



Research Guide

HOW TO USE THE CIS INDEX/ABSTRACT SYSTEM

I. Congressional Information Service:

Congressional Information Service (CIS) is a comprehensive source of federal legislative materials dating from 1970 to the present. The following publications are included:

- Congressional Hearings
- Committee Prints
- House and Senate Reports
- House and Senate Documents
- Executive Reports and Treaty Documents
- Public Laws
- Congressional Budget Office Publications
- Office of Technology Assessment Publications

For definitions of some of these publications, see the Legal Research Center Guide Series *Federal Legislative History Sources* available in the racks next to the Reference Office.

Floor debates and the full text of bills and resolutions are not included. Floor debates may be found in the *Congressional Record* (KF 35 .R43). Bills for 1979, (96th Congress) to 2000 (106th Congress), are available on microfiche at KF 16.U54. Bills after 1993, (103rd Congress) to current are also available on GPO Access www.access.gpo.gov/su-docs/index.html

CIS consists of:

- 1) a printed index;
- 2) printed abstracts of documents;
- 3) the full text of documents on microfiche; and
- 4) a printed *Legislative Histories* volume (since 1984).

II. Using CIS is a four-step process:

The online catalog, can also be searched under the available indexes to retrieve CIS accession numbers. Because of cataloging delay, current materials (last 2 years) are searchable only in the print indexes.

STEP 1: SEARCH THE INDEX TO IDENTIFY NEEDED PUBLICATIONS.

You may search by subject, name (personal author, committee name, or hearing witness name), title of publication, bill number, report number, document number, hearing number, committee print number, and SuDoc number. The subject index occupies the bulk of the volume. The other indexes are included in the "Supplementary Indexes" portion at the end of the volume. The indexes cover multi-year periods and are updated monthly.

Example: Under the subject "Everglades National Park" you will find the following entry in the 1987-90 Index volume:

Expansion and water mgmt improvement, **89** H443-29, **89** H643-14, **89** S313-34, **89** PL101-229, **90** S311-16. (These are CIS accession numbers referring to House documents, Senate documents and Public Laws; Joint publications are prefixed with a J).

STEP 2: RECORD THE ACCESSION NUMBER OF RELEVANT ABSTRACTS.

Once you have a reference from the index, write down the entire CIS accession number(s).

Example: **90** S311-16.

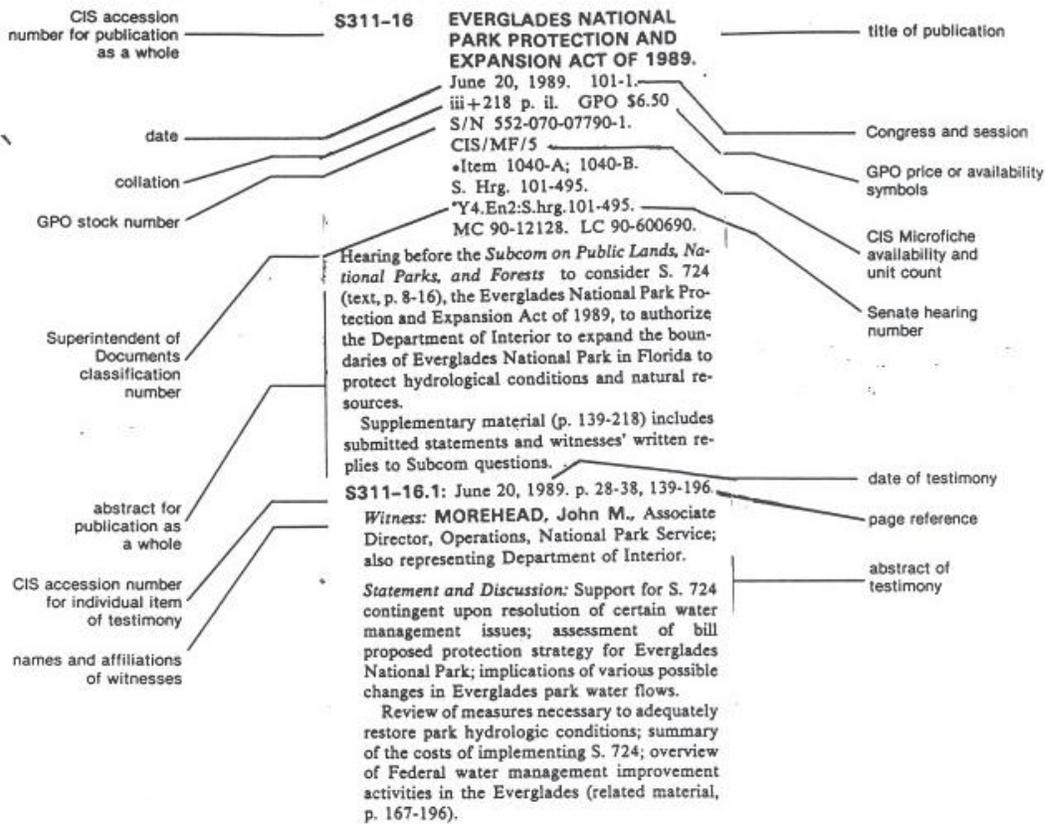
Note: The year in bold print refers to the year in which CIS indexed and abstracted the document. It has no relation to the year in which the event being recorded occurred. For example, the Bork hearings from 1987 were indexed and abstracted by CIS in 1989. Keep this in mind when using the indexes.

