

# Proceedings of the 7th Annual Federal Depository Library Conference

April 20 - 23, 1998

---

## U.S. Senate Bibliographies Project

John A. McGeachy, North Carolina State University  
Raleigh, NC

---

In 1983, near the beginning of the 103d Congress, the Senate adopted a numbering scheme to provide unique identifying numbers for its hearings, committee prints, and publications. Reports and documents had been so numbered for many years, and these new numbers meant that every publication of the Senate would receive a unique number. Since 1983 the designations "S.Hrg.," "S.Prt." and "S.Pub." have been printed on the covers of these materials. The House did not follow the Senate's lead, so hearings, prints, and publications of the House do not carry similar numbers.

GPO recognized that the Senate numbering scheme would provide a quick and easy means to classify these documents. Unfortunately, the marriage of SuDocs stems for the issuing committee with the Senate numbering designation, assigned without regard to the committee, created some disharmonies in depository collections. When you browse the hearings of a given committee now, the numbers you see appear to be randomly assigned. For example, here are the hearings from the Aging Committee of the 104th Congress in SuDocs order:

104-0110 Gaming the Health Care System: Trends in Health Care Fraud

104-0113 Problems in the Social Security Disability Programs: The Disabling of America?

104-0118 Planning Ahead: Future Directions in Private Financing of Long-Term Care

104-0149 Society's Secret Shame: Elder Abuse and Family Violence (Field hearing held in Portland, ME)

104-0230 Breakthroughs in Brain Research: A National Strategy to Save Billions in Health Care Costs

104-0256 Federal Oversight of Medicare HMO's: Assuring Beneficiary Protection

104-0384 Medicaid Reform: Quality of Care in Nursing Homes at Risk

104-0434 Health Care Fraud: Milking Medicare and Medicaid

104-0489 Hearing on Mental Illness Among the Elderly

104-0490 Telescams Exposed: How Telemarketers Target the Elderly

104-0491 Hearing on Adverse Drug Reactions in the Elderly

104-0517 Alzheimer's Disease in a Changing Health Care System: Falling Through the Cracks

104-0649 National Shortage of Geriatricians: Meeting the Needs of Our Aging Population

104-0654 Stranded on Disability: Federal Disability Programs Failing Disabled Workers

104-0661 Nutrition and the Elderly: Savings for Medicare (Forum)

104-0693 Suicide and the Elderly: A Population at Risk

104-0705 Social Security Reform Options: Preparing for the 21st Century

104-0735 Investing in Medical Research: Saving Health Care and Human Costs (Joint with Appropriations)

The reports and documents, which make up a great part of the U.S. Congressional Serial Set, have enjoyed a long history of bibliographic control through the Documents Index, the Numerical Lists and Schedules of Volumes, and the U.S. Congressional Serial Set Catalog. Despite an obvious need to provide a similar tool for hearings, committee prints and publications, the Federal agencies charged with bibliographic control of Government publications have failed to provide a comparable bibliography for these Senate series.

The bibliographic control tool for Senate hearings, prints and publications is available from a North Carolina academic library. Since the mid-1980s the depository staff at North Carolina State University has maintained database files of Senate hearings, prints and publications. The database files were first compiled from non-cumulative lists that appeared in GPO's Administrative Notes. Since 1991 the files have been compiled primarily from title page proofs supplied to NC State by the staff of the Senate Library.

The fact that an individual's project replaced a Government effort did not go entirely unnoticed. Library Journal reported the situation in its November 15, 1991, issue with the title, "North Carolina Librarian Picks Up Where Feds Left Off."

The first goal of the Senate Bibliographies Project is to provide comprehensive listings of the hearings, prints and publications of the Senate from 1983. This goal is accomplished by a series of Web pages at <http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/stacks/senatebibs/>.

Links from the top of this page lead first to a section with a hot-linked list of Congresses, 98th (1983-84) through 105th (1997-98). A click on any of the Congresses takes you to another page where you are presented with the names of a series of files, typically nine files for each Congress. A final click on any of these links takes you to a chosen bibliography.

