



Peeping THOMAS: A Little Look at a Big System

**Law Library of Congress
AALL Annual Meeting, 2011**

Agenda

- *Introduction and History* –
Bob Gee
- *Technical Challenges* –
Tammie Nelson
- *Providing Reference* –
Christine Sellers
- *Updating and Enhancing* –
Andrew Weber



Introduction and History

- **Launched on January 5, 1995**
- **Content:**
 - **Bill summaries: 1973 ->**
 - **Bill text 1989 ->**
 - **Congressional Record 1989 ->**
 - **Congressional Reports 1995 ->**
 - **Treaties**
 - **Presidential nominations**
- **Law Library of Congress manages content**





Technical Challenges of THOMAS

Challenges

- **THOMAS is a complex system**
- **Setting Priorities:**
 - **Long-term vs Short-term**
 - **Limited Resources**
- **Preferred Method:**
 - **User-driven definition of priorities**



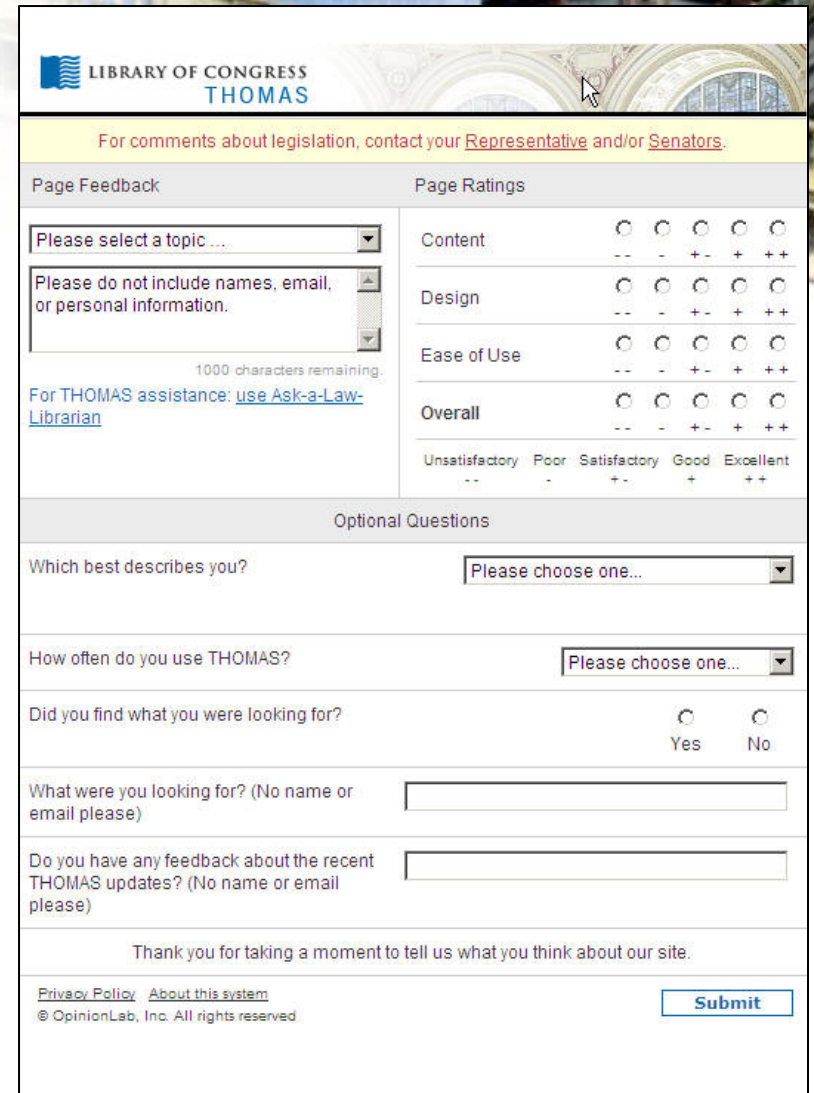
We Have Been Listening

- **What is OpinionLab?**

[+]
FEEDBACK



- **Categorizing and Tracking Comments**



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For comments about legislation, contact your [Representative](#) and/or [Senators](#).

