

Researching Statutes 101



A statute is...

A law enacted by a legislative body

- ◆ Federal
- ◆ State
- ◆ Or other level (Ex/ territorial legislature, as in Puerto Rico)

Federal Statutes

- ◆ Enacted one at a time
- ◆ Each created as an individual entity known as a *Public Law* (P.L.)
- ◆ Published individually and numbered chronologically

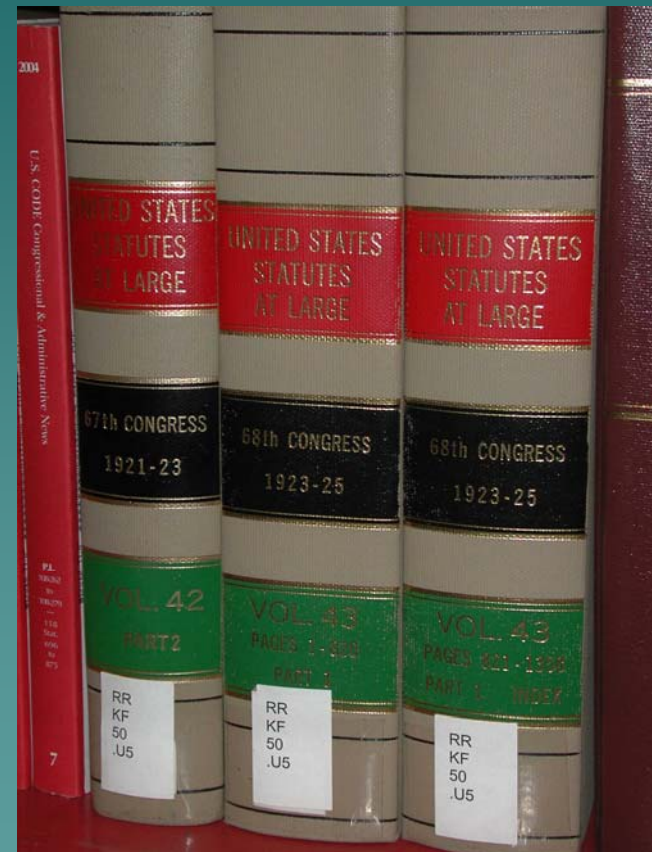
Ex/ P.L. 100-23 is the 23rd act passed by the 100th Congress

Publication – Finding Statutes

- ◆ Slip Laws – pamphlets
- ◆ United States Statutes at Large (Stat)
- ◆ U.S. Code, Congressional, and Administrative News (USSCAN)
- ◆ United States Code (U.S.C.)

