



KEY POINTS

A LEGAL RESEARCH NEWSLETTER FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT FROM WEST

Volume 28, Number 7
September 2010

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But See Also ...

"[T]here are two opposing canons
on almost every point."

—Law professor Karl Llewellyn



HOW DID THE LAW LOOK ON [ENTER DATE HERE]?

You can instantly retrieve sections of the USCA or selected state statutes in effect on a particular date.

When you retrieve a *United States Code Annotated*® (USCA®) section on Westlaw, you retrieve the section that is currently in effect. But what if you need the statute as it existed on an earlier date?

That's when you turn to PastStat Locator®, the Westlaw feature that allows you to view the version of a statute in effect on a particular date. With this feature, you simply enter a date before running a search or before retrieving a section using the Table of Contents service.

Retrieving a prior version from a Search page

1. Access the USCA or a California, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, or Texas statutes database, then click the **Terms and Connectors** or **Natural Language** tab and type a Terms and Connectors query or Natural Language description in the *Search* text box.
2. Next, do either of the following:
 - Type a date, e.g., **03/13/2008**, in the Search sections *effective on* text box.
 - Click the **Calendar** icon. In the displayed calendar, choose a month and enter a year, then click **Go**. Then click a day.

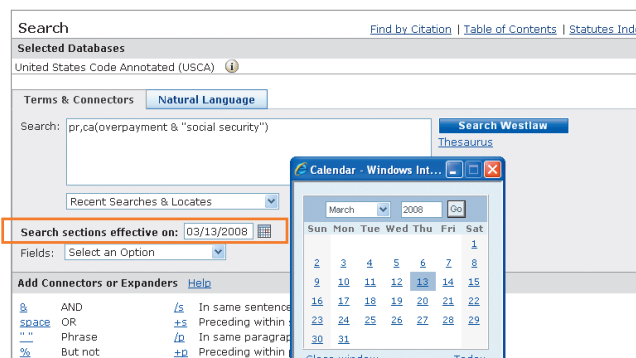
Once you have entered the query or description and the effective date, click **Search Westlaw**.

Retrieving a prior version using the Table of Contents

You can display the table of contents for the USCA or selected statutes as it existed on the date you specify. Complete the following steps:

1. Access the appropriate statutes database and click **Table of Contents** at the Search page.
2. Type a date in the *Effective Date* text box at the bottom of the page or select a date by clicking the **Calendar** icon.
3. Click **Go**.

The table of contents is displayed as it existed on the date you selected. Browse the table of contents by clicking the plus (+) and minus (–) symbols. To retrieve a section in effect on that date, click the section name in the table of contents.



Past Stat Locator on USCA Search page





Welcome, new law clerks!

NEW PROJECT? THE FIRST STEP'S A DOOZY

You've just been handed a new research project. You know the essential facts, the parameters of the project, and the primary legal issue to research.

But here's something you might not know: where to start. May we suggest a few possibilities?

Am Jur 2d, CJS, ALR

If the issue is unfamiliar, you might start with an analytical resource database, such as American Jurisprudence 2d (AMJUR), Corpus Juris Secundum (CJS), or American Law Reports (ALR). Each of these resources summarizes the major concepts and holdings within an aspect of the law and provides citations to leading authorities and research references. In addition, when you search these materials on Westlaw, you can jump directly to—and from—a wide variety of primary and secondary sources via hypertext links.

Statutes: Table of Contents service and Links tab

If you find a statute on point, your research is mostly done: You can quickly retrieve related analytical materials and citing cases by clicking links on the Links tab (e.g., *Treatises and Forms*). One of the easiest ways to retrieve relevant statutes is to use the Table of Contents service to browse the contents of the statutory code and retrieve sections by clicking section names. Access a statutes database and click **Table of Contents** at the Search page.

Customized tabbed pages

When you need to identify databases to search, you might start by selecting the appropriate tabbed page on Westlaw. Tabbed pages provide easy access to the most commonly used sources in a given legal area. Click **Add a Tab** to get started.

[◀ Previous Section](#) **AMJUR COMPINTNET § 25** [Next Section ▶](#)
 § 25. Effect of interactive nature of website, generally; defendant' . . .
 Approx. 7 pages

NTS Am. Jur. 2d Computers and the Internet § 25

American Jurisprudence, Second Edition
 Database updated July 2010
 Computers and the Internet
 Mitchell Waldman, J.D.