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<input type="text" value="Please do not include names, email, or personal information."/>	Design <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<small>1000 characters remaining.</small>	Ease of Use <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
For THOMAS assistance: use Ask-a-Law Librarian	Overall <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
	Unsatisfactory -- - + - + ++
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	Satisfactory + + - - -
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	Excellent ++ + - -

Optional Questions

Which best describes you?

How often do you use THOMAS?

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What were you looking for? (No name or email please)

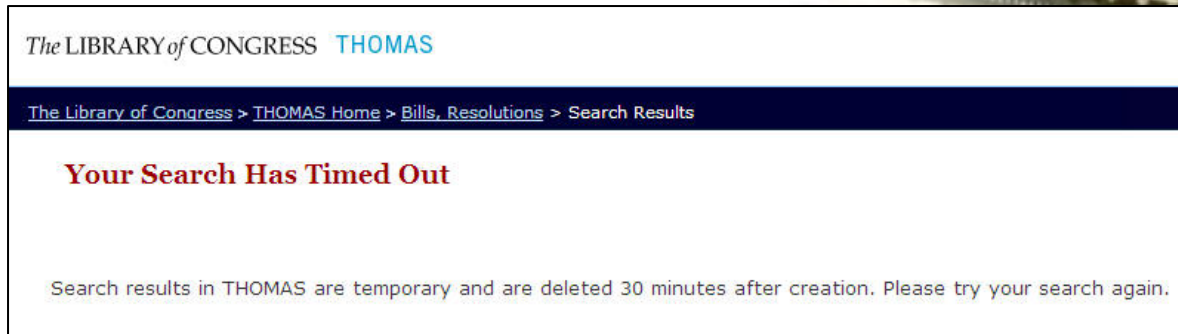
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Increasing the Timeout Interval



Timeout OpinionLab Numbers:

- Overall for 2009 – 12% on this topic
- For 2010 and 2011 – down to 2%

Request for Permalink

 <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/D?d112:1:./temp/~bdxolr:./home/LegislativeData.php>

 <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d112:h.r.1:>

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- **Permalink OpinionLab Numbers:**
 - 2009 – 17%
 - 2010 – 8%
 - Currently – 5%

Additional Examples



- **Improve Navigation**
 - **From 6% to 3%**
- **Provide Contact Info for Members**
 - **From 18% to 2%**
- **Providing Lists of Popular Bills**
 - **From 4% to 0%**

Numbers Talk

- **Areas that still cry for improvement:**
 - **Searching:**
 - 2009 – 17%
 - 2010 – 20%
 - 2011 – 23%
 - **Current Top Percentages (to date in 2011):**
 - Compliment – 58%
 - Improve Searching – 23%
 - Provide Permalink – 6%
 - Visual Representation of Bill Lifecycle – 5%
 - Improve Navigation - 3%



Numbers Talk

- **Positive feedback has increased:**
 - **Compliments:**
 - 2009 – 19%
 - 2010 – 54%
 - 2011 – 58%





Providing Reference for THOMAS

THOMAS Reference – Resources

- **Phone**
- **Email / Ask A Librarian**
- **In-person**
- **Facebook**
- **Twitter**



THOMAS Reference – Questions

- **Searching for specific legislation – especially current legislation in the news (“debt ceiling” vs. “debt limit”)**
- **Amendments to legislation**
- **Appropriations chart**
- **Congressional Record – Daily Digest**



THOMAS Reference – Questions

- **Roll Call Votes**
- **Legislation process – especially
Congressional Glossary**
- **THOMAS Help & FAQ – where is my
bill?**
- **Identifying problems**



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H.R.493

Title: To prohibit discrimination on the basis of **genetic information** with respect to health insurance and employment.

