PARLIAMENTARY INFORMATION ON THE WEB

by Ralph Gaebler

In the last several years it has become quite common to search for the laws of foreign countries on the web. There are several web index sites that provide links to the many other sites where foreign statutes can be found. Among them are the U.S. House of Representatives Internet Law Library (http://law.house.gov/52.htm) and Washlaw Web (http://www.washlaw.edu/).

Within the past year, it has also become possible to locate sites maintained by national parliaments, and the Legal Information Institute (http://www.law.cornell.edu) conveniently maintains links to many of them. A tour through some of these sites revealed that they provide a wide variety of information. On the plus side, the best of them include the text of proposed laws and other legislative texts, such as committee reports, sometimes in HTML, sometimes in PDF format. This information makes it practical for the first time for researchers in the U.S. to investigate legislative proposals under consideration by foreign parliaments. On the minus side of the equation, the Internet sites in question do not often have adequate search facilities, and the core material is invariably in the official language of the target country.

In addition to legislative documents, parliamentary web sites usually contain a useful summary of the legislative process. These summaries typically are available in English, and are quite useful in helping the researcher determine which categories of legislative documents are important. Some sites also provide press releases in English, as well as regular updates of current parliamentary activities. Many also provide links to related sites, such as those maintained by parliamentary parties.

One important feature shared by most parliamentary sites is official sponsorship. This provides some assurance that the information they contain is accurate and will not disappear in the future. Since most of the sites are new, they do not contain much legislative information from past years, but one can anticipate that they will strive to archive the information they add.

None of the parliamentary sites I looked at provide the wealth of legislative information researchers are used to obtaining electronically in the U.S. However, they certainly provide access to foreign information that has not typically been available in printed sources, at least in U.S. libraries, and for that reason hold out a great deal of promise for the future.
NEW & NOTEWORTHY: THE END


Ever wonder where I. U. Law School alumnus, and the only Hoosier to serve on the U. S. Supreme Court, Sherman Minton, is buried? Do you know which Supreme Court Justice died as a result of a visit to his dentist? Name the Supreme Court Justice who was so disliked by his brethren, than none attended his funeral. The answers to these and hundreds of other intriguing questions can be answered in David N. Atkinson’s Leaving the Bench: Supreme Court Justices at the End. But don’t dismiss this book as just a collection of trivia. Atkinson, a political science professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (who also holds a J.D. from the University of Iowa), has compiled a fascinating study of the final years of the Justices of the Supreme Court and judicial disability.

In his first chapter, “Why do they Leave or Stay,” Atkinson outlines the reasons he thinks Justices leave the bench: 1) the threat of impeachment; 2) an attractive pension; 3) ambition; 4) dissatisfaction or weariness; 5) poor health or declining physical energy; 6) mental decline or disability; 7) family pressure; and 8) a voluntary choice even though they remain capable of doing the work. He then outlines the reasons they do not voluntarily leave office: 1) financial considerations; 2) ideological reasons; 3) stubbornness; 4) a sense of indispensability; 5) loss of status; 6) a belief they can still do the work; 7) not knowing what else to do; and 8) family pressure to stay in office. The book’s concluding chapter, “When Should Justices Leave,” documents Atkinson’s “modest” thoughts on reform. Specifically he weighs the pros and cons of mandatory retirement and suggests revising the delegation of duties to law clerks.

The meat of the book however, are the five chapters that fall in between Atkinson’s reasons and reforms. Arranged chronologically, these chapters not only detail the final years of each Justice’s life, but more importantly show just how human Supreme Court Justices are - and how their human frailties affect the court. Three appendices (A: “Who Asked Justice Grier to Resign,” B: “Age and Tenure of Justices,” and C: “Where are they Buried”) follow.

While some might complain that Leaving the Bench is far from an analytical scholarly monograph, I suspect that anyone who has a curiosity about the Court will quickly be drawn in for a pleasant and informative read.

By the way, the answers to the questions above are:

- Holy Trinity Catholic Cemetery in New Albany
- Edward T. Sanford
- James C. McReynolds.

Dick Vaughan,
Acquisitions & Serials Control Librarian

UPDATE: THE CONVERSION OF JX CALL NUMBERS

The conversion of the JX call numbers to JZ and KZ continues to occur. We are currently completing the conversion of those to be shelved on the second floor under the call number KZ. After completing these, we will begin the conversion of those to be shelved on the third floor under the call number JZ. If you are searching for a book with a JX call number, first check the 3rd floor (unless it is a reference book, then check the reference collection). If it is not on the 3rd floor (or in reference), please see a reference librarian because it might be in the technical services department awaiting processing. If you are looking for book with a KZ call number, check the 2nd floor. If it is not there, again please see a reference librarian. Most likely the book is in the technical services area waiting to be relabeled. There is a very large backlog of these books, but we will be happy to retrieve any book you desire.

