

KRESGE LIBRARY GUIDE

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS FOR HISTORIANS

President's Papers

President's public messages, statements, speeches, and news conference remarks.

- [American Presidency Project](#) (transcripts, and an audio/video archive of presidential speeches)
- [GovInfo](#) (since the George H.W. Bush presidency)
- [Compilation of Presidential Documents](#) since 1993
- [University of Michigan Public Papers of the President](#) (from the Hoover to Clinton presidencies)
- [The Public Papers of President Ronald W. Reagan](#)

Presidential election debates

- [transcripts from the Commission on Presidential Debates](#)
- [Debates - American Presidency Project](#) (also convention speeches, party platforms and elections data)

Other

- [The Federal Register](#) (official daily publication for rules, proposed rules, and notices of Federal agencies and organizations, as well as executive orders and other presidential documents)
- [The Living Room Candidate: Presidential Campaign Commercials, 1952-2012](#)
- [Presidential history, Scripps Library and Multimedia Archive](#)
- [Library of Congress collections](#)
- Presidential Libraries' digital archives: some, like [Robert F. Kennedy's](#) library, have digital collections. See [list of presidential libraries](#).

Congressional Committee Hearings

They contain the testimony of government officials and private individuals invited to appear before Congressional committees to provide information and argue for or against passage of a bill. They cover all aspects of domestic and foreign policy.

[Congressional House and Senate Unpublished Hearings](#)

Full-text access to unpublished hearings held by Congress: House hearings (1973-1982) and Senate hearings (1985-1992).

Other sources:

- **prior to 1875:** online in the [US Congressional Documents and Debates](#)
- **since 1997:** online at [Govinfo](#) - Selected hearings, primarily 105th Congress (1997)-present, with some earlier hearings back to 1962
- **in KL's government document library** (since 1900)
To search for hearings in OneSearch, enter your keywords and the word "hearing". In the results list, select "Documents" from the Library Location option.
- the [Hathi Trust](#) and the [Internet Archive](#) contain a lot of digitized hearings

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Congressional debates and proceedings

Congressional Record (1873-present)

Daily publication of the speeches on the floor of the House and Senate. Organized in four parts:

- *House of Representatives*
- *Senate*
- *Extensions of Remarks (includes text that was not part of floor activity, but was inserted later)*
- *Daily Digest (summary of all Congressional activity for that day.)*

In addition to the daily edition, a bound edition is produced following each session of Congress.

The bound edition (1873-2009) is available on the [govinfo site](#).

Prior to 1873, Congressional debates were published in [The Debates and Proceedings in the Congress of the United States](#) (also known as the Annals of Congress, 1789-1824), [The Register of Debates in Congress](#) (1824-1837), and [The Congressional Globe](#) (1833-1873). Those are summaries, rather than verbatim transcripts.

Other access:

- prior to 1873: full text online at the [Century of Lawmaking](#) site (Library of Congress)
- 1833-1973: KL microfilm, room 143 KL
- 1873-1929: KL microfilm, room 143 KL
- 1929-1993: print, room 154 KL, call number X (a subject index is available)
- current: [online at govinfo](#)

Other Congressional materials

Congressional Reports

- originate from congressional committees and deal with proposed legislation and issues of interest
- online at [Govinfo](#) for post 1995 reports
- [online at Archive It](#) since 2008

Congressional Documents

- can include reports of executive departments and agencies, as well as committee prints
- [online at Govinfo](#) since 1995

Congressional Research Service reports

- created by experts, the reports present a legislative perspective on topics such as agriculture policy, counterterrorism operations, banking regulation, veterans' issues, and much more
- online at [CRS Reports](#)

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[Legislative Insight](#)

A federal legislative history service that makes available professionally researched compilations of digital full-text congressional publications relevant to enacted U.S. public laws.

Foreign Policy

[Foreign Relations of the United States](#)

Compilation of all foreign policy decisions and diplomatic activity. For earlier periods (1861-1960), see also the [University of Wisconsin Digital Collections](#). Available in print at [KL, room 154](#) (S1.1 call number)

[American State Papers](#)

Congressional documents for 1789-1838

[National Security Archive](#)

Declassified records on issues including U.S. national security, foreign policy, diplomatic and military history, intelligence policy, etc.

Other sources

- [Declassified Documents Reference Service](#) (Princeton)
- [CIA FOIA Reading Room](#)
- [FBI FOIA Reading Room](#)
- [Department of Defense FOIA Reading Room](#)
- [The Avalon Project](#) (Yale Law Library)