Sponsor: [Rep Slaughter, Louise McIntosh](#) [NY-28] (introduced 1/16/2007) [Cosponsors](#) (224)

Related Bills: [H.CON.RES.340](#), [H.RES.1156](#), [H.RES.1167](#), [H.R.1424](#), [S.358](#)

Latest Major Action: Became Public Law No: 110-233 [GPO: [Text](#), [PDF](#)]

House Reports: [110-28](#) Part 1, [110-28](#) Part 2, [110-28](#) Part 3, [110-28](#) Part 4

All Information (except text)	Text of Legislation	CRS Summary	Major Congressional Actions
Titles	Cosponsors (224)	Committees	All Congressional Actions
Related Bills	Amendments	Related Committee Documents	All Congressional Actions with Amendments With links to <i>Congressional Record</i> pages, votes, reports
CBO Cost Estimates	Subjects		

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Bill Summary & Status 110th Congress (2007 - 2008) H.R.493

Item 1 of 1

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H.R.493

Latest Title: Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008

Sponsor: [Rep Slaughter, Louise McIntosh](#) [NY-28] (introduced 1/16/2007) [Cosponsors](#) (224)

Related Bills: [H.CON.RES.340](#), [H.RES.1156](#), [H.RES.1167](#), [H.R.1424](#), [S.358](#)

Latest Major Action: Became Public Law No: 110-233 [GPO: [Text](#), [PDF](#)]

House Reports: [110-28](#) Part 1, [110-28](#) Part 2, [110-28](#) Part 3, [110-28](#) Part 4

Note: For further action, see [H.R.1424](#), which became Public Law 110-343 on 10/3/2008.

All Information (except text)	Text of Legislation	CRS Summary	Major Congressional Actions
Titles	Cosponsors (224)	Committees	All Congressional Actions
Related Bills	Amendments	Related Committee Documents	All Congressional Actions with Amendments With links to <i>Congressional Record</i> pages, votes, reports
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There are 6 versions of Bill Number H.R.493 for the 110th Congress

- 1 . Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2007 (Introduced in House)[\[H.R.493.IH\]](#)
 - 2 . Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2007 (Reported in House)[\[H.R.493.RH\]](#)
 - 3 . Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2007 (Engrossed as Agreed to or Passed by House)[\[H.R.493.EH\]](#)
 - 4 . Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2007 (Placed on Calendar in Senate)[\[H.R.493.PCS\]](#)
 - 5 . Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (Engrossed Amendment as Agreed to by Senate)[\[H.R.493.EAS\]](#)
 - 6 . Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (Enrolled as Agreed to or Passed by Both House and Senate)
[\[H.R.493.ENR\]](#)
-

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Bill Text Versions 110th Congress (2007-2008) H.R.493

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There are 6 versions of Bill Number H.R.493 for the 110th Congress. Usually, the last item is the most recent.

- 1 . Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2007 (Introduced in House - IH)[\[H.R.493.IH\]](#)[\[PDF\]](#)
- 2 . Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2007 (Reported in House - RH)[\[H.R.493.RH\]](#)[\[PDF\]](#)
- 3 . Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2007 (Engrossed in House [Passed House] - EH)[\[H.R.493.EH\]](#)[\[PDF\]](#)
- 4 . Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2007 (Placed on Calendar Senate - PCS)[\[H.R.493.PCS\]](#)[\[PDF\]](#)
- 5 . Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (Engrossed Amendment Senate - EAS)[\[H.R.493.EAS\]](#)[\[PDF\]](#)
- 6 . Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (Enrolled Bill [Final as Passed Both House and Senate] - ENR)[\[H.R.493.ENR\]](#)[\[PDF\]](#)

Searching for “Fair Tax Act” in 111th Congress



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fair tax act

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Choose House Members

Abercrombie, Neil [D-HI-1]
Ackerman, Gary L. [D-NY-5]
Aderholt, Robert B. [R-AL-4]

Choose Senate Members

Akaka, Daniel K. [D-HI]
Alexander, Lamar [R-TN]
Barrasso, John [R-WY]

Sponsor Co-sponsor Sponsor/Co-Sponsor

Combine multiple Members with AND OR

Choose House Committees

Agriculture
—Conservation, Credit, Energy, and Research
—Department Operations, Oversight, Nutrition and Forestry
—General Farm Commodities and Risk Management

Choose Senate Committees

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Items 1 through 3 of 3

1. [H.R.25](#) : To promote freedom, fairness, and economic opportunity by repealing the income tax and other taxes, abolishing the Internal Revenue Service, and enacting a national sales tax to be administered primarily by the States.

Sponsor: [Rep Linder, John](#) [GA-7] (introduced 1/6/2009) [Cosponsors](#) (44)

Committees: House Ways and Means

Latest Major Action: 1/6/2009 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.

