is published daily when Congress is in session. *GPO Access* contains *Congressional Record* volumes from 140 (1994) to the present. The current year's *Congressional Record* database is usually updated daily by 11 a.m., except when a late adjournment delays production of the issue. Documents are available as [ASCII text](#) and [Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format \(PDF\)](#) files. [1]

Browse the Daily Digest

The browse feature allows you to view the Daily Digest from the previous day's *Congressional Record*. The Daily Digest serves as a table of contents for the House and Senate actions reported in that issue and for the statements published in the Extensions of Remarks. It is available in two formats: [Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format \(PDF\)](#) and [ASCII text](#). Simply click on a link to open it.

Retrieve a Congressional Record Page

If you know the year/volume and page number of the *Congressional Record* document that you want to retrieve, you may bypass the traditional method of searching by using the specialized [Retrieve a Congressional Record Page](#) feature. First, select the year/volume by clicking on the corresponding radio button. Only one year/volume may be accessed in a single retrieval; the default is the current year/volume. Next, type the page number you wish to retrieve in the appropriate box. Tables that contain ranges for the House, Senate, Extensions of Remarks, and Daily Digest pages in each issue are available for *Congressional Record* volumes from 1998 to the present. Finally, click on the "submit" button. Pages are available as [Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format \(PDF\)](#) files only.

Note: Navigational tools in Adobe Acrobat allow you view the previous page, next page, or a page number that you enter in the "Go to page" box, once you have retrieved a *Congressional Record* page by following the above steps.

Fielded Searches

A fielded-search page is provided for *Congressional Record* databases from 1995 to the present. Fielded searches allow you to make your search more specific by limiting your results by preselected elements, such as issue, section, and date.

The fields for the *Congressional Record* databases are as follows:

Issue: 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999

Section: Daily Digest, Extensions of Remarks, House Section, Senate Section, and Lobby List [2]

Note: You may click on a section name (the underlined text, not the checkbox) to view a description of that section.

Issue Date: Date Range, On, Before, and After

To select or deselect a field, click on the appropriate box or circle. You may search one or multiple issues (years) and/or sections with a single query. However, you may choose only one option in regard to the issue date. Queries that do not specify a field will perform a search of the entire database.

Note: The fielded-search page automatically defaults to the current year. If you do not wish to search this year, you must deselect the corresponding volume checkbox.

Fielded searches are not available for the 1994 *Congressional Record* database. In order to find a document in this database, you must perform a simple search from the general [GPO Access simple-search page](#). Scroll down the list of databases, click on "Congressional Record, Volume 140 (1994)," and then enter your search terms in the appropriate box.

Maximum Responses

The maximum responses you may receive from a query is set at a default of 40. To locate a larger number of documents (up to 200), you must change the setting. All of the *GPO Access* search pages provide a box in which you may change the maximum number of returned documents. Generally, 40 responses should be adequate to retrieve the document for which you are searching. If you cannot find a desired document with the default 40 responses, you may want to try making your query more specific before expanding the number of returned documents.

Identification Codes

In the list that displays your query results, the title of each *Congressional Record* document is preceded by an identification code. The identification code contains three elements: a database abbreviation, the issue date, and a section identifier. For example, in the identification code "cr20oc98H," "cr" stands for *Congressional Record*, "20oc98" is the issue date (October 20, 1998), and "H" indicates that the document is from the House section. The chart below contains all of the *Congressional Record* section identifiers.

D	Daily Digest
E	Extensions of Remarks
H	House Section
S	Senate Section

While identification codes are helpful for identifying certain attributes of a document in your results list, they cannot be used for searching within a query.

Sample Searches

The following sample searches are provided as guides to popular types of searches in the *Congressional Record* databases. Unless otherwise indicated, the searches are performed in the 1998 *Congressional Record* database. [3]

Note: Whenever you enter a query, make sure that you deselect any default settings that may interfere with your search. The *Congressional Record* online database automatically defaults to the current year's volume.

Search by Subject

This type of search returns documents that are related to a specific subject. The word(s) that you enter as your search term(s) may appear anywhere within the document.

Query: **"state of the union"**
Alternative: **state ADJ of ADJ union**

Results: cr28ja98S STATE OF THE UNION RESPONSE
 cr04fe98E STATE OF THE UNION
 cr11se98H REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS
 (Other documents were returned that are not included here.)

Search by Congressperson's Name

This type of search returns documents based on a Congressperson's name. To make your search more specific, modify the query by also including a date, field, or subject.

Query: **Chenoweth AND ("national parks" OR "public lands")**

Results: cr07oc98H OMNIBUS NATIONAL PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS ACT OF 1998
 cr27mr98H FOREST RECOVERY AND PROTECTION ACT OF 1998
 cr23se98H EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR BICENTENNIAL OF LEWIS AND CLARK
 (Other documents were returned that are not included here.)

As in a general subject search, the name(s) that you enter as your search term(s) may appear anywhere within the document. The results list does not differentiate among documents in which the Congressperson is speaking and those in which the s/he is spoken of. After you retrieve a document, you can tell that s/he is speaking if her/his name is written in all capital letters and aligned to the left of the page. (Performing a "find" search with your browser will allow you to make this determination more quickly and easily than reading through the text.)

Note: In the *Congressional Record*, a Congressperson is identified as Mr., Mrs., or Ms., not as Senator or Representative.

Search by Bill Number

This type of search returns documents based on a given bill number. The bill number may be typed with or without punctuation. If no punctuation is used, you must leave a space between the "h" and the "r" for bills in the House.

Query: "h.r. 856"
Alternative: "h r 856"

Results: cr04mr98H UNITED STATES-PUERTO RICO POLITICAL STATUS ACT
cr03mr98H AMENDMENTS
cr04mr98H PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 856, UNITED STATES-
(Other documents were returned that are not included here.)

The order of returned documents is determined by [relevance ranking](#), not by chronology; this ranking accounts for the appearance of a *Congressional Record* document from March 3, 1998, in between two documents from March 4, 1998.

Search by Roll-Call Vote

This type of search returns documents that contain roll-call votes. If you know the number of the specific roll-call vote in which you are interested, you may search for it with a query such as "**rollcall vote no 131**". The search below illustrates how to search generally for roll-call votes related to a subject.

Query: "rollcall vote no" AND defense

Results: cr20my98H PERSONAL EXPLANATION
cr25jn98S NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1999
cr13my98S AMERICAN MISSILE PROTECTION ACT OF 1998--MOTION TO PROCEED
(Other documents were returned that are not included here.)

Search by Page Number

This type of search returns documents that appear wholly or partially on a specified page. You must include the word "page" in your query in order to eliminate the return of documents that include the page number as a numeric reference within the text. In the *Congressional Record*, the page number is preceded directly by a letter, indicating the house with which that page is concerned; "S" refers to a Senate page, and "H" refers to a House page.

Query: "page S821"

Result: cr23fe98S PAYCHECK PROTECTION ACT

For documents that span more than one page, it is possible to find the full page range by consulting the heading in an ASCII text file or the "Go To Page" tool in the Adobe Acrobat Reader. Page breaks are indicated by separators (e.g., [[Page 825]]) in an ASCII text file or by a new page view in the Adobe Acrobat Reader; they may, as in a printed document, fall in the middle of a sentence.

Note: Page numbers do not appear in the 1994 *Congressional Record* database.

Footnotes

[1] Users with the free Adobe Acrobat Reader software can view documents as they appear in the printed version. This software is available from Adobe's Web site at the following URL:
<http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html>.

[2] A lobby list identifies individuals and organizations that lobby Congress and the clientele that those lobbyists represent. The list is based on disclosure forms filed with the Clerk of the House and Secretary of the Senate, and it is published in the *Congressional Record* quarterly, usually in February, May, August, and November. The three sections of the lobby list are registrations, quarterly reports for the most recent quarter, and quarterly reports from the prior quarter that were received too late for inclusion in the previous list.

[3] The results of these sample searches are described as they appear on the Web interface. The display of the results may vary for users of the WAIS client and SWAIS software.

[Questions or comments](#) regarding this service? Contact the **GPO Access User Support Team**
by Internet e-mail at gpoaccess@gpo.gov;
by telephone at **1-202-512-1530** or **toll-free at 1-888-293-6498**;
or by fax at **1-202-512-1262**.