III. Procedural Effects of Use of Internet or E-mail; Electronic Signatures, Transactions, and Contracts
 A. Use of Internet as Conferring Jurisdiction over Nonresident; Venue

[Topic Summary](#) [References](#)

§ 25. Effect of interactive nature of website, generally; defendant's doing business over Internet

West's Key Number Digest

West's Key Number Digest, [Courts](#) ◀12(2) to (2.40)
 West's Key Number Digest, [Telecommunications](#) ◀461.15

A.L.R. Library

[Internet website activities of nonresident person or corporation as conferring personal jurisdiction under long-arm statutes and Due Process Clause, 81 A.L.R. 5th 41 §§ 5 to 7](#)

The operation of an Internet website can constitute the purposeful availment of the privilege of acting in a forum state, as will potentially support the exercise of personal jurisdiction consistent with the Due Process Clause over a nonresident defendant who operates a website, if the website is



KeySearch®

Don't forget about KeySearch, the Westlaw tool that identifies terms and West topic and key numbers related to your topic and then runs an expert-level query in the case law or secondary source database you choose. The queries (created by West attorney-editors) are already in KeySearch waiting for you. All you have to do is browse the pages of topics and subtopics and click one that sounds relevant, designate a database, and let it fly. To access KeySearch, click **Key Numbers** at the top of any Westlaw page, then click **KeySearch**.

Search for Key Numbers feature

When you have the right topic and key number, case law retrieval is a breeze—the key number is a pipeline to every reported case in the country that discusses the point of law similarly classified. An easy way to pick the right topic and key number is to use the Search for Key Numbers feature. Type a short description of your issue, e.g., **liability for incorrect information in credit report**, in the text box and click **Search**. A list of topic and key numbers is displayed. Click a topic and key number to view the headnotes classified under that topic and key number.

The screenshot shows the Westlaw interface for the 'Social Security' tab. At the top, there are navigation links like 'FIND & PRINT', 'KEYCITE', 'DIRECTORY', 'KEY NUMBERS', and 'SITE MAP'. Below that, there are tabs for 'Legislative History - Fed', 'Health Care Reform', and 'Social Security'. The main content area is divided into several sections: 'Content and Display Options', 'Find by citation:', 'KeyCite this citation:', 'Search for a database:', 'Sticky Notes:', 'Search' (with a search box and 'Search' button), 'Cases' (with checkboxes for 'Federal Social Security Cases - All Courts', 'State Government Benefits Cases (Multistate)', 'Federal Statutes - U.S. Code Annotated (Social Security Act)', and 'Code of Federal Regulations (SSA Regulations)'), 'Vocational Materials' (with checkboxes for 'DOT (Dictionary of Occupational Titles)', 'SCO (Selected Characteristics of Occupations Defined in the Revised Dictionary of Occupational Titles)', 'Bloch on Social Security (treatise)', and 'Hall - Social Security Disability Practice (treatise)'), and 'Analytical Materials' (with a 'Show all' link).

Tabbed Social Security page on Westlaw

The screenshot shows the KeySearch interface. On the left, there is a description of KeySearch as a research tool powered by the West Key Number System. Below that, there is a search box for topics and subtopics. The main content area is a grid of legal topics and subtopics, each with a folder icon and a list of related terms. The topics include: Administrative Law (Open Meetings, Exhaustion, Primary Jurisdiction), Agriculture (Federal Aid, Veterinarians, Pest Control), Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) (Securities Law, Insurance, Bankruptcy), Antitrust and Trade Regulation (Horizontal Restraints, Price Fixing, Crimes), Art, Entertainment, and Sports Law (Agents, Licenses, Torts), Bankruptcy (Exemptions, Stay, Priorities, Preferences), Business Organizations (Corporations, Partnerships), Civil Procedure (Jurisdiction, Evidence and Witnesses, Limitations), Civil Remedies (Contempt, Damages, Sanctions), Government (Municipal Corporations, Contracts, Civil Service), Health (Mental Health, Nursing Homes, Hospitals), Immigration Law (Deportation and Removal, Naturalization, Asylum), Indigenous Peoples (Domestic Relations, Treaties, Gambling and Casinos), Insurance (Liability Coverage, Motor Vehicles, Bad Faith), Intellectual Property (Computers and Online Services, Patents, Trademarks), International Law (Espionage, Sovereignty, Treaties), Juvenile Justice (Evidence and Witnesses, Probation, Restitution), and Legal Services (Discipline, Disqualification, Retainer and Authority).

KeySearch



Advanced SEARCH TIP

Getting Around Those Stop Words

Suppose you run a can't-miss search such as **but +1 for /3 causation**. What do you retrieve?

You retrieve nothing but this cheerful message: "Your request contains term(s) too common to be searched."

In other words, you've run into the problem of *stop words*, words so common that Westlaw won't search for them. (For a complete list of stop words, click **Help** at the top of any Westlaw page. In the displayed dialog box, type **stop** in the *Search* text box in the right frame and click **Search**. Then click **What are 'stop words' on Westlaw?**)

Yet *but for causation* is a widely recognized legal phrase! What now?

Solution:

There are several ways to work around stop words, including the following:

- hyphenate, e.g., type **but-for /3 causation**
- enclose the phrase in quotation marks, e.g., type **"but for causation"**
- type a pound symbol (#) before every stop word in the query, e.g., type **#but +1 #for /3 causation**