



A User's Guide to the *Congressional Record*

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Summary

The *Congressional Record* is a substantially verbatim account of remarks made during the proceedings of the House and Senate, subject only to technical, grammatical, and typographical corrections. It consists of four main sections: the proceedings of the House and Senate, the Extensions of Remarks, and the Daily Digest. This report is one of a series on the legislative process. For more information on the legislative process, please see <http://www.crs.gov/products/guides/guidehome.shtml>.

The daily *Record* sections are numbered separately and consecutively in each session of Congress. The pages of the House proceedings are preceded by an “H,” those of the Senate with an “S,” those of the Extensions of Remarks section with an “E,” and the Daily Digest with a “D.” The placement of Senate and House proceedings are usually alternated in the consecutive issues of the *Record*. There are no letter designations in the final, hardbound versions of the *Record*.

The Daily Digest is the key to use of the daily *Record*. It is the last section in each edition of the daily *Record* and serves as an index. By reading the Digest first, a reader can locate the times of meetings of both houses; measures reported, considered, or signed into law; and information on the previous and current days’ committee activities and schedules. At the beginning of each month, a resume of congressional activity is published. It contains cumulative, statistical information on the congressional session.

Senators and Representatives may have remarks and other extraneous material, not necessarily pertaining to legislation, printed in the *Record* without ever speaking or reading the text on the floor. In the House, Members may also revise their remarks by asking permission of the presiding officer to “revise and extend” (i.e., expand their statements). However, these remarks as well as any other undelivered speeches and insertions are distinguishable by a different type style.

The Extensions of Remarks portion of the *Record*, located after the House and Senate proceedings, but before the Daily Digest, contains the bulk of House undelivered remarks and other insertions, such as constituent tributes. On the back page of each daily *Record* is found a list of the Members who have remarks in the “Extensions” section.

The initial pages of the House and Senate proceedings contain an opening prayer and designations of the presiding officers. Then, typically, the House will turn to “one minute” speeches and the Senate to “morning business,” during which Members have the opportunity to speak on current events or other matters. Debate on bills and resolutions usually follows. Unanimous consent agreements, if any, are printed in the Senate proceedings; they guide when or how a measure will be considered. Rollcall or voice votes on amendments, passage, or tabling of measures are shown in the *Record*. For a rollcall vote, a list is printed indicating how Members voted. Information on the status of amendments adopted or rejected is easily obtained in the Daily Digest.

In the Senate, a bullet symbol (●) precedes and distinguishes undelivered remarks. Inserted Senate statements unrelated to pending business are usually printed near the end of Senate proceedings under the heading “Additional Statements.” In the House proceedings, any portion of a statement not spoken is printed in different type style. In the Senate, with unanimous consent, undelivered remarks are printed as if spoken.

The Senate and House portions of the *Record* list measures reported out of their committees, and thus, ready for floor consideration. Also, in Senate proceedings, is report and vote information on treaties and nominations from the Senate’s Executive Calendar. Printed separately in the *Record* portion for each house is a list of measures introduced, including original sponsors and the committees to which they were referred. Texts of Senate bills are printed upon request within the Senate proceedings, with the sponsor often giving a statement of introduction. The list of introduced House measures is printed at the end of its proceedings. Texts of House measures are rarely printed, and there are usually no statements of introduction.

Also published in the proceedings of each house are appointees to conference committees; messages from the House and Senate to each other; presidential messages; and petitions and memorials (i.e., messages from state and local governments calling for actions by Congress). The Senate prints the names of Members filing cloture motions, votes on such motions, notices of hearings, and requests for committees to meet beyond the ending time established in its rules.

Found in the last portion of the Senate proceedings are the announcements of the time and business for the next meeting as well as a list of any executive nominations. The last pages of the House proceedings usually include the granting of special orders and permission to submit Extensions of Remarks, the announcement of the costs of *Record* insertions exceeding two pages, statements on the time and agenda of the next House session, and the list of House measures introduced.

At the back of the *Record*, following the Extensions of Remarks, when space permits, are published the names and office numbers of each Member, committee rosters, officers of the House and Senate, and judges on the federal courts. The “Laws and Rules for Publishing the Congressional Record” are also often found on the back pages of the *Record*.

Indices to the *Record* are published periodically during a session of Congress and can also be found online with the full text of the *Record* at <http://www.congress.gov>. For more information, consult CRS Report 98-266, *Congressional Record: Its Production, Distribution, and Accessibility*.

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