2. [H.R.99](#) : To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reduce taxes by providing an alternative determination of income tax liability for individuals, repealing the estate and gift taxes, reducing corporate income tax rates, reducing the maximum tax for individuals on capital gains and dividends to 10 percent, indexing the basis of assets for purposes of determining capital gain or loss, creating tax-free accounts for retirement savings, lifetime savings, and life skills, repealing the adjusted gross income threshold in the medical care deduction for individuals under age 65 who have no employer health coverage, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: [Rep Dreier, David](#) [CA-26] (introduced 1/6/2009) [Cosponsors](#) (1)

Committees: House Ways and Means

Latest Major Action: 1/6/2009 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.

3. [S.296](#) : A bill to promote freedom, fairness, and economic opportunity by repealing the income tax and other taxes, abolishing the Internal Revenue Service, and enacting a national sales tax to be administered primarily by the States.

Sponsor: [Sen Chambliss, Saxby](#) [GA] (introduced 1/22/2009) [Cosponsors](#) (3)

Committees: Senate Finance

Latest Major Action: 1/22/2009 Referred to Senate committee. Status: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance.

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Text searched: fair tax act

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Items 1 through 6 of 6

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Sponsor: [Rep Linder, John](#) [GA-7] (introduced 1/6/2009) [Cosponsors](#) (65)
Committees: House Ways and Means
Latest Major Action: 1/6/2009 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.
2. [111th] [H.R.99](#) : Fair and Simple Tax Act of 2009
Sponsor: [Rep Dreier, David](#) [CA-26] (introduced 1/6/2009) [Cosponsors](#) (3)
Committees: House Ways and Means
Latest Major Action: 1/6/2009 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.
3. [111th] [H.R.1767](#) : Fair Housing Tax Credit Extension Act of 2009
Sponsor: [Rep Paul, Ron](#) [TX-14] (introduced 3/26/2009) [Cosponsors](#) (None)
Committees: House Ways and Means
Latest Major Action: 3/26/2009 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.

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Advanced search contains options to search by stage in the legislative process, chamber of Congress, and date.

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Adams, Sandy [R-FL-24]
Aderholt, Robert B. [R-AL-4]

Choose Senate Members

Akaka, Daniel K. [D-HI]
Alexander, Lamar [R-TN]
Ayotte, Kelly [R-NH]

Sponsor Co-sponsor Sponsor/Co-Sponsor

Combine multiple Members with AND OR

Choose House Committees

Agriculture
—Conservation, Energy, and Forestry
—Department Operations, Oversight, and Credit
—General Farm Commodities and Risk Management

Choose Senate Committees

Aging (Special)
Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Appropriations
Armed Services

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Updating and Enhancing THOMAS

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5:46 AM
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[1] <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/D?d107:1:./temp/~bdq5SL:S/home/LegislativeData.php?n=BSS%3Bc=107>

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In the spirit of Thomas Jefferson, legislative information from the Library of Congress

[HR1: The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 \(stimulus bill\)](#)

[What's new for the 111th Congress](#)

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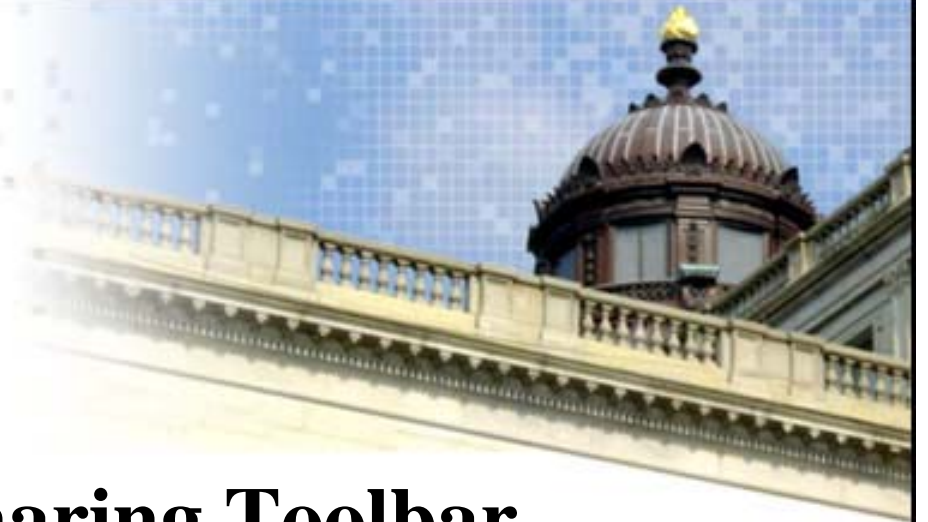
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[Publishing the Declaration of Independence](#)
Speaker: Robin Shields
Running Time: 27 min.

January 2010

- **Bookmarking and Sharing Toolbar**
- **Top Five Bills**
- **Presented to the President RSS / Email**
- **Contact Members of Congress**
- **Tip of the Week**
- **Increased Timeout Interval**





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|| Weekly Top Five ||

- [H.R. 2417](#) [112th]
- [H.R. 2354](#) [112th]
- [H.R. 4646](#) [111th]
- [H.R. 2219](#) [112th]
- [H.R. 2018](#) [112th]

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|| Tip of the Week ||

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Contacting Members of Congress

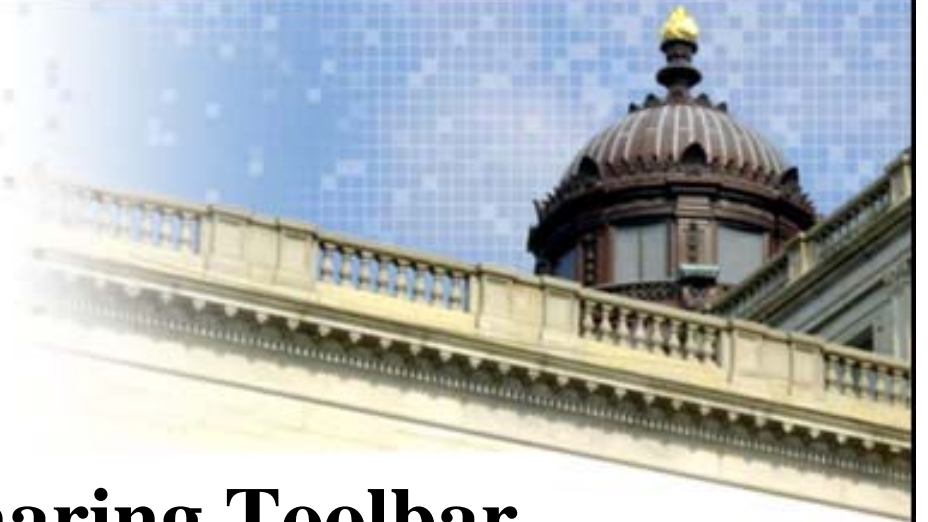
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How can I communicate with a Member of Congress (e.g., email addresses)?

1. Members' individual Web sites provide comprehensive contact information:
[Senate Member Sites](#)
[House of Representatives Member Sites](#)
2. House "[Write Your Representative](#)" service
3. [How to Contact U.S. Senators](#)
4. [THOMAS Legislative Resources](#)
5. The telephone number for the U. S. Capitol Switchboard is 202-224-3121
6. [Communication tips](#), including forms of address and telephone inquiries, from [Congress.org](#)

June 2010

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- **More Search and Browse Options**



THOMAS Top Ten

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Top ten legislative items searched on THOMAS, compiled on 7/17/2011 from weekly usage statistics

1. [H.R. 2417](#) [112th]
Better Use of Light Bulbs Act
2. [H.R. 2354](#) [112th]
Making appropriations for energy and water development and relate the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes
3. [H.R. 4646](#) [111th]
Debt Free America Act
4. [H.R. 2219](#) [112th]
Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2012
5. [H.R. 2018](#) [112th]
Clean Water Cooperative Federalism Act of 2011
6. [H.R. 1473](#) [112th]
Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act,
7. [H.R. 1309](#) [112th]
Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2011
8. [H.R. 1380](#) [112th]
New Alternative Transportation to Give Americans Solutions Act of 20
9. [S. 1435](#) [111th]
Human-Animal Hybrid Prohibition Act of 2009
10. [H.R. 4173](#) [111th]
Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act

Tip of the Week Archive

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Want to tweet about legislation? Do it the [@THOMASdotgov](#) way. Simply put #HR or #S in front of the bill number. An example is #HR1351.

Confused about how to spot the [different types of legislation](#)? THOMAS has a guide to the designations for bills, joint resolutions, concurrent resolutions and simple resolutions.

Easily see the number of [sponsored and cosponsored legislation](#) of each Representative or Senator on THOMAS.

Find recorded vote information in [Roll Call Votes](#), available from the "More Legislative Information" section of the THOMAS homepage. However, only a minority of bills receive a roll call vote.

Tweaking THOMAS: [Read about](#) the recent homepage enhancements.

Use the [Congressional Schedules and Calendars](#) page to find out what Congress has scheduled for this week. This page is located under Current Activity on the THOMAS homepage.

Want to search more than one Congress for legislation? Select the "[Search Multiple Congresses](#)" page in Bills, Resolutions.

Curious about what occurred yesterday in Congress? Select the Latest Daily Digest from the [Congressional Record](#) page or the link in the "Current Activity" section of the THOMAS homepage.

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Use the [Advanced Search](#) to search the Bill Summary and Status of legislation for previous Congresses.

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H.R.493

Title: To prohibit discrimination on the basis of **genetic information** with respect to health insurance and employment.

Sponsor: [Rep Slaughter, Louise McIntosh](#) [NY-28] (introduced 1/16/2007) [Cosponsors](#) (224)

Related Bills: [H.CON.RES.340](#), [H.RES.1156](#), [H.RES.1167](#), [H.R.1424](#), [S.358](#)

Latest Major Action: Became Public Law No: 110-233 [GPO: [Text](#), [PDF](#)]

House Reports: [110-28](#) Part 1, [110-28](#) Part 2, [110-28](#) Part 3, [110-28](#) Part 4

All Information (except text)	Text of Legislation	CRS Summary	Major Congressional Actions
Titles	Cosponsors (224)	Committees	All Congressional Actions
Related Bills	Amendments	Related Committee Documents	All Congressional Actions with Amendments With links to <i>Congressional Record</i> pages, votes, reports
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Bill Summary & Status - 110th x +

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Bill Summary & Status 110th Congress (2007 - 2008) H.R.493

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H.R.493

Latest Title: Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008

Sponsor: [Rep Slaughter, Louise McIntosh](#) [NY-28] (introduced 1/16/2007) [Cosponsors](#) (224)

Related Bills: [H.CON.RES.340](#), [H.RES.1156](#), [H.RES.1167](#), [H.R.1424](#), [S.358](#)

Latest Major Action: Became Public Law No: 110-233 [GPO: [Text](#), [PDF](#)]

House Reports: [110-28](#) Part 1, [110-28](#) Part 2, [110-28](#) Part 3, [110-28](#) Part 4

Note: For further action, see [H.R.1424](#), which became Public Law 110-343 on 10/3/2008.

All Information (except text)	Text of Legislation	CRS Summary	Major Congressional Actions
Titles	Cosponsors (224)	Committees	All Congressional Actions
Related Bills	Amendments	Related Committee Documents	All Congressional Actions with Amendments With links to <i>Congressional Record</i> pages, votes, reports

Bill Summary & Status 110th Congress (2007 - 2008) H.R.493

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H.R.493

Latest Title: Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008

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Related Bills: [H.CON.RES.340](#), [H.RES.1156](#), [H.RES.1167](#), [H.R.1424](#), [S.358](#)

Latest Major Action: Became Public Law No: 110-233 [GPO: [Text](#), [PDF](#)]

House Reports: [110-28](#) Part 1, [110-28](#) Part 2, [110-28](#) Part 3, [110-28](#) Part 4

Note: For further action, see [H.R.1424](#), which became Public Law 110-343 on 10/3/2008.

All Information (except text)	Text of Legislation	CRS Summary	Major Congressional Actions All Congressional Actions All Congressional Actions with Amendments With links to <i>Congressional Record</i> pages, votes, reports
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Sharing to Twitter

The image shows a Twitter post and a Facebook sharing dialog overlaid on it. The Twitter post is from the account 'LawLibCongress' and contains the text 'THOMAS - Bill Summary and Status - H.R.493 -' followed by the URL 'http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.uscongress/legislation.110hr493'. The Facebook sharing dialog is titled 'Share this Link' and shows the same text and URL. It also includes a text input field for a message, a dropdown menu for sharing location (set to 'On your own Wall'), and a preview of the shared content. The preview includes the title 'Bill Summary & Status - 110th Congress (2007 - 2008) - H.R.493 - THOMAS (Library of Congress)', the URL, and a note: '(This measure has not been amended since it was passed by the Senate on April 24, 2008. The summary of that version is repeated here, with changes reflecting enrollment corrections.)'. At the bottom of the dialog are 'Share Link' and 'Cancel' buttons.

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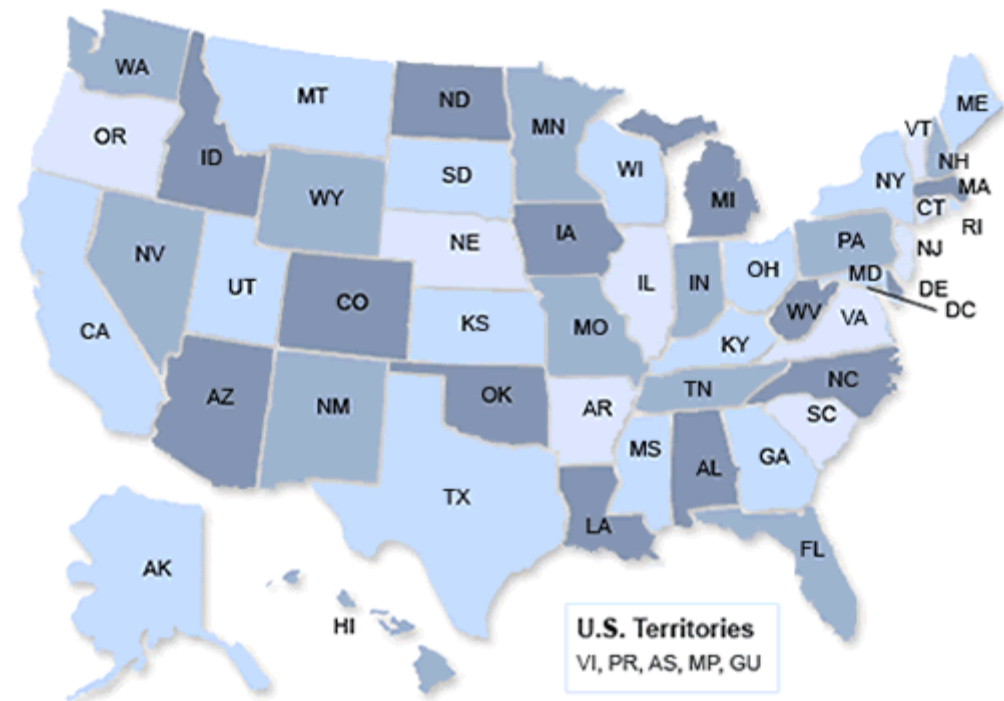
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December 2010

- **Convert GPO Access Links to FDsys**
- **Search Enhancement**
- **Latest Action**
- **Latest Title**
- **Cosponsors' List**
- **Metadata Enhancement**



2011

- **January – THOMAS on Science.gov**
- **February – Constitutional Authority Statements**
- **April - @THOMASdotgov**
- **May – New LOC metasearch (www.loc.gov/search/) includes THOMAS**



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5.981 - A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a partial exclusion for capital gain from certain sales of real ...

Amends the Internal Revenue Code to exclude from gross income 50 percent of any gain from the sale or exchange of real property acquired by the taxpayer directly from the Federal Savings ...

Sponsor: Sen Boschwitz, Rudy
Site: Thomas
Original Format: Legislation
Date: 1989



5.2270 - Bank Insurance Fund Rebate Act of 1998

Bank Insurance Fund Rebate Act of 1998 - Amends the Federal Deposit Insurance Act governing refunds of assessments imposed upon insured depository institutions to provide that a refund for any semiannual assessment ...

