NCSL Bill Information Service Quick Guide

Contents

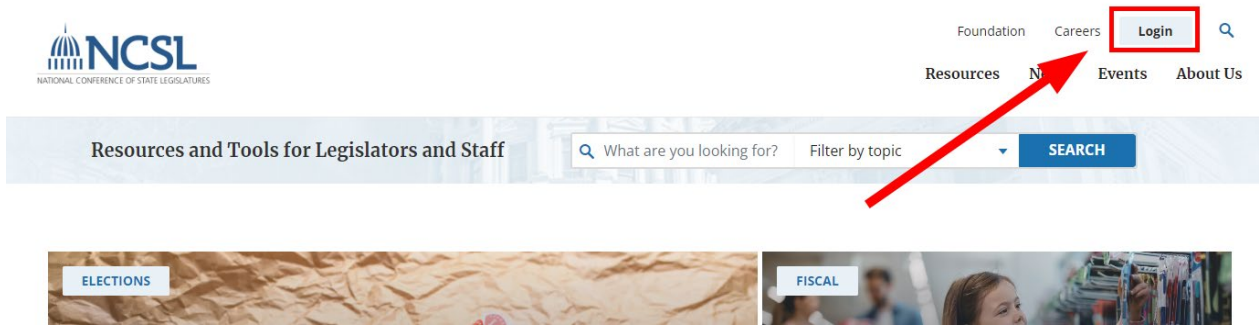# NCSL Bill Information Service Quick Guide

Overview

The BIS provides access to the full text of legislation in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands and the U.S. Congress for the current session as well as past sessions.

You can search for legislation by bill number, term or phrase, topic, committee, sponsor and location. The BIS also provides session statistics from all 50 states, access to state directories, session calendars, election information and ballot measures.
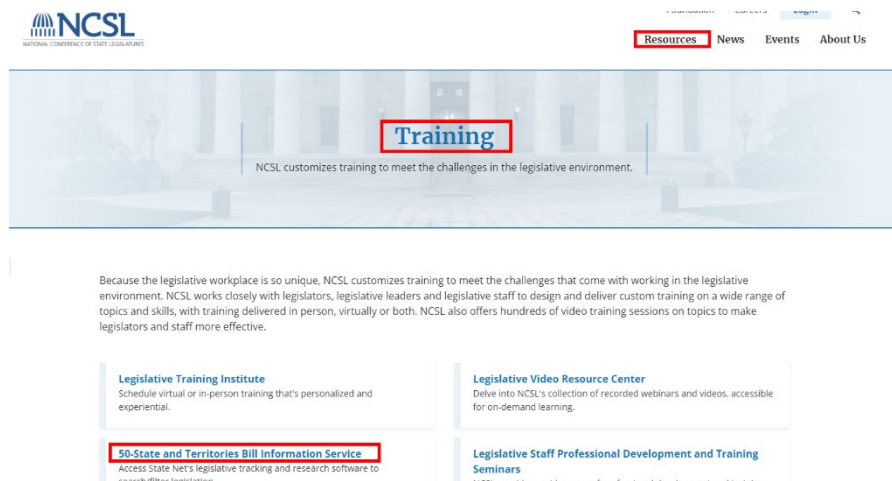
As a NCSL member, you are granted exclusive access to this service along with all state legislators and legislative staff.

Logging into the BIS

1. First, log in using the Login button located on the top right corner of the home page at www.ncsl.org.

2. Once logged in with your NCSL credentials, click on the Resources link located in the top right, and under the Training heading, select 50-State and Territories Bill Information Service.

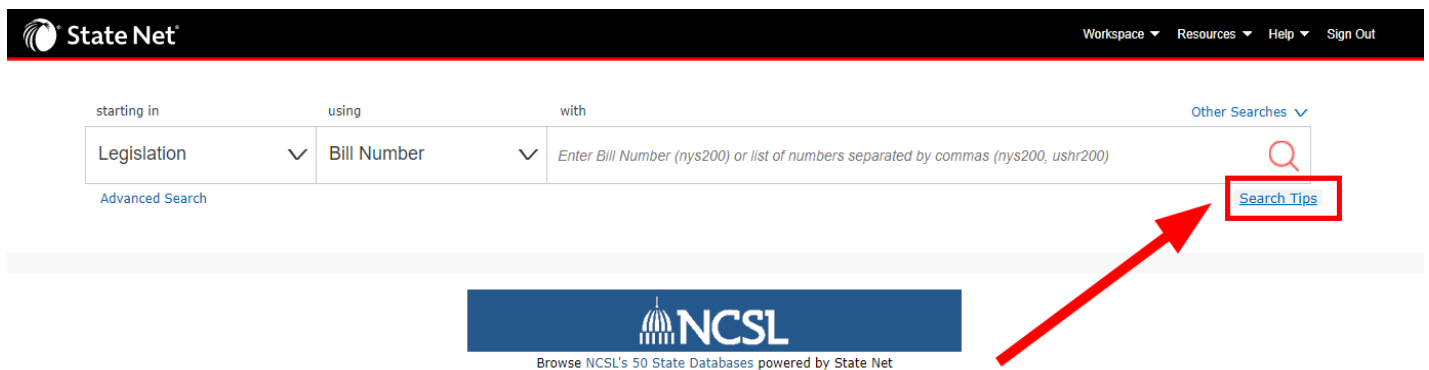3. From the BIS Overview page, click on the link for Access the BIS.

