

KEY POINTS

When Is a Law Not a Statute?

codify: to reduce to a code; systematize

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th Edition

When you are researching federal laws, first determine whether the law you are seeking has been codified in the *United States Code*. Not all public laws are codified; only laws of general and permanent applicability are included in the *Code*.

The United States Public Laws database (US-PL) contains enrolled bills passed by the current Congress that have been signed into law by the president, whether or not they are classified to the *Code*.

Suppose you want to retrieve legislation passed by the current Congress amending the District of Columbia Home Rule Act. Access the US-PL database and search for your terms in the summary field (su), e.g.,
su("home rule")

The United States Public Laws 1973–2006 database (US-PL-OLD) contains public laws passed by previous Congresses, beginning with the First Session of the 93rd Congress in 1973.

To retrieve laws that have been codified in *Code*, access the United States Code Annotated database (USCA).

Suppose you want to retrieve the *Code* section on fair use in copyright. Access the USCA database and type
pr(copyright) & ca("fair use")

In addition to running Terms and Connectors or Natural Language searches, you can access finding tools—such as the Table of Contents service, the Popular Name Table, and the Statutes index—right from the top of the USCA Search page.

The Popular Name Table is especially useful when you know a federal law by its popular name, e.g., Sarbanes-Oxley Act. Just click **Pop. Name Table**. Click the letter with which the name begins, e.g., S. Then scroll down until you see the name, e.g., *Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 (Public Company Accounting Reform and Investor Protection Act)*. Click the name to view a list of the *Code* sections enacted by the law.

The USCA database contains many special features. For example, the disposition table for title 11, Bankruptcy, which lists the sections of the former title 11 and indicates the sections of title 11 revised by Pub. L. No. 95-598 that cover similar and related subject matter. To retrieve this document, access Find and type **11 usca disp table**.

An Ear for Beauty

"Poetry is the rhythmical
creation of beauty in words."

Edgar Allen Poe

Volume 10, Number 8
November/December 2008

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For search assistance,
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1-800-REF-ATTY (1-800-733-2889)

Guide to Federal Legislative Enactments

<i>If law is a</i>	<i>And it is a (example)</i>	<i>Will not be codified in USCA®</i>	<i>Codified in US</i>
private bill, law, or resolution (for the benefit of specific individual, corporation, or institution)	N/A (bill enacted for the relief of Shigeru Yamada)	X	
public law	law of the District of Columbia (District of Columbia Home Rule Act–Amendments)	X	
public law	local law provision (Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Building)	X	
public law	appropriations provision*** (Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2008)	X	
public law	provision of limited applicability (Army Reserve Centennial)	X	
public law	provision of general and permanent applicability (Court Security Improvement Act of 2007)		X

SCA	<i>You can find it in print</i>	<i>You can find it on Westlaw® in (database identifier)</i>	<i>Sample Westlaw search</i>
	<i>Congressional Record</i> (if entered into the record) slip law printed by Government Printing Office (GPO) <i>Statutes at Large</i>	CR	relief +10 “shigeru yamada” +50 enacted
	slip law printed by GPO <i>U.S. Code Congressional and Administrative News®</i> (USCCAN) <i>Statutes at Large</i> <i>District of Columbia Official Code</i>	US-PL* US-PL-OLD** USCCAN DC-ST-ANN DC-LEGIS, DC-LEGIS-OLD	ca(“district of columbia” /s “home rule” /s amendment)
	slip law printed by GPO USCCAN <i>Statutes at Large</i>	US-PL US-PL-OLD USCCAN	ca(lyndon /s johnson /s education /s building)
	slip law printed by GPO USCCAN <i>Statutes at Large</i>	US-PL US-PL-OLD USCCAN	ca(military /s construction /s appropriation /s 2008)
	slip law printed by GPO USCCAN <i>Statutes at Large</i>	US-PL US-PL-OLD USCCAN	ca(army /s reserve /s centennial)
	slip law printed by GPO USCCAN <i>Statutes at Large</i> <i>United States Code</i> (USC) <i>United States Code Annotated®</i> (USCA)	US-PL US-PL-OLD USCCAN USCA	ca(court /s security /s improve! /s 2007)

* The US-PL database contains enrolled bills passed by the current Congress that have been signed into law by the president whether or not they are classified to the *United States Code*.

** The US-PL-OLD database contains public laws passed by previous Congresses, beginning with the First Session of the 93rd Congress in 1973.

*** An appropriations act may contain provisions that will be codified to USCA.

ADVANCED SEARCH TIP

A Table You Are Sure to Love

The U.S. Code Congressional and Administrative News—Legislative History Table database (USCCAN-TABLE) contains documents from Table 4 as printed in *West's® U.S. Code Congressional and Administrative News*. This invaluable table lists each public law, its date of approval, the *United States Statutes at Large* page number, the Senate or House bill number, and other legislative history information.

Coverage begins with the second session of the 106th Congress (2000).

The USCCAN-TABLE database provides a handy template to make searching easy. Access the database; then type the year of the legislation in which you are interested in the Year text box and click **Search Westlaw**.

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