If you are going to identify concerns and affect change in public policy, being able to perform a legislative history to research the law is important. The following sources will help you do this. Some of them are subscription services that you can access from the library’s Databases list (on the main library website); some are paper and located in the Reference collection or the Government Documents collection; others are government or academic web sites.

**Federal Legislation**

**Congress and the Nation: Politics and Policy**  REF/KF/49/.C65
- Published every four years; tied to presidential terms.
  - First volume in this series covers 1945-1964.
- Summarizes the most important government developments.
  - Overviews the events of the four-year period, including important personages.
  - Details public policy by summarizing legislative and executive branch activity.

**CQ Almanac**  1972-2010. Annual. REF/KF/42/.C65
- Looks at all important bills considered during the year—even if they did not become law.
- Includes a list of all bills enacted into law during the year.
- Contains narrative accounts of important legislation.

**CQ Researcher**
- Online under CQ Electronic Library on the Databases list.
- Weekly reports on a wide variety of public policy issues.
- May summarize some legislation in that area.

- Covers the history, powers, and procedures of Congress.
- Also covers relationships with the executive and judicial branches.
- Includes issues such as campaign financing, ethics and disciplining.
- Contains many appendices of statistical and factual information.

**CRS Reports**
- Provides background information on issues taken up by Congress.
- May include legislative histories.
- Not widely distributed; have to rely on sites like Open CRS and the University of North Texas Digital Library or request the reports from your representative.

**FDSYS**
- Online at http://www.fdsys.gov
- GPO's Federal Digital System (FDsys) provides public access to Government information submitted by Congress and Federal agencies and preserved as technology changes.
- Can be used to find legislative history of a bill, as well as full text of Public Laws and the Congressional Record.

**Statutes at Large**  Gov Docs AE 2.111:
- Cumulated volumes of Public Laws (Gov Docs AE 2.110).
Online version for some years available (search the online catalog for “Statutes at Large”).
For earlier Public Laws / Statutes, use the paper version in Government Documents collection.
Legislative history summary is included at the end of each law since 1975.

**THOMAS** ([http://thomas.loc.gov/](http://thomas.loc.gov/))
- From the Library of Congress; might be helpful in tracking legislation.

- Codifies all statutes in force into broad subject areas called titles; subdivided into chapters and sections.
- Sections are followed by a reference to the text’s source.
- Can be used to find the statute or public law, and trace the legislative history from it.

- Calls itself “the definitive source for finding and making contacts.”
- Lists directors / persons-in-charge of government and nongovernment agencies and organizations.
- Lists websites, phone numbers, email addresses, and street addresses.
- Although this information is available on the web, this title pulls it together in one volume.
- Excellent place to look for contacts at the right organization for many public policy issues.

- Online in Gale Virtual Reference Library, accessible through the Database list.
- Look up your topic of interest—animal rights, health care, water quality, etc.
- May reference relevant legislation and court cases.

**Holston Associated Libraries catalog** ([www.hal.org](http://www.hal.org))
- Holdings of four libraries.
- All types of materials are included.
- Can search by author, title, subject, keyword, or any combination.
- Most items discussing your public policy issues will have some sort of summary of legislation.
- To help you get started here are some official subject headings you might useful:
  - **Animal rights**: animal welfare—law and legislation
  - **Childhood obesity**: obesity in children; obesity in children—U.S.—prevention; obesity in adolescence
  - **Civil rights for gays**: gay rights; same-sex marriage
  - **Domestic violence**: child abuse; family violence; marital violence
  - **Economic development** for small communities: community development; regional planning; rural development—economic aspects; Appalachian Regional Comm.
  - **Educational inequality**: educational accountability; curriculum evaluation; standards of learning—Virginia; educational equalization; school improvement programs
  - **Energy and job creation**: sustainable development—economic aspects; environmental policy—economic aspects; renewable energy sources
  - **Health care**: health services accessibility; medical care; medical policy
  - **Homelessness**: homelessness; homeless persons; domicile in public welfare; housing
  - **Living wages**: working poor—United States; minimum wage—United States
  - **Mental health**: mental health; mental health—children; mental health—insurance; mental health—Older people; mental health—policy; mental health services
  - **Patriot Act**: Uniting and Strengthening American by Providing Appropriate Tools to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT ACT) Act of 2001; national security—laws and Legislation; civil rights—United States; Terrorism—United States—prevention
Sex discrimination: sex discrimination; sex discrimination against women
Sexual harassment: sexual harassment
Water availability: water resources; water supply
Water quality: water quality; water—pollution—law and legislation

State Legislation

State-level legislative information may be harder to obtain than federal level legislation. Some of the sources below should help you find information on Virginia.

Code of Virginia. REF/JK/3925/.M6
- In addition to the print version of the Code of Virginia, you can find it online at the Virginia General Assembly’s Legislative Information System (http://leg1.state.va.us/lis.htm).
- It gives online access to the Code of Virginia (http://leg1.state.va.us/000/src.htm), the Virginia Administrative Code (http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?000+men+SRR), and many other documents.