Resource

50-State and Territories Bill Information Service

March 09, 2021

Access the BIS
You must be registered on the NCSL website as a legislator or legislative staff.

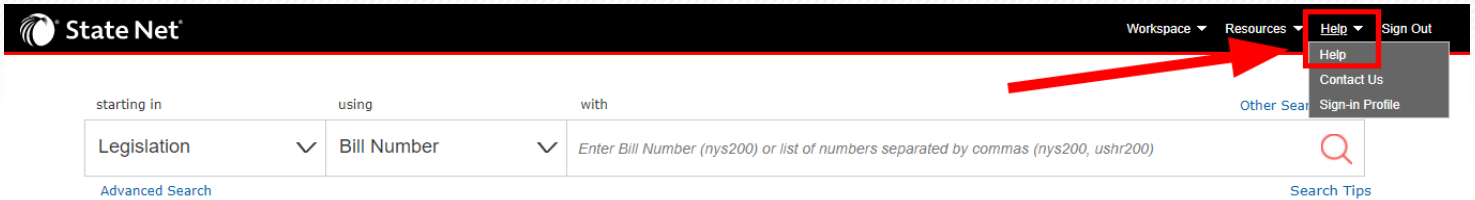## Search Tips

For help searching, click on Search Tips below the red magnifying glass icon in the global search bar. A list of Boolean connectors for searching by term or phrase can be found here.

State Net®   Workspace ▾   Resources ▾   Help ▾   Sign Out

starting in	using	with	Other Searches ∨
Legislation ∨	Bill Number ∨	Enter Bill Number (nys200) or list of numbers separated by commas (nys200, ushr200)	🔍
Advanced Search			Search Tips

NCSL
Browse NCSL's 50 State Databases powered by State Net

Additional instructions are available by opening the Help dropdown menu located in the black bar at the top right side of the homepage. State Net provides a number of help articles on Using State Net for more detailed instructions.
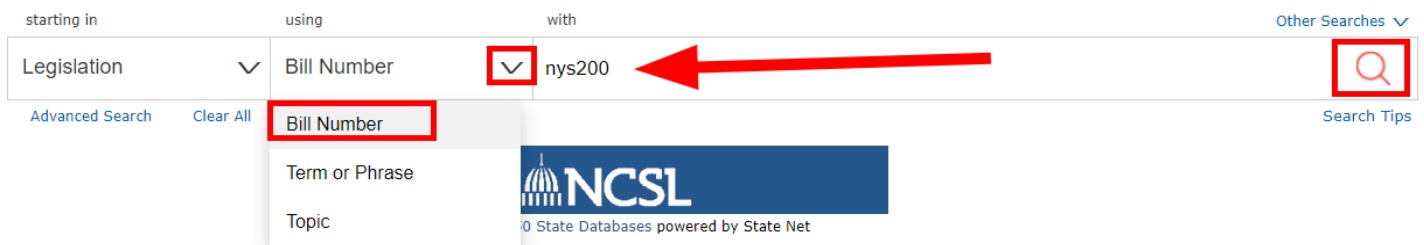
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From any page in the BIS, click on the State Net logo at the top left of the page to return to the main search screen at any time.

Search by Bill Number

In the global search bar across the top of the page, click on the "using" dropdown so that Bill Number is selected. In the search box to the right, enter the postal abbreviation for the state and a single uppercase or lowercase letter to denote the chamber (with no spaces in between), followed by the bill number. Example: "nys200" for New York Senate Bill No. 200. To run your search, press enter (or click the red magnifying glass icon). For more information on bill number formatting, including how to search special sessions, executive orders or ballot measures visit this help page.

Additional Advanced Search Options

1. **Archived and Other Bill Types:** Click the Advanced Search link under the global search bar and select the option for Include archived records to search bills from previous sessions. Alternatively, select the option for Include all legislative types to search other bill types.

NCSL Bill Information Service Quick Guide

Legislation by Bill Number

Enter Bill Number (nys200) or list of numbers separated by

nys200

☐ Include archived records
☐ Include all legislative types

Display
⦿ Basic
○ Comprehensive
○ Index
○ Table (2 columns)
○ Table (3 columns)

2. **Set Display/Output/Sort:** In the Advanced Search options, you can select various options to determine the scope of the information, output format, and sort order for your results. Outputs include HTML, plain text, Word, and spreadsheet.