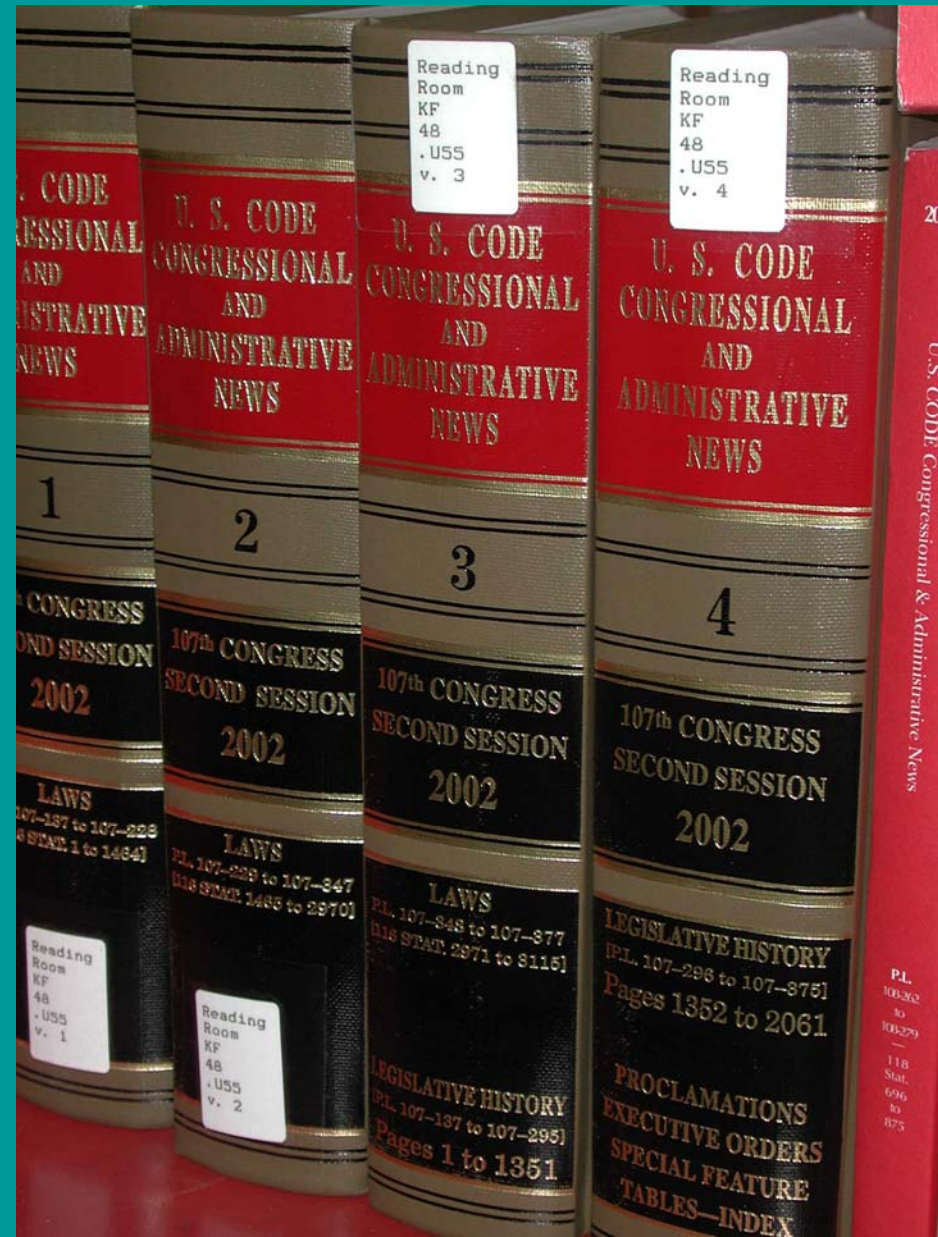
Statutes at Large

- ◆ If you know the year (1924) or Congressional Session (68th) in which it was enacted
- ◆ Go to the volume covering that year / Congress
- ◆ The laws enacted in that year are published in full text in numerical order
- ◆ Ex/ P.L. 100-23 - 100th Congress, Act number 23



USSCAN

- ◆ Individual statutes can also be found in a similar set entitled
- ◆ *Also contains some legislative history of the statutes (hearings, reports, etc.)*





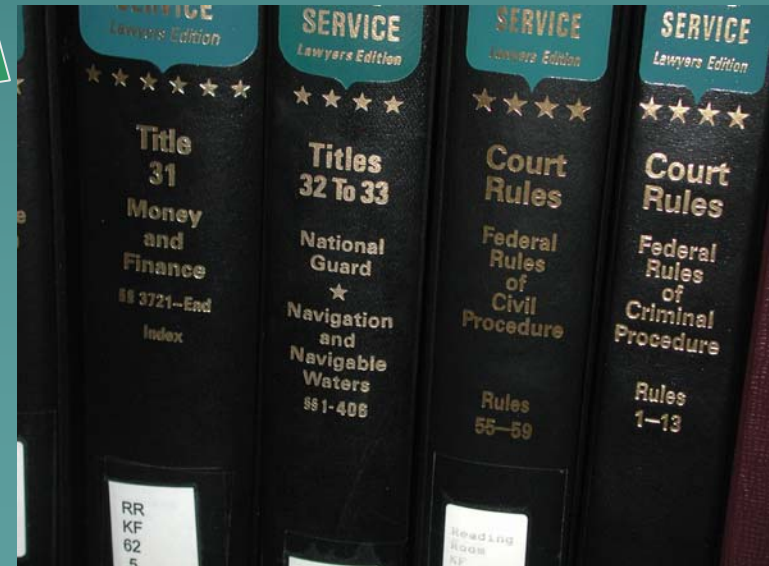
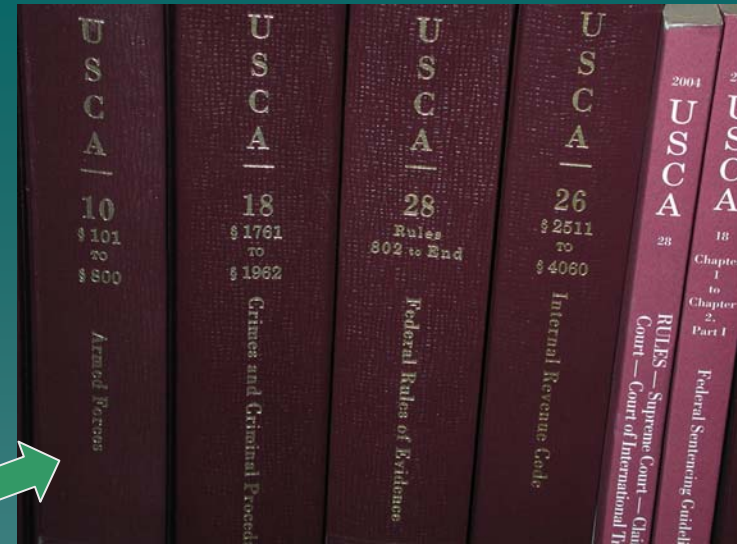
But what if I don't know the Congress or year of the statute? How would I find laws related to, for example, the Uranium Pew-36 Explosive Space modulator?