Data is provided in three sequences for the three kinds of documents covered by the project. For hearings, committee prints and publications, the lists are arranged in sequence number order, alphabetically by committee and within each committee by sequence number, and in title order.

An additional feature allows you to search a single database containing records of all printed hearings, prints, and publications indexed at this Web site, 1983 to date. Only title keywords, committee names and Senate numbering system sequence numbers are contained in the database that is searched, and that is all the information contained in retrieval sets.

Two years ago, after the 1996 Federal Depository Conference, the Senate Bibliographies Project took on a second goal. For the years 1995-96, the number of hearings printed by the 104th Congress was the smallest since the Senate numbering scheme began. The table below gives the highest numbered hearing for the most recent Congresses:

1983-84 (98)	1305
1985-86 (99)	1098
1987-88 (100)	1085
1989-90 (101)	1298
1991-92 (102)	1204
1993-94 (103)	1087
1995-96 (104)	934

To identify a universe of hearings for the 104th Congress, staff at NC State examined the Daily Digest section of the Congressional Record for the years 1995-96, and identified an additional 156 hearings that had not yet been printed. The results of this investigation, which continues, are presented in additional sections of the Senate Bibliographies Web site.

First there are the Senate Report Cards. These statistical summaries record, for each Senate committee, the number of hearings held; show the numbers of hearings printed and unprinted by the Government Printing Office; and assign a numerical grade representing how well each committee informs the nation of its activities by publishing transcripts of its

hearings. At present, there are two Senate Report Cards, one for each of the two years of the 104th Congress. The Foreign Relations Committee has the poorest printing record.

Next, additional bibliographies for the 104th Congress can be found under the "Lists by Congress" section. There is a long file listing in chronological order all the hearings discovered by examining the Daily Digest, both printed and unprinted. At present, this file covers only 1995. Data for 1996 is being edited and will be added to this file soon.

Also here in the 104th "Lists by Congress," and in a separate section called "Lists of Unprinted Hearings," are three bibliographies of unprinted hearings. The bibliographies are sequenced in the same manner as are the printed ones: in numerical sequence order (i.e., by date), alphabetically by committee and within each committee by hearing date, and in title order--the title being that given in the Daily Digest.

These bibliographies of unprinted hearings presently contain data for 1995 only. Similar data for 1996 is being compiled and will be added later. The summary figures for 1996 are available in that year's Senate Report Card, and are being updated as additional 104th Congress hearings are printed.

A keyword title search on the unprinted hearing file can be performed to retrieve lists of unprinted hearings on topics of interest. The committee chairperson holds final say over whether a certain hearing transcript will be published. The list of unprinted hearings from 1995 contains such titles as

Bosnia: Committee held hearings to examine the United States' overall goals and diplomatic strategy in Bosnia, ... Foreign Relations 19950608 Hearings also held on 6/9/95

Conventional Weapons Treaty: Committee concluded hearings on the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons, and two accompanying Protocols on Non-Detectable Fragments (Protocol I) and on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices (Protocol II) (Treaty Doc. 103-25), ... Foreign Relations 19950307

Crisis in Rwanda and Burundi: Senate Committee on Foreign Relations' Subcommittee on African Affairs concluded joint hearings with the House Committee on International Relations' Subcommittee on African Affairs to examine the current crisis situation in Rwanda and Burundi, ... Foreign Relations 19950405

GPO: Committee concluded oversight hearings to review activities of the Government Printing Office, focusing on cost savings and new information services, ... Printing 19950606

Hong Kong: Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs concluded hearings to examine United States' interests in the future economic and political stability of Hong Kong after it reverts to the jurisdiction of the People's Republic of China on July 1, 1997, ... Foreign Relations 19950606

These hearings should be available to the American public. Why they are not is a question our elected representatives should be asked to answer.

Does the same sad business of unprinted hearings exist in other Congresses? Very probably. An examination of the Daily Digest for 1993 has been begun which will provide further information on the matter.