Further updates of this project will be published in Res Ipsa Loquitur.

Michael Maben,
Cataloging Librarian
WHAT’S THE FDLP?

The Federal Depository Library Program is based on an agreement between the Government Printing Office (GPO) and participating libraries nationwide to make U.S. government information, regardless of format, accessible to the public and to assure future access to this information. The participating depository library selects and receives government information free of charge from GPO and, in return, agrees to make this information freely accessible to the public. The logo above identifies the Library as an FDLP participant.

The Law Library has been a Congressionally designated participant in the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) since 1978 selecting approximately 25% of the material available through this program. Our collection is particularly strong in areas of civil rights and environmental law, with comprehensive acquisition of justice, judiciary and legislative material.

Selection of government information in the I.U. Law Library is based on the needs of its primary users, the I.U. Law School Community. However, the Law Library welcomes anyone who wants to use the documents collection during regular library hours without restriction of use.

You may find government publications throughout the Library:

- The primary federal documents collection is housed on the fourth floor of the Library and is arranged by the Superintendent of Documents (SuDocs) classification system.
- Selected government publications are shelved in the reference collection on the first floor.
- Heavily used recent periodical titles are available with the unbound periodicals in the reserve collection on the first floor.
- Government publication titles may be accessed through the online catalog and are indexed in a variety of specialized publications found in the reference collection of the Library. Please ask a librarian for assistance if you are uncertain about which resource to use.
- In addition to traditional publications housed within the building, the Law Library provides Internet access to GPO Access and other government sponsored Internet sites offering the full-text of legislative and agency materials.

Marianne Mason,
Government Documents Librarian

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The Suggestion Box

(Each month in this space Associate Director Linda Fariss replies to suggestions received by the Library)

Suggestion: Campus Access Card, where is our machine and why do the law school machines still charge $.07 per copy when everywhere else (SPEA and Main Library, etc.) only charge $.065 per copy?

Response: First of all, we used to have a machine that allowed you to put money on a card (or now your student ID). That machine was removed because it was not used enough. I am requesting that a machine be installed in the Law School and I will report on my progress in later issues of Res Ipsa. In regard to the second part of your question, the campus sets copy prices based on the use of the machines in each location. Our prices were established this year based on last year’s use. If we reduced the number of machines we have, the cost per copy might go down but, of course, the lines would be longer. The more our machines are used, the better chance we have for cheaper copies. By the way, we checked with the Copy Machines office and the Main Library machines currently cost $.08 per copy because they have so many machines. SPEA is currently $.065 per copy. According to Copy Machines, the cheapest copies are at Optometry, where the cost is $.05 per copy.
FIRST MONDAY IN OCTOBER

Here’s a little quiz to commemorate the beginning of a new Supreme Court Term. Try matching the current justices with positions they held prior to their appointment to the high court. Answers appear at the bottom.

1. William H. Rehnquist  a. Co-chair of the Arizona Committee to elect Richard Nixon
2. John Paul Stevens  b. Clerked for Associate Justice Arthur Goldberg
3. Sandra Day O’Connor  c. Taught antitrust law classes at Northwestern University
4. Antonin Scalia  d. Served as Attorney General of New Hampshire
5. Anthony M. Kennedy  e. Director of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
7. Clarence Thomas  g. Served as a “weather observer” in Africa during World War II
8. Ruth Bader Ginsburg  h. Taught constitutional law at the McGeorge School of Law in California

Answers: 1-g, 2-c, 3-a, 4-i, 5-h, 6-d, 7-e, 8-f, 9-b  

Nonie Watt,  
Head of Technical Services

USE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS IN THE LIBRARY

It has been brought to our attention that some students are using smokeless tobacco products in the Library. It is the policy of the Library to restrict the use of all tobacco products, not just cigarettes. No smokeless tobacco products may be used in the Library. If you notice anybody using tobacco products in the Library, please report it to a member of the staff. We appreciate your cooperation in enforcing this rule.  

Linda K. Fariss,  
Associate Director

WORKING THE HALLS

Happy October Birthdays to:  
Earl Singleton, CLC Director, on October 5th  
Professor Bill Oliver on the 6th  
Professor Bob Heidt on the 10th  
Professor Ken Dau-Schmidt on the 12th  
Professor Kevin Brown on the 13th  
David Lankford, Library Media Center Coordinator, on the 15th  
Professor Bruce Markell on the 24th  
Professor Bill Hicks on the 26th  
Professor Bill Popkin on the 28th.

Welcome to Martha Garrett, who joins the Library staff as the new Serials Clerk.

Congratulations to Tim Martin (Graduate Admissions Coordinator) and his wife Iva, the proud parents of a new son, Tristan Matthew, born on October 1st.

Hope you all have a great day!