- Has three directories:
  - Directory I: Elective Officials
  - Directory II: Legislative Leadership, Committees & Staff
  - Directory III: Administrative Officials
    - Lists websites, email addresses, and mailing addresses for officials and offices.
- If you are seeking state-level legislative information on a public policy, these directories may help.
- Although these directories are not online at the Council of State Governments (http://www.csg.org/) website, the site might lead you to state legislative and public policy information.
- Click on the Policy and Research tab. Then scroll down the left side to the Policy Areas link.

Legislative Reference Center (http://dls.state.va.us/lrc/leghist.htm)
- From the Virginia Division of Legislative Services.
- Has some tips how to conduct research on Virginia law.

Virginia Legal Research in Depth (http://www.ll.georgetown.edu/states/virginia-in-depth.cfm)
- From Georgetown University Law Center.
- Excellent summary of statutory, administrative, and case law.
- Note: since this guide was prepared by librarians at Georgetown University, it refers to some library resources that Kelly Library does not own.

Periodical and newspaper databases
- General multi-subject periodical databases, such as Academic Search Complete, General OneFile, and JSTOR may provide information on legislation, especially if it’s newsworthy. Depending on your topic, subject-specific databases such as Environment Complete, Health Source, and Women’s Studies International may be helpful. Lexis Nexis is well-known for its legal research component, as well as its newspaper database. EBSCO’s Legal Collection is another good source of legal information. America’s Newspapers, Factiva, and Newspaper Source Plus are newspaper databases that may be helpful with legal coverage in the news.
- You’ve probably had experience with a few of these databases in English, history or Transitions classes.
- Remote access:
  - You should be able to remotely access any of the library’s subscription databases from off campus.
  - Go to the library website (www.library.ehc.edu), then the Database list, and click on your database. A login screen will appear. Login with your username and password.
  - If you are having problems doing this, please contact the Electronic Resources Librarian, Jody Hanshew (ext. 6213; jhanshew@ehc.edu).

America’s Newspapers
• Accessible from the Database list.
• Might help you by locating articles in smaller state papers that discuss legislation.
• Please look at the screen shot below.

I limited my search on dog fighting to newspapers in Virginia in the past five years. My results list will have some articles detailing legislative action on animal cruelty.

**EBSCO’s Legal Collection**
Accessible from the Database list.
User interface is similar to other EBSCO databases (Academic Search Complete, etc.).

**Lexis Nexis Academic**
• Accessible from the Database list.
• Click the Legal tab on the left; then choose federal and state cases, federal statues, state statutes, etc.
• Enter your search terms.
• Note that you can search all 50 state codes here, as well as federal legal documents.
Above is a search in *LexisNexis* for laws on *animal welfare* in the state of Virginia. My results are listed on the next page.

**County and Local Codes and Ordinances**


- Codes for other counties and municipalities in Virginia (as well as the 49 other states) can be found at the [MuniCode](http://www.municode.com/library/ClientListing.aspx?stateID=46) site.
- **Note:** not all localities are available here, or have county codes posted online. You might have to contact those offices directly.

**Code of Ordinances, Smyth County, Virginia**

Interlibrary Loan

- **Service** offered by Kelly Library to obtain article copies or borrow books for you from other libraries.
- Online ordering system called **ILLiad; register here** to create an account.
- There is no charge for this service for the first 50 requests per academic year.
- Please **double check your requests in the catalog** and the **Full-Text E-Journals list** before you fill in the order form to be sure that the library does not own the material.
- Allow at least 5-7 working days to receive your order.

Documenting Your Sources

When you quote an author’s words, or paraphrase an author’s unique ideas, you must give credit to the source. If you do not, you have committed **plagiarism**, which is a violation of the E&H Honor Code. The different documentation styles for the various academic fields will help you avoid this.

- Style guides for **MLA, APA**, and **University of Chicago** documentation are available at the Circulation Desk on permanent reserve.
- You might want to check out some of the documentation sites the librarians have listed under the **Research Tips** link, under Research on the library main page.
- Also, don’t forget the resources at E&H’s **Writing Center** ([http://www.ehc.edu/academics/resources/academic-support/writing-center](http://www.ehc.edu/academics/resources/academic-support/writing-center))

**Remember**: If you need help locating or using any of the sources listed above, please speak with a library staff member. We’re here to help you with your information needs. **Librarians** providing reference service are: **Jane Caldwell, Patty Greany, Jody Hanshew, and Janet Kirby**. **Circulation staff** members are **David Lyons, Pat Maiden, Shelby Smith, Stephen Woodward, and Tonya White**.

Library web page: [www.library.ehc.edu](http://www.library.ehc.edu)
Phone: **276.944.6208**
Email: [askalibrarian@ehc.edu](mailto:askalibrarian@ehc.edu)