The United States Code

- ◆ Official source of US law
- ◆ Organized by subject
- ◆ Contains 50 subjects called *Titles*
 - Ex/ Title 8 – Immigration
(8 U.S.C. §1326 – Illegal Reentry after Deportation)

3 Codes

- ◆ *United States Code (U.S.C.)*
 - Official
- ◆ *United States Code Annotated (U.S.C.A.)*
 - West Publication
- ◆ *United States Code Service (U.S.C.S.)*
 - Lexis Publication
- ◆ The same numbering is used in all three sets.
- ◆ Ex/ Title 42, Section 1983:
 - 42 U.S.C. § 1983
 - 42 U.S.C.A. § 1983
 - 42 U.S.C.S. § 1983



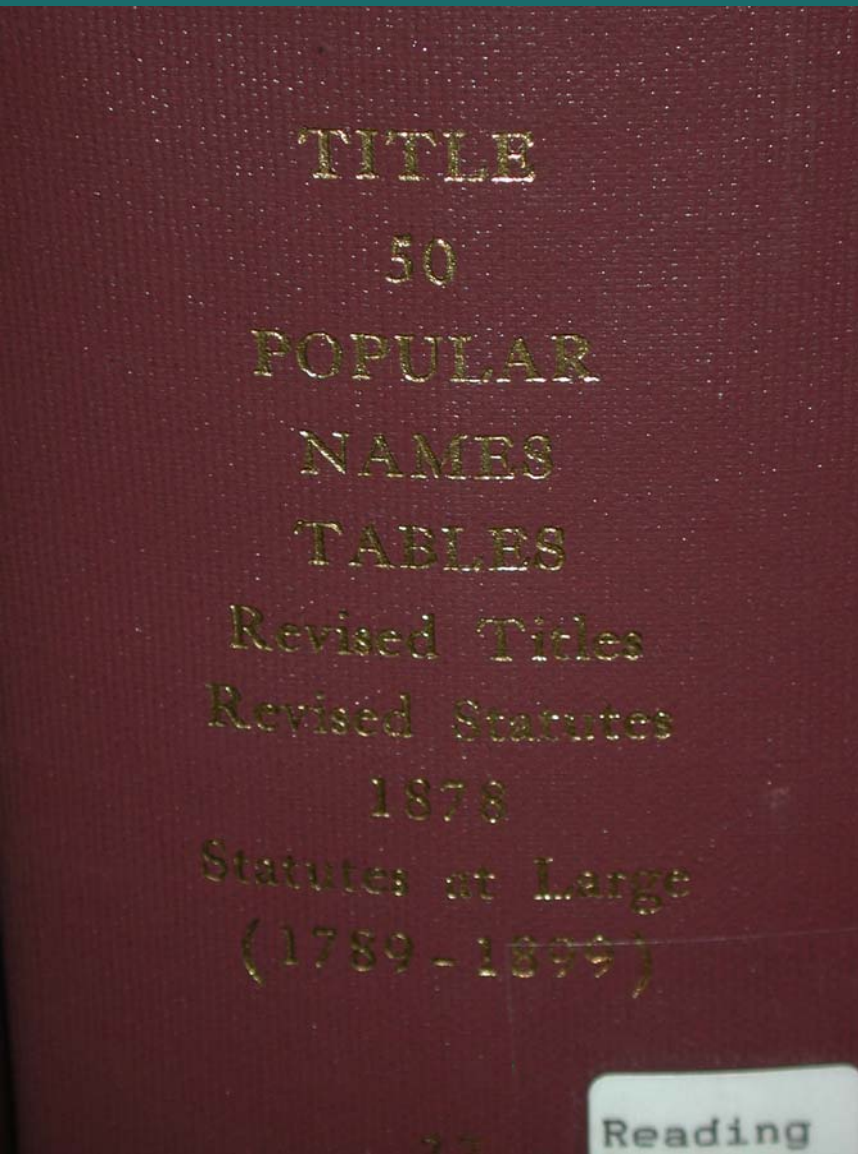
Advantages to U.S.C.A. and U.S.C.S.

- ◆ U.S.C.S. and U.S.C.A. are *annotated*
 - Contain very helpful references to cases, encyclopedia topics, and law review articles
- ◆ Published more frequently than U.S.C.
 - Kept current with Pocket Parts
 - U.S.C. published every 6 years
- ◆ They are much better indexed
 - Easier to find what you need

Code Index

- ◆ Find statutes on a particular subject
- ◆ Separately bound volumes at the end of the code set
- ◆ Look under any and all relevant terms
- ◆ Will provide title and section numbers
- ◆ Don't forget to check the pocket parts and/or supplements

Tables Volumes



- ◆ Use these to locate statutes by popular name (Ex/ "Brady Law")
- ◆ Use them to trace a public law (each section) to its location in a code
- ◆ Useful for finding where an older statutory section was placed after a code was re-organized or re-numbered