Sponsor: Sen Faircloth, Lauch
Site: Thomas
Original Format: Legislation
Date: 1998



H.R.4881 - A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act with respect to coverage of optometrists' services and coverage of occupational therapy ...

Amends title XVIII (Medicare) of the Social Security Act to extend coverage to include the items and services which an optometrist is legally authorized to provide. Provides coverage, under part B (Supplementary ...

Sponsor: Rep Stark, Fortney Pete
Site: Thomas
Original Format: Legislation
Date: 1986

June 2011

- **Tweaking THOMAS**
 - **Update to Social Media Box to include @THOMASdotgov**
 - **Added C-SPAN2 video link for Senate**
 - **Added 3 most recent THOMAS In Custodia Legis posts**
 - **More Dublin Core Metadata**



Under Development

- **Integrate @THOMASdotgov into the homepage**
- **Add Congressional Website Archive**





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Note: The default view of this landing page is for the most recent Congress available. For illustration purposes, the this wireframe uses the 110th Congress.

- 1 Use shortened title in the breadcrumb. Note that breadcrumb only goes to 4 levels
- 2 H1 must reflect the page that is showing, in this case, the Members of Congress Web Archives. Default view is 110th Congress. If user clicks on another congress, the H1 reflects that
- 3 Follow standards for secondary navigation in Style Guide
- 4 Short intro describing the page, for SEO purposes. Content should vary to reflect the chosen Congress session.
- 5 Behaves like navigation by dates, takes user to page showing selected Congress
- 6 Use the Thomas Congress-to-Year conversion on <http://www.thomas.gov/home/faqlist.html#10>
- 7 **Note:** This section should be programmed so that only a single selection can be made from any list, Member, State or Party, for a successful result

Member list is populated for members of the selected Congress. Listed alphabetically by last name, include party and state designation, add district for Representatives.
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- 8 If State is chosen, user goes to an interim landing page for the state, and chooses member from there
- 9 Follow style for action buttons in Style Guide

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110th Congress Member Web Archive

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Adams, Sandy [R-FL-24]	Alexander, Lamar [R-TN]
Aldenholt, Robert B [R-AL-4]	Ayotte, Kelly [R-NH]
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Alexander, Rodney [R-LA-5]	Baucus, Max [D-MT]

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3 Current and Former Congressional Members

4

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Note: **Representatives** are always shown with their district. Example: Ackerman, Gary L [D-NY-5]
Senators are shown only by state. Example: Akaka, Daniel K. [D-HI]

A

5


- > [Ackerman, Gary L \[D-NY-5\]](#)
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Rep. Gary L. Ackerman Web Archives 110th Congress

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Rep. Gary Ackerman

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4 **2008**

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March	03/20/08	03/21/08
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May		
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2007

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February	21/26/07	
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April		

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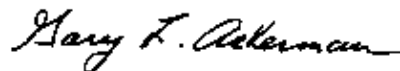
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Last Updated On: 11/22/2002

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I hope to make this a place where I can interact with my constituents by providing up-to-date legislative information, access to congressional services, and a place to voice concerns about issues that are important to you. For new additions, check out the press and photo pages. I hope you enjoy your visit here!



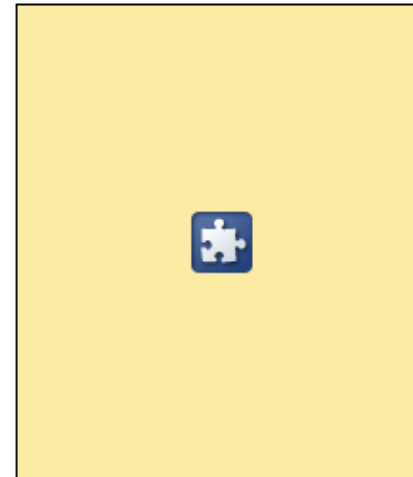
[Click to see photos shot by Congressman Ackerman of Congress' special session at New York's Federal Hall](#)

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Although mail delivery to United States Capitol offices has resumed, the delivery process is still very slow and not yet back to normal. Until the process is more timely, the best way to contact me is email. Please click on the link to the left

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- **Why are we here?**
 - **We want feedback from law librarians**
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- **Goal: new system in 2014**





SUGGESTIONS?

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