To run the advanced search, enter your search criteria in the search box at the top, and press enter (or click the "Search" button at the bottom of the page).

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Legislation by Bill Number

Enter Bill Number (nys200) or list of numbers separated by commas (nys200, ushr200)

nys200

☐ Include archived records
☑ Include all legislative types

Display
◉ Basic
○ Comprehensive
○ Index
○ Table (2 columns)
○ Table (3 columns)
○ Create New Display

☑ Include client information

Output format
◉ HTML
○ Plain text
○ MS Word
○ Spreadsheet (.csv)

Sort by
◉ Entry order
○ Bill order
☑ Include status entered today

Search

Search by Author or Sponsor

To the right of the global search bar at the top of the main page, click Other Searches and select Bills by Author from the dropdown to search by legislators, committees or others.

starting in	using	with	Other Searches ⌄
Legislation ⌄	Bill Number ⌄	Enter Bill Number (nys200) or list of numbers separated by commas (nys200, ushr200)	Bills by Author
			Bills by Location
			State Directories
			Votes
			Voter Scorecard

Advanced Search

NCSL
Browse NCSL's 50 State Databases powered by State Net

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Select the state, followed by, 1) the legislator or committee; 2) select the version or current disposition; 3) display and output formats from the available options. Once you've entered your search criteria, click Search at the bottom of the page to run the search.

Legislation by Author

State *
AK

Author Type
- ● Legislator
- ○ Committee
- ○ Other

Author
Legislator

House		Senate
Carpenter	-or-	none selected

Start date   **End date**

(leave blank to search from beginning of session through today)

Search Type		**Current Disposition**
All	- or -	None

Display
- ● Basic
- ○ Comprehensive
- ○ Index
- ○ Table
- ○ Create New Display...

☑ Include client information

Output format
- ● HTML
- ○ Plain text
- ○ MS Word
- ○ Spreadsheet (.csv)

Advanced Options

Search ⬅️

Search by Term or Phrase

In the global search bar across the top of the main page, click on the "using" dropdown to select the option for Term or Phrase. In the search box to the right, enter the term or phrase (examples: insurance or automobile insurance). To run your search, press enter (or click the red magnifying glass icon).

Term or Phrase Boolean Operators & Connectors

A list of Boolean connectors for searching by term or phrase can be found by clicking Search Tips under the red magnifying glass icon. Additionally, there are examples of how to use connectors in the table below.

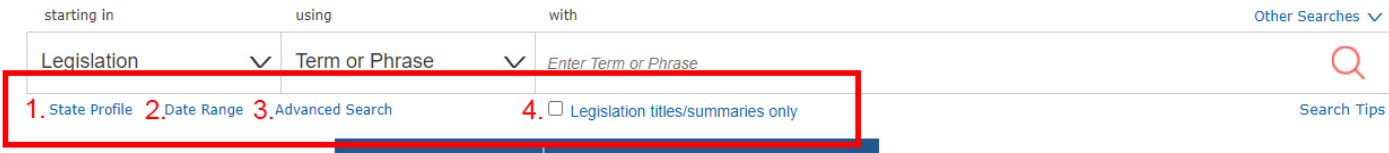| STATE NET TERMS	MEANING / EXAMPLE
and	Narrows search e.g., waste and toxic—retrieves all bill text in which both waste AND toxic occur
or	Broadens search e.g., doctor OR physician OR medical provider—retrieves all bill text in which any of these terms/phrases occur
?	Wildcard (any single character) e.g., wom?n = women or woman
$	Truncation—Finds variant endings e.g., acqui$ finds acquire, acquisition, acquired, etc.
near	Finds all bill text in which the words occur near each other, but in any order e.g., "physician near approved" finds "physician approved" or "approved physician"; "gender NEAR neutral" finds "gender neutral" or "neutral as to gender" *(note in the last example that common words are not searched: of, the, and, or, by, etc.)*
near#	Use a number to specify how many words e.g., sex NEAR2 offender finds "sex offender" and "sexually violent offender"
adj	Finds all bill text in which the first word immediately precedes the second word e.g., controlled ADJ substance finds "controlled substance" but not "substance controlled"
with	Finds all bill text in which the words occur within the same **sentence** e.g., tenant WITH lease
same	Finds all bill text in which the words occur within the same **paragraph** e.g., Internet SAME fraud

not	Finds all bill text in which "waste" appears but not with "high level" e.g., waste NOT high level *(use with caution--may eliminate relevant bills)*

Other Tips

- When using **periods**, surround the letters in quotes:
  - Example: ".08" or "T.A.N.F."
- Use **parentheses** to separate concepts when using connectors:
