

Prepared by Larry Romans, Central Library, Vanderbilt University, x22838, April 2009

## PSCI 244 – LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

The location and call number of each publication is given in parentheses at the end of its bibliographic entry. All publications in this guide are shelved on the 4th level (the main floor) unless otherwise stated.

The URL for the Vanderbilt Library home page is <http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/>

### Assignment

You may do either of the following:

1. Compare and contrast the behaviors of two senators as they adjust to the new Obama administration and its legislative program.
2. Compare the efforts to enact the Obama stimulus package at the start of the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress with one of the following
  - a. the Clinton Reconciliation bill in 1993
  - b. the Reagan economic program (budget resolution, reconciliation bill and tax-cut bill on 1981.
  - c. the Bush Budget Enforcement Act of 1990 (a reconciliation package).
  - d. the George W. Bush tax-cut package.

### News Sources and Newsmagazines

**CQ Weekly [Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report]**, 1946-. ([Database](#), 1983-; latest five years: GOVT REF Alcove JK1.C15--West Wall)  
 Best source for current developments on political issues and campaigns and on activities of all three branches of government. Choose Archive "Search Articles." **Use the \* (asterisk) to substitute for word endings.**  
**Look in these two sources to find information about the Reagan, Bush, Clinton, and Bush packages. Look at the year in which they were introduced. The annual *Congressional Quarterly Almanac* (GOVT REF Alcove JK1.C66--West Wall) and quadrennial *Congress and the Nation* (GOVT REF Alcove JK1001.C6--West Wall) summarize and arrange CQ Weekly information by topic.**  
**Sample search: bush and budget enforcement and 1990**  
 For the paper version, the yellow pages provide a cumulative index.

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**National Journal**, 1969-. ([Database](#); latest five years: GOVT REF Alcove JK1.N28--West Wall)  
 Weekly newsmagazine of politics and government. Focuses more on economic than social issues. Use the electronic version that comes directly from National Journal. **Use the \* (asterisk) to substitute for word endings.**  
 Choose an "advanced search" limit search to the National Journal.  
**Sample search: clinton and reconciliation and 1993**

**LexisNexis Academic, 1973- . (Database)**  
 Indexes fulltext newspaper articles. **You can narrow your search for newspapers to those from the state of the senators you choose to compare.** To limit search to state or regional newspapers, click the Sources tab -> then change 'All Countries' to 'United States' next to 'Filter by' -> then click the Publication type folder called 'News' -> then select a state or region -> click on "[name of state] News Sources" -> click the red "OK – Continue" button and then enter your search. **E-mail: articles.**  
**Use the ! (exclamation mark) to substitute for word endings.**  
**Sample search: Bernie Sanders**

**Also check out these two sources for background information on the senators you choose:**

***Almanac of American Politics***, 1972-. ([Database](#); Latest on GOVT REF JK 1012 .A44--Bookcase 1)  
***Politics in America***, 1982-. ([Database](#); Latest on GOVT REF JK 1010 .P64--Bookcase 1)

## Periodical Articles

At the Vanderbilt Library home page, on the right under "Databases and E-Resources," click on "Articles and Databases." Then click on the initial letter of the database name and choose the database you want.

### *Worldwide Political Science Abstracts (WPSA)*, 1975-. ([Database](#))

The most comprehensive Political Science database. Provides citations, abstracts, and indexing of the international serials literature in political science and its complementary fields, including international relations, law, and public administration / policy.

### *PAIS International*, 1972-. ([Database](#))

Covers current events, public policy issues, and the social sciences in general--including economic and social conditions, government and politics, and international relations. Indexes a broad range of materials--books, pamphlets, and publications of the U.S. government and of international organizations.

**You can search both databases at the same time. Click on "change: specific databases" and click on that both WPSA and PAIS.**

**Both databases use the \* (asterisk) to substitute for word endings. E-mail: citations.**

**Sample search: evan bayh**

**Sample Search: reagan and reconciliation and budget and 1981**

### *Proquest*. ([Database](#))

Provides citations and summaries of articles from over 4,000 publications, with many in full-text. Indexes a broad range of social sciences publications, numerous general-interest magazines such as *Time* and *Newsweek*, and recent issues of major newspapers. **E-mail: articles.**

**Search Tip #1:** Use the \* (asterisk ) to substitute for word endings. **Sample Search: coups d etat**

**Search Tip #2:** Before you search, you can limit the number of databases you look at: click on the downward arrow to the right of "Databases:" and choose "Interdisciplinary: Proquest Research Library."

**Search Tip #3:** After entering your basic search, look at the "suggested topics" above the results you get. Click on the most appropriate one to get a list of the items that focus most on that topic.

Another tip: After entering your basic search, if you don't get many results, look at the list of results. From the titles of the articles listed, you may see other words or terms that will focus your topic better.

**Sample search: arlen specter;** then choose **Spector, Arlen (person)** as the suggested topic.

**Sample search: PER(Bush, George) and "Budget Enforcement Act" and 1990**

## U. S. Government Information

### *LEXIS-NEXIS Congressional*, 1789-1969; 1970-. ([Database](#))

Indexes CRS reports, U.S. Congressional hearings and committee prints, and documents from other Congressional units. Use the ! (exclamation mark) to substitute for word endings.

**Sample search: appropriation! and (military or defense)** and change Date to after Jan. 20, 2009.

### *Congressional Hearings* (Microfiche GOVT Y 4.\_\_)

Testimony on proposed legislation, an existing government program, or an event: spokespersons for the administration, interest group representatives, state and local officials, members of Congress, and others interested in the passage or defeat of legislation. Search on *LEXIS-NEXIS Congressional* ([Database](#)) or Acorn to identify hearings on your topic.

### *Congressional Record* [title varies], 1789-. (GOVT X\_\_)

Official transcript of the **floor debates and votes** of Congress. Speeches about a bill can be found on the day it was introduced in each chamber of Congress and during the debates before it is voted on in each chamber.

Good sources for which issues on which the member of Congress on the floor. Online version: *Congressional Record Online via GPO Access* ([Database](#); <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/crecord/index.html>). Also available on *LEXIS-NEXIS Congressional* ([Database](#)).

## Books and U.S. Government Documents on Acorn

Acorn is Vanderbilt's online library catalog. It lists almost all books in all Vanderbilt libraries and most U.S. government publications distributed after July 1976. It lists which periodicals we subscribe to, but does not list individual articles. **Default operator: same.** ("Same" works the same way as "and," except that it looks for the search words only in the same field (author, title, or subjects, for example.)

**For books by a specific author,** enter the author's name (surname first), then select "author begins with" from the drop-down menu

**For a specific book,** enter the first few words of the title, then select "title begins with" from the drop-down menu

**For items on a topic,** enter the keywords for the topic, and select "words anywhere" from the drop-down menu. For keyword searching only, **use a \$ to substitute for word endings** (for example, working paper\$). To search for a phrase, enclose the phrase with single rather than double quotes (for example, 'north atlantic treaty').