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GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

Congressional committee hearings provide a good source of information on debate topics. Most of the research work done by members of Congress is conducted in committee hearings; each congressional committee holds its own hearings on legislation that falls within its jurisdiction. Each hearing typically includes testimony from key federal government officials and leading scholars in the topic area. Hearings offer testimony from both proponents and opponents of legislative proposals. Hearings are available on the Internet in two formats: HTML and PDF. Although PDF files take longer to download, they have the advantage of pagination that precisely follows the format of the printed version of the government document. Debaters are, therefore, able to cite the page number for each quotation.

Congressional hearings can be retrieved in full text from the following website: www.gpoaccess.gov/chearings/index.html— the Government Printing Office (GPO) website for hearings. The GPO website allows you to search in any session of Congress after the 105th.

The Government Printing Office also maintains a website that searches the published reports of the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and all other executive departments and agencies. This search engine is available at the following website: www.gpoaccess.gov/cgp/advanced.html.

A website called Thomas (named after Thomas Jefferson) is the place to go for access to the *Congressional Record* (a transcript of the floor debate in both houses of Congress) and for information on the status of pending legislation. Thomas, available at <http://thomas.loc.gov>, is maintained by the U.S. Library of Congress.

Often a debater needs to know whether a particular piece of legislation has passed Congress and become law. Thomas offers accurate, up-to-date information about legislation, including whether hearings have been held, whether legislation has passed the House or Senate, and whether it has become a public law.

Another useful group of government documents is available from the Congressional Research Service (CRS), a division of the Library of Congress. The CRS has prepared