STEP 3: LOCATE AND REVIEW THE ABSTRACT TO DETERMINE RELEVANCY.

Each annual Abstracts volume is arranged in accession number order, starting with the H numbers. Using the number in boldface from your reference, find the appropriate annual volume of the Abstracts and locate the full citation for your entry. If your reference has a decimal number, it allows you to focus on the appropriate range of pages in the microfiche document. Make a note of the page numbers you need.

As you become more familiar in the use of the CIS system, you may wish to skip this step and go directly from Step 2 to Step 4.

Example of one of the abstracts matching our Everglades sample:



STEP 4: RETRIEVE THE MICROFICHE DOCUMENT

Once you have evaluated the abstract for relevance to your research, you can look at the full text of the document on microfiche. CIS microfiche are located at KF 49 .C62 in the microfiche cabinets. Find the drawer with the appropriate year, and search the file for your accession number. Dividers in the drawers will help you locate specific number sequences. The "H" numbers (for House publications) are filed before "J" numbers (for Joint publications). The "S" numbers (for Senate publications) are filed next. The last segment filed contains all the Public Laws enacted during the calendar year. For accession numbers with decimals, remove the microfiche with the whole number. Use the information printed at the top of individual microfiche to view the specific pages you need.

(OVER)

III. LEGISLATIVE HISTORIES:

Legislative Histories enable a researcher to trace the development of a law from its first consideration through final passage. Since 1984, CIS has published separate annual compilations of legislative histories for all public laws except those that are essentially ceremonial in nature (OVER) those that affect only a small number of individuals (e.g., appointment of citizen regents Smithsonian Board of Regents), and those that deal with "housekeeping" matters (e.g., establishing the date for the convening of a second session of Congress).

Each history published in the CIS/Annual contains an abstract of the public law and full citations for all relevant documents from the current and prior congresses. Some of these documents are slip laws, committee reports, *Congressional Record* references, committee hearings, committee prints, House and Senate documents, and Presidential statements issued upon signing the law.

The most direct access to a particular history is by the public law number. If you do not have this number you may find it using any one of the additional indexes, (bill number and the subject and name index), at the back of each volume. For example, in the 1990 CIS/Annual, under the subject "Immigration," you will find a citation to P.L. 101-649, the *Immigration Act of 1990*. If you have the number of the bill that introduced this legislation, use the bill number index. For example, S. 358 refers you to P.L. 101-649.

Each of the documents cited carries a full CIS citation which allows you to retrieve the full text of the document from the CIS microfiche file. *See Step 4 above*. Please note that the floor debates published in the *Congressional Record* and the full text of the bills are not included in the CIS microfiche file. (*See Section I above*)

For assistance in using the microfiche equipment *see* the Legal Research Center Information Series entitled *Instructions For Microform Users*.

Note: Many of the Congressional Reports and Documents, Public Laws, and Executive Reports and Treaty Documents may also be available in print sources at the LRC.

CONTACT A REFERENCE LIBRARIAN FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE