

Introduction to Federal Statutory Research

The United States Code contains federal laws that are currently in force, arranged by subject. As a general rule, you should use the U.S. Code when researching or citing federal statutory law.

Three versions of the U.S. Code are available: an official version published by the government (known simply as the U.S. Code) and two unofficial annotated versions, the United States Code Annotated (U.S.C.A.) from West and the United States Code Service (U.S.C.S.) from Lexis. Researchers generally prefer the U.S.C.A. or U.S.C.S. because they're annotated and more current than the official version.

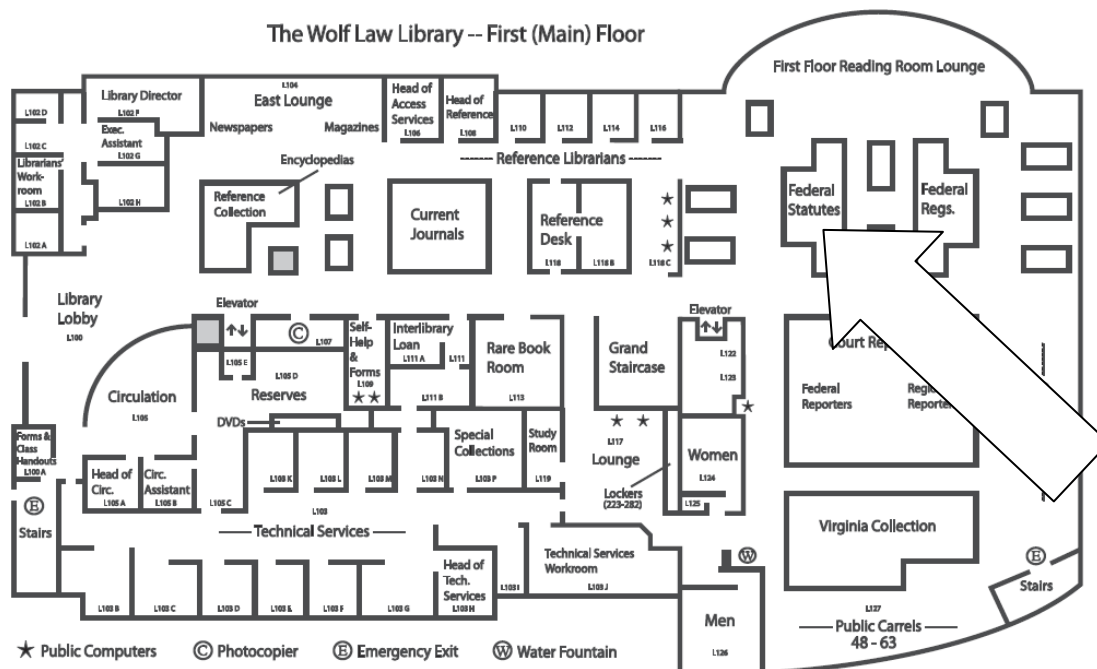
The U.S. Code is divided into titles numbered 1 through 50. Each title covers a different subject area. Titles are subdivided into chapters and sections; sometimes, subtitles and subchapters are also used. When citing to a U.S. Code section, give the title and section number, as well as the year of the volume you're citing from. Here's an example of a citation to the official version: **42 U.S.C. § 15481 (2006)**. In this citation, 42 is the title number and 15481 is the section number.

This handout will explain how to find code sections using the U.S.C.A. in print, the U.S.C.A. on Westlaw, and the U.S.C.S. on Lexis. (The U.S.C.S. is also available in print and is comparable to the print U.S.C.A.)

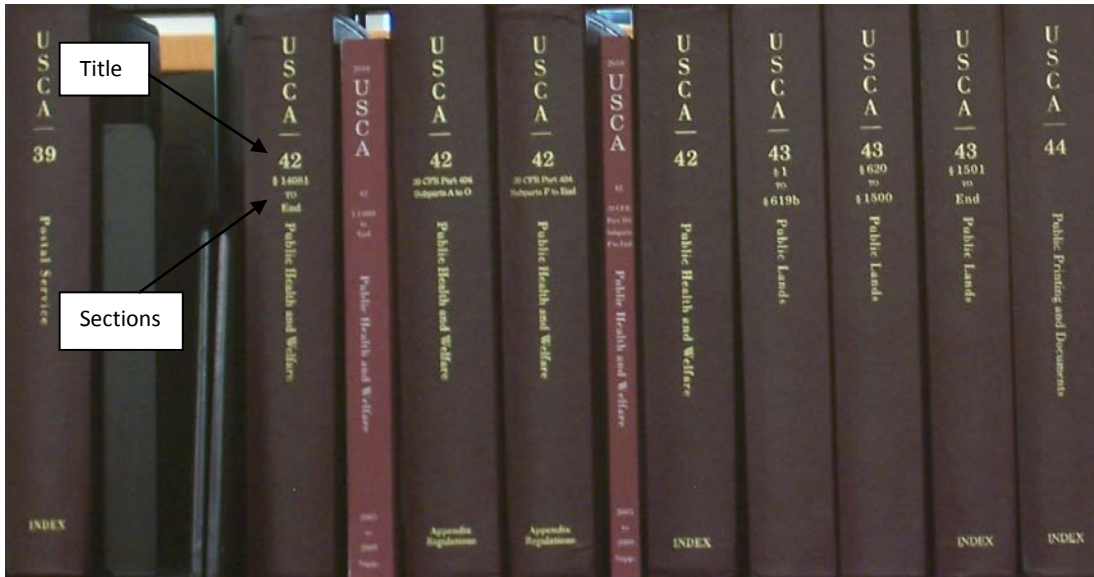
Using the U.S.C.A. in Print

Finding a Code Section When You Have a Citation

The print copies of the U.S. Code are located on the law library's first floor, in the low shelves adjacent to the first floor reading room lounge.



To find 42 U.S.C. § 15481, look at the title and section numbers on the spines of the volumes.



Once you've located the correct volume, go to section 15481. The section numbers run consecutively through the title.

At the end of the code section, in parentheses, you'll see the history of that code section: citation(s) to the session law(s) that created and amended the code section. Session laws are another type of publication format for statutory law. Section 15481 was created by Public Law 107-252 in 2002 and has not been amended. We'll take a closer look at session laws in the spring semester.

§ 15481. Voting systems standards

(a) Requirements

Each voting system used in an election for Federal office shall meet the following requirements:

(1) In general

(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the voting system (including any lever voting system, optical scanning voting system, or direct recording electronic system) shall—

....

(d) Effective date

Each State and jurisdiction shall be required to comply with the requirements of this section on and after January 1, 2006.

(Pub.L. 107-252, Title III, § 301, Oct. 29, 2002, 116 Stat. 1704.)

History

Below the history information you'll see historical and statutory notes and annotations. The annotations consist of cross-references to secondary sources and summaries of court decisions that have interpreted the code section.

HISTORICAL AND STATUTORY NOTES

Revision Notes and Legislative Reports
2002 Acts. House Report No. 107-329(Part I), see 2002 U.S. Code Cong. and Adm. News, p. 1086.
References in Text
Subchapter II of this chapter, referred to in text, originally read "title II", mean-

ing Title II of Pub.L. 107-252, Title II, § 201 et seq., Oct. 29, 2002, 116 Stat. 1673, which enacted subchapter II of this chapter, 42 U.S.C.A. § 15321 et seq.

LIBRARY REFERENCES

American Digest System
Elections Ⓒ126(6), 222.
Key Number System Topic No. 144.

Research References

Encyclopedias
25 Am. Jur. 2d Elections § 5, Congressional Elections.

Notes of Decisions

Accessibility 1

1. Accessibility

Disabled voters failed to show likelihood of success on merits of their claim against California's Secretary of State, under Help America Vote Act (HAVA) section requiring, by January 1, 2006, at least one direct recording electronic (DRE) voting system or other voting system equipped for individuals with dis-

abilities at each polling place, as would support preliminary injunction against Secretary's directives which decertified and withdrew approval of use of certain DREs, where voters had no evidence that California counties would not be able to offer voters with disabilities accessible voting equipment if directives were followed. American Ass'n of People with Disabilities v. Shelley, C.D.Cal.2004, 324 F.Supp.2d 1120. Injunction Ⓒ 138.51

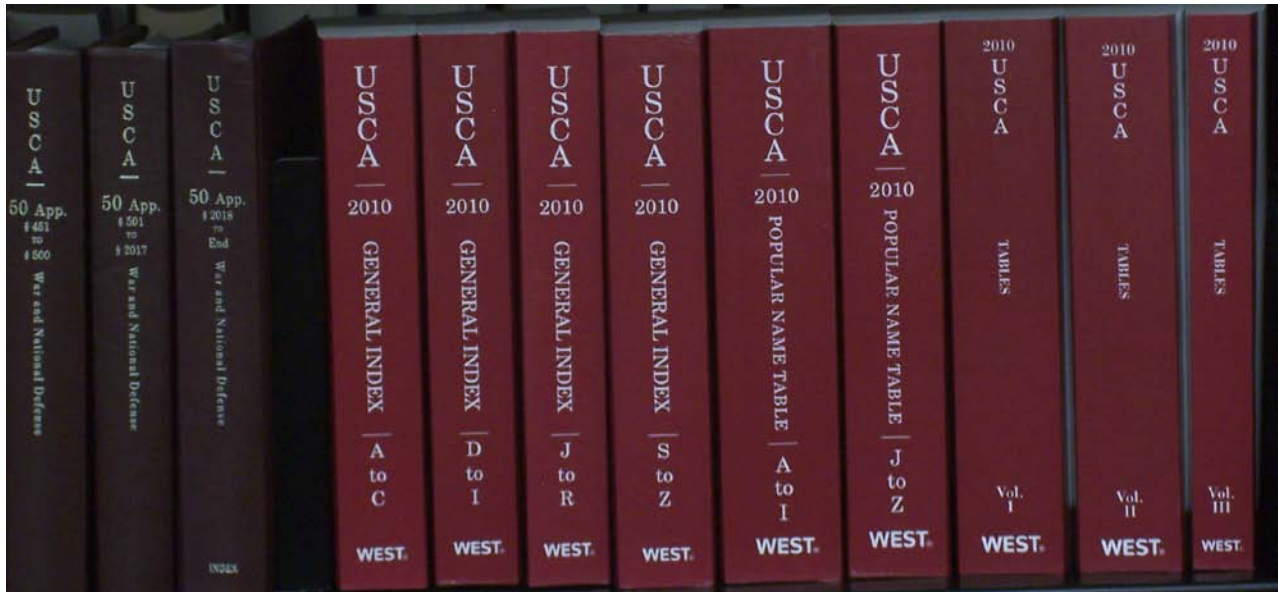
Updating

Each volume of the U.S.C.A. is updated by an annual supplement. This can be found in a pocket at the back of the volume (known as a pocket part) or in a separate softbound volume shelved next to the main volume. You should check the supplement to see if the code section has been amended or if any new annotations have been added since the main volume was printed.

At the end of the U.S.C.A. set, you may see one or more softbound pamphlets that update the annual supplements.

Finding a Code Section Using the Index

If you don't already have a citation to a code section, you can find code sections using the index at the end of the U.S.C.A. set.



If you were looking for a code section on standards for voting machines, the index would point you to 42 U.S.C. § 15481 et seq. (*Et seq.* means “and following”; i.e., you should look at section 15481 and the sections following it.)

ELECTIONS—Cont’d

Voting machines,

Certificates and certification, 42 § 15371

Grants, tests, 42 § 15451 et seq.

Guidelines, 42 § 15361 et seq.

House of Representatives, 2 § 9

Improvements, 42 § 15301 et seq.

Research, grants, 42 § 15441 et seq.

→ Standards, 42 § 15481 et seq.

Studies, 42 § 15381 et seq.

Tests, 42 § 15371

Finding a Code Section by Browsing

Another method of finding code sections is to browse the tables of contents to the code. It’s a good idea to use this technique in addition to the index to make sure you’re not overlooking relevant sections. The index can give you some starting points and the tables of contents can show you other sections nearby that might also be relevant.

At the beginning of each volume of the U.S.C.A., you’ll see a table of contents that lists all the chapters in the title. You can see below that in Title 42, Chapter 146 covers Election Administration Improvement. Note that the section numbers run consecutively through the title; i.e., they don’t start over again with each new chapter. For this reason, you don’t need to provide the chapter number when citing to a code section.

TITLE 42

THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE

Sections 14081 to End appear in this Volume

Chapter	Section
1. The Public Health Service [See also Chapter 6A]	1
1A. The Public Health Service; Supplemental Provisions [Transferred or Omitted]	71
2. Sanitation and Quarantine	81
3. Leprosy [Repealed]	121

→	146. Election Administration Improvement	15301
	147. Prison Rape Elimination	15601
	148. Windstorm Impact Reduction	15701

At the beginning of Chapter 146, you'll see a list of the subchapters and sections for that chapter. You can see that section 15481 covers standards for voting machines, but the other sections in that subchapter are also relevant. Sometimes you must read several sections together to understand Congress' intent.

CHAPTER 146—ELECTION ADMINISTRATION IMPROVEMENT

SUBCHAPTER III—UNIFORM AND NONDISCRIMINATORY ELECTION TECHNOLOGY AND ADMINISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

PART A—REQUIREMENTS

→	15481. Voting systems standards.	
	15482. Provisional voting and voting information requirements.	
	15483. Computerized statewide voter registration list requirements and requirements for voters who register by mail.	
	15484. Minimum requirements.	
	15485. Methods of implementation left to discretion of State.	

Using the Popular Name Table

Some laws passed by Congress are known by popular names—e.g., the Americans with Disabilities Act or the Freedom of Information Act. To find one of these acts in the code, use the Popular Name Table at the end of the U.S.C.A. set. This table lists the names of acts in alphabetical order and provides citations to the relevant session laws and code sections.

Below you can see the entry for the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The Act was first enacted by Public Law 89-110 and has been amended many times, mostly recently by Public Law 110-258. References to the U.S. Code are in parentheses. By browsing the table of contents around 42 USC § 1971, you can get a clearer picture of how the Voting Rights Act has been arranged in the code.

Voting Rights Act of 1965

See, also, Help America Vote Act of 2002

Short title, see 42 USCA §§ 1971 note, 1973 note

Pub.L. 89-110, Aug. 6, 1965, 79 Stat. 437 (42 §§ 1971, 1973, 1973a to 1973p)

Pub.L. 90-284, Title I, § 103(c), Apr. 11, 1968, 82 Stat. 75 (42 § 1973j)

Pub.L. 91-285, §§ 3 to 6, June 22, 1970, 84 Stat. 315 (42 §§ 1973b, 1973c, 1973aa to 1973bb-4)

Pub.L. 91-405, Title II, § 204(e), Sept. 22, 1970, 84 Stat. 853 (42 § 1973i)

Pub.L. 94-73, Titles I to IV, Aug. 6, 1975, 89 Stat. 400 to 406 (42 §§ 1973a to 1973d, 1973h, 1973i, 1973k, 1973l, 1973aa, 1973aa-1a, 1973aa-2 to 1973aa-5, 1973bb, 1973bb-1)

Pub.L. 97-205, §§ 2 to 6, June 29, 1982, 96 Stat. 131 to 135 (42 §§ 1973, 1973 note, 1973b, 1973b note, 1973aa-1a, 1973aa-1a note, 1973aa-6, 1973aa-6 note).

Pub.L. 102-344, § 2, Aug. 26, 1992, 106 Stat. 921 (42 § 1973aa-1a)

Pub.L. 103-94, § 5, Oct. 6, 1993, 107 Stat. 1005 (42 § 1973d)

Pub.L. 109-246, §§ 3 to 8, July 27, 2006, 120 Stat. 578, 580, 581 (42 §§ 1973a to 1973g, 1973j to 1973l, 1973aa-1a)

Pub.L. 110-258, §§ 2, 3, July 1, 2008, 122 Stat. 2428 (42 §§ 1973b, 1973q)

Using the U.S.C.A on Westlaw

Finding a Code Section When You Have a Citation

Enter the citation in the “Find by citation” box.

The screenshot displays the Westlaw website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'FIND & PRINT', 'KEYCITE', 'DIRECTORY', 'KEY NUMBERS', 'COURT DOCS', 'FORMFINDER', and 'SITE MAP'. On the right side of the navigation bar, there are links for 'HELP', 'SIGN OFF', 'Preferences', 'Alert Center', and 'Research Trail'. Below the navigation bar, there are tabs for 'Public Records', 'Westlaw', 'Virginia', 'NewsRoom with Reuters', and 'Law School'. The 'Law School' tab is selected. Below the tabs, there is a 'Content and Display Options' section with a 'Show' button. The main content area is divided into several sections. On the left, there is a 'Law School Exchange' section with a 'New' badge and a description. Below it is the 'Find by citation:' section, which contains a search box with the text '42 usc 15481' and a 'Go' button. An arrow points to this search box. Below the search box are links for 'Find using a template', 'Publications List', and 'Find a Case by Party Name'. To the right of the 'Find by citation' section is the 'Search' section, which includes a search box, a 'Search' button, and a 'Recent Searches & Locates' dropdown menu. Below the search section are the 'Cases' and 'Secondary Sources' sections, each with a 'Show all' button and a list of search options.

Finding a Code Section Using the Index

The screenshot shows the Westlaw search interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: Public Records, Westlaw, Virginia, NewsRoom with Reuters, and Law School. Below the tabs, there are several search and navigation options:

- Find by citation:** A search box with a "Go" button and a checkbox for "and Print".
- KeyCite this citation:** A search box with a "Go" button.
- Search for a database:** A search box with a "Go" button and a dropdown menu for "Recent Databases".
- Definitions:** A search box with a "Go" button.
- Terms & Connectors:** A search box with a "Search" button.
- Recent Searches & Locates:** A dropdown menu.
- Cases:** A list of search options: Supreme Court Cases | SCT | Scope, All Federal Cases | ALLFEDS | Scope, All State Cases | ALLSTATES | Scope, All State and Federal Cases | ALLCASES | Scope.
- Statutes:** A list of search options: US Constitution | US-CONST | Scope, United States Code Annotated | USCA | Scope, United States Code Annotated-General Index | USCA-IDX | Scope, USCA Popular Name Table | USCA-POP | Scope | Table of Contents, United States Public Laws | US-PL | Scope | Table of Contents.
- Secondary Sources:** A list of search options: Black's Law Dictionary | BLACKS | Scope, American Law Reports - ALR | ALR | Scope, American Jurisprudence (Am Jur) | AMJUR | Scope | Table of Contents, Am Jur Proof of Facts | AMJUR-POF | Scope, Corpus Juris Secundum | CJS | Scope | Table of Contents, Causes of Action | COA | Scope, All Law Reviews, Texts, and Bar Journals | TP-ALL | Scope, Journals and Law Reviews | JLR | Scope.
- Popular Resources:** A list of search options: Restatements of the Law | REST | Scope | Table of Contents.

The screenshot shows the Westlaw Statutes Index page. The page title is "Statutes Index" and it includes navigation links: Search | Find by Citation | Table of Contents | Pop. Name Table | 50 State Surveys. Below the title, there is a section for "Selected Databases" with a link to "United States Code Annotated (USCA)".

The main content is a list of code sections, each with a description and a link to the specific section:

- Veterans of World War I of the United States of America, [36 USCA § 230303](#)
- Vice President of the United States,
- Virgin Islands, [48 USCA § 1571 et seq.](#)
- Vocational education, Future Farmers of ... [36 USCA § 70903](#) [36 USCA § 70905](#) More...
- Voluntary, guidelines, [42 USCA § 15501](#) [42 USCA § 15502](#)
- Volunteers, training, improvements, [42 USCA § 15301 et seq.](#)
- Vote recorder, replacement, [42 USCA § 15301 et seq.](#)
- Voting machines,**
 - Certificates and certification, [42 USCA § 15371](#)
 - Grants, tests, [42 USCA § 15451 et seq.](#)
 - Guidelines, [42 USCA § 15361 et seq.](#)
 - House of Representatives, [2 USCA § 9](#)
 - Improvements, [42 USCA § 15301 et seq.](#)
 - Research, grants, [42 USCA § 15441 et seq.](#)
 - Standards, [42 USCA § 15481 et seq.](#)
 - Studies, [42 USCA § 15381 et seq.](#)
 - Tests, [42 USCA § 15371](#)
- Votomatic, replacement, [42 USCA § 15301 et seq.](#)
- Water pollution, Chairman of National Study Commission, [33 USCA § 1325](#)
- Witnesses, Election Assistance Commission, [42 USCA § 15325](#)

Finding a Code Section by Browsing

Go to the USCA's table of contents and expand the table by clicking on the "+" signs.

The screenshot shows the Westlaw interface with the 'Law School' tab selected. The top navigation bar includes 'FIND&PRINT', 'KEYCITE', 'DIRECTORY', 'KEY NUMBERS', 'COURT DOCS', 'FORMFINDER', and 'SITE MAP'. The main content area is divided into several sections: 'Find by citation:', 'KeyCite this citation:', 'Search for a database:', 'Definitions:', 'Cases', 'Statutes', and 'Secondary Sources'. The 'Statutes' section is expanded, showing a list of USCA titles and sections. A callout box points to the '+' sign next to '§ 15481. Voting systems standards'.

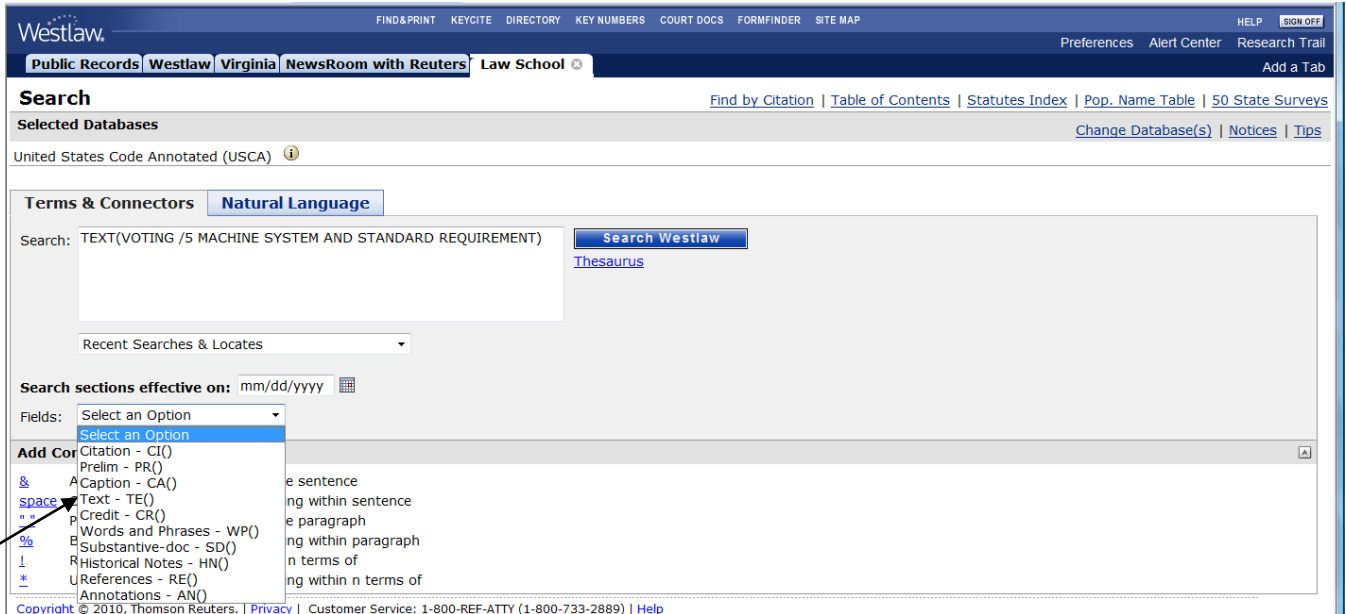
The screenshot shows the Westlaw interface with the 'Law School' tab selected. The main content area displays a list of chapters and subchapters under 'CHAPTER 146-ELECTION ADMINISTRATION IMPROVEMENT'. The list is expanded, showing subchapters I through VII. A callout box points to the '+' sign next to '§ 15481. Voting systems standards'.

Finding a Code Section with a Full-Text Search

An example of a search that would retrieve section 15481 is *TEXT(VOTING /5 MACHINE SYSTEM AND STANDARD REQUIREMENT)*. The "TEXT" field limits the search to the text of the code sections; this excludes language in the notes and annotations and cuts down on the number of false hits you retrieve. You can see a list of the available fields by clicking on the drop-down menu below the search box.

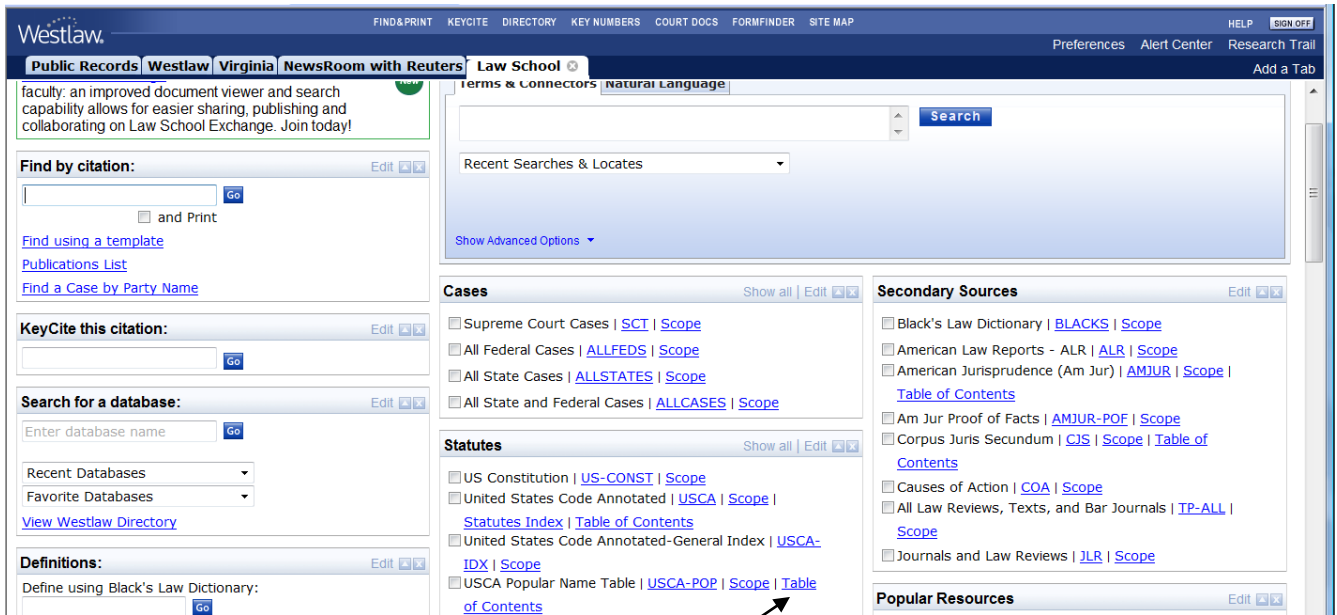
The connector /5 searches for terms within five words of each other. In Westlaw, words with no connectors between them default to an *OR* search. In this search, *SYSTEM* and *REQUIREMENT* are used

as synonyms for *MACHINE* and *STANDARD*, respectively. Using synonyms helps you retrieve as many relevant code sections as possible. In Westlaw and Lexis, regular plural forms of the terms you enter are automatically included in the search, so this search will also pick up *systems* or *machines*.



Using the Popular Name Table

To browse the Popular Name Table on Westlaw, select the Popular Name Table’s “Table of Contents.” This will display an alphabetical list of acts.



Westlaw’s version of the Popular Name Table tells you where each section of the act can be found in the code. Further down the page, you’ll see a list of the laws that amended the act.

The screenshot shows the Westlaw interface for the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The page title is "Voting Rights Act of 1965". Below the title, it lists "Pub.L. 89-110, Aug. 6, 1965, 79 Stat. 437" and "Short title, see 42 USCA §§ 1971 note, 1973 note".

On the left side, there is a "Full-Text Document" section with a "Table of Contents" link. An arrow points from a box labeled "Sections of the act" to the "Table of Contents" link.

In the center, there is a table titled "Current USCA classifications:" with two columns: "Section of Pub.L. 89-110" and "USCA Classification". The table lists sections 2 through 205, each with a corresponding USCA classification (e.g., 42 USCA § 1973, 42 USCA § 1973a, etc.). An arrow points from a box labeled "U.S. Code sections" to the "USCA Classification" column.

Using the U.S.C.S. on Lexis

Finding a Code Section When You Have a Citation

Click on the "Get a Document" tab and enter the citation.

The screenshot shows the LexisNexis Total Research System interface. The "Get a Document" tab is selected. Below the navigation bar, there are options for "by Citation", "by Party Name", and "by Docket Number".

The "Get by Citation" search form is visible, with the citation "42 usc 15481" entered in the search box. The "Full Text" radio button is selected. A "Get" button is next to the search box. An arrow points from the "Get" button to the "Get a Document" tab.

Below the search form, there is a "Related Searches" section with links for "Get By Party Name" and "Get By Docket Number". A "Did you know..." section provides additional information about retrieving case law decisions.

Finding a Code Section by Browsing

To browse, click on “United States Code Service.” An expandable table of contents will be displayed. Note that Lexis does not have an online index for the U.S.C.S.

Court Records, Briefs and Filings

- All Federal and State Pleadings, Combined i
- All Federal and State Briefs and Motions, Combined i
- U.S. Supreme Court Briefs i
[View more sources](#)

Expert Witness Analysis, Jury Verdicts & Settlements

- Mega Jury Verdicts & Settlements (Including IDEX) i
[View more sources](#)

Federal Legal - U.S.

- United States Code Service - Titles 1 through 50 i
- USCS - Federal Rules Annotated i
- CFR - Code of Federal Regulations i
- FR - Federal Register i
- Federal Agency Decisions, Combined i
[View more sources](#)

States Legal - U.S.

- [California](#) [New Jersey](#)
- [Florida](#) [New York](#)
- [Georgia](#) [Ohio](#)

Estates, Gifts & Trusts [Patent Law](#)

[Foreign Laws & Legal Sources](#) [Securities](#)

[Insurance](#) [Taxation](#)

[International Arbitration](#) [Trademark Law](#)

[View more sources](#)

50 State Multi-Jurisdictional Surveys

- LexisNexis 50 State Surveys, Legislation & Regulations i
- Multi-Jurisdictional Surveys by Topic with Analysis i

Secondary Legal

- [Emerging Issues Analysis](#) [Jurisprudences, Restatements and Principles of the Law](#)
- [Matthew Bender\(R\)](#) [BNA](#)
- [Mealey Reports](#) [Tax Analysts](#)
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- [Jurisprudences, ALR & In-House Memoranda](#)
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Legal News

Reference

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View: TOC ↔ 1 - 50 of 50 ↔

Source: [Legal](#) > [Federal Legal - U.S.](#) > [Find Statutes, Regulations, Administrative Materials & Court Rules](#) > [United States Code Service](#) i

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United States Code Service - Titles 1 through 50 Show title

Terms and Connectors Natural Language

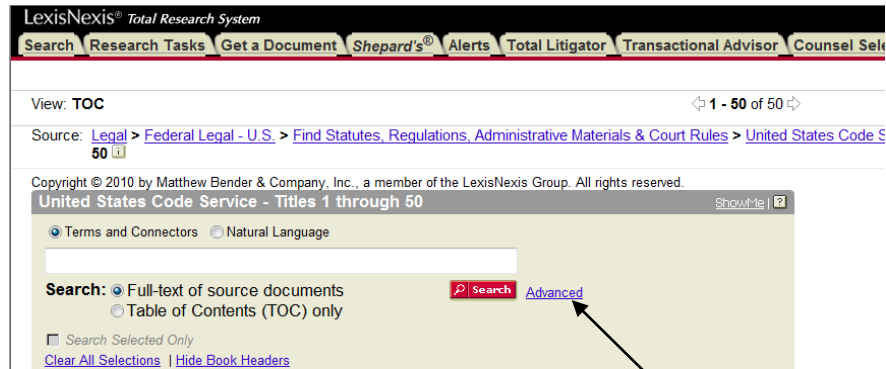
Search: Full-text of source documents Table of Contents (TOC) only [Search](#) [Advanced](#)

Search Selected Only
[Clear All Selections](#) | [Hide Book Headers](#)

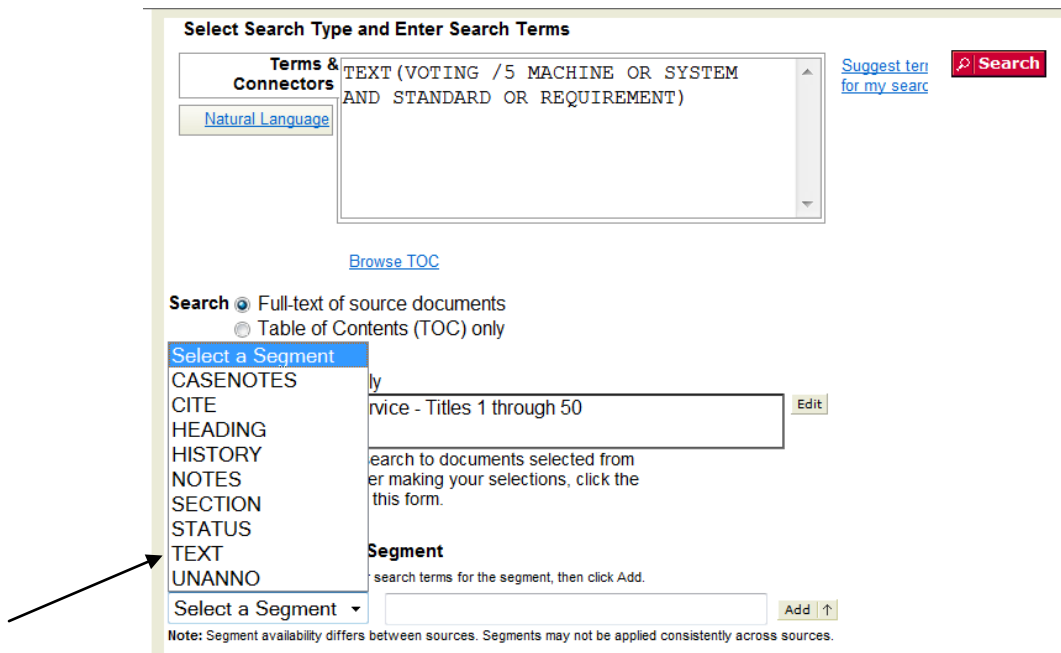
- TITLE 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS
- TITLE 2. THE CONGRESS
- TITLE 3. THE PRESIDENT
- TITLE 4. FLAG AND SEAL, SEAT OF GOVERNMENT, AND THE STATES
- TITLE 5. GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION AND EMPLOYEES
- TITLE 6. DOMESTIC SECURITY
- TITLE 7. AGRICULTURE
- TITLE 8. ALIENS AND NATIONALITY
- TITLE 9. ARBITRATION
- TITLE 10. ARMED FORCES

Finding a Code Section with a Full-Text Search

To see all the search options available for a full-text search of the U.S.C.S., go to the “Advanced” search page.

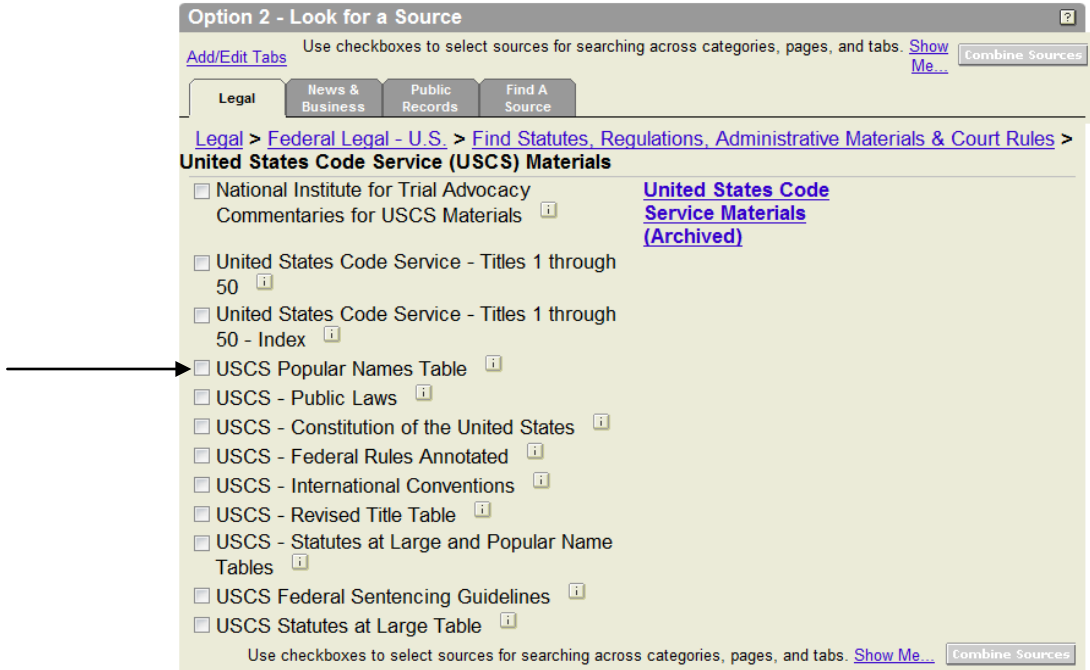


“Segments” on Lexis are comparable to “fields” on Westlaw. You can see a list of the available segments on a drop-down menu. In Lexis, words with no connectors between them are read as a phrase, so you need to insert *OR* connectors between synonyms.



Using the Popular Name Table

To access the Popular Name Table on Lexis, go to Federal Legal → United States Code Service Materials → USCS Popular Names Table.



On Lexis, the format of the Popular Names Table is essentially the same as the print version. This entry for the Voting Rights Act of 1965 shows that it was first enacted by Public Law 89-110 and has been amended many times, mostly recently by Public Law 110-258. Citations to U.S. Code sections are provided.

