

Legislation – What’s Hot

By Kelly Crouch, CFA Legislative Information Liaison

Sharon Coleman, CFA Legislative Legal Analyst

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Federal and State Legislature Sites, Part 2

Accessing credible legislative information is crucial for any advocacy effort. Government sites are official sources for information on bills under consideration by the federal and state government as well as basics of legislative procedures and terms. Some state sites are elaborate, with lots of information readily available for public users. Others are more bare-bones but are growing the breadth of the information supplied and increasing ease of use. Below are the URLs of the U.S. Congress, the District of Columbia, and the second half of the state sites not included in part one. Also included is the URL for Legiscan, a self-described “data service, providing the nation’s first impartial real-time legislative tracking service designed for both public citizens and government affairs professionals across all sectors in organizations large and small.” Combined with official sites, Legiscan’s additional, standardized features enhance the quality of free legislative information available to everyone.

The information valuable to fanciers goes beyond the bill text, but that is where it starts. Legislative sites have bill search functions where a bill can be searched by bill number or by a word search. Once you find the piece of legislation you are looking for, it is time to dig in. Reviewing all bill versions is essential as bills must pass in the same form in both houses (only Nebraska is a unicameral legislature). The history will tell you if the bill has been amended and may link to the amendment. It will also tell you where the bill is in the legislative process though that may not always be obvious. Often these sites will provide a fiscal, committee, or floor analysis of the legislation. It will reveal who the authors and co-authors or the sponsors and co-sponsors of a bill are. That way, you can research these people and determine if a meeting is in order. Most sites provide a bio of each legislator to get the individual legislator research started. The number of sponsors, as well as the sponsors themselves, can give you an idea of how much support a bill enjoys. A bill with politically powerful sponsors, or a large number of them, is more likely to navigate the legislative process.

The wealth of available information on the state legislature websites extends beyond the bill history. Committee assignments and information are often available. There are critical legislative dates as well. Before a bill’s introduction, you want to know what the cutoff date is for filing bills. The cross-over date is the last date a bill can leave the house of origin and be submitted to the other house for consideration. Adjournment sine die is the last day of the legislative session. Legislation that has passed both houses but not signed by the governor as of this date may still become law. Hearing dates are also important during the session, especially if you want to give testimony or be a visible supporter of your side of the issue.

Most legislature websites now have links to the state constitutions and statutes that can be essential to analyzing bills. Some sites also provide information on the state legislative process and a glossary of terms. You can also find your own representatives on these sites.

On the next page are the links to the remaining 50 states, the federal government, the District of Columbia, and Legiscan. The first half of the state websites were provided in part one and ended with Montana.

Website	URL
Multistate Tracking site	
Legiscan	https://legiscan.com/
Federal	
Congress.gov (U.S.)	https://www.congress.gov/
District of Columbia	
Washington D.C.	https://dc.gov/
State Sites	
Nebraska Legislature	https://nebraskalegislature.gov/
Nevada Legislature	https://www.leg.state.nv.us/
New Hampshire, The General Court of	http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/
New Jersey Legislature	https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/
New York State: Its Constitution does not designate a single term for the legislative bodies as with other states; legislative power is “vested in the senate and assembly.”	https://nyassembly.gov/
	https://www.nysenate.gov/
North Carolina General Assembly	https://www.ncleg.gov/
North Dakota Legislative Branch	https://www.legis.nd.gov/
Ohio Legislature	https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/
Oklahoma State Legislature	http://www.oklegislature.gov/
Oregon State Legislature	https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/
Pennsylvania General Assembly	https://www.legis.state.pa.us/
Rhode Island General Assembly	https://www.rilegislature.gov/Pages/Default.aspx
South Carolina Legislature	https://www.scstatehouse.gov/
South Dakota Legislature	https://sdlegislature.gov/
Tennessee General Assembly	https://capitol.tn.gov/
Texas Legislature Online	https://capitol.texas.gov/
Utah State Legislature	https://le.utah.gov/
Vermont General Assembly	https://legislature.vermont.gov/
Virginia General Assembly	https://viriniageneralassembly.gov/
Washington State Legislature	https://leg.wa.gov/
West Virginia Legislature	http://www.wvlegislature.gov/
Wisconsin State Legislature	https://legis.wisconsin.gov/
Wyoming Legislature, State of	https://www.wyoleg.gov/

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