

“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation...” *Isaiah 28:16*

Research Cornerstones

Federal Statutes

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.

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.

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

Ex. 114 STAT. 1055

UNITED STATES CODE (Code)

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 two years out of date.

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.

Location: Range 115 KF62 .A2

Citation: [Title] U.S.C. § [section #] (year)

Ex. 5 U.S.C. §4301 (1994)

UNITED STATES CODE SERVICE (USCS) AND UNITED STATES CODE ANNOTATED (USCA)

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 *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 complementary *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.

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.

United States Code Service (USCS)

Location: Range 115 KF62 1972 .L38

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

United States Code Annotated (USCA)

Location: Range 116 KF62.5 .W45 2005

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

Electronic and Online Access

GPO Access

- Full-text of the *United State Code* <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/uscode/index.html>

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*

Westlaw Databases

United States Code-USC

United States Code Annotated-USCA

United States Code Annotated historical (1990-1998) USCAYY (where y equals the year)

United States public laws – US-PL

United States public laws - historical (1973-1998) – US-PL-OLD

LexisNexis Databases

USCS, constitution, rules – Library: CODES File: USCODE

United States Public Laws- Library: CODES File: PUBLAW

USCS Archives - Library: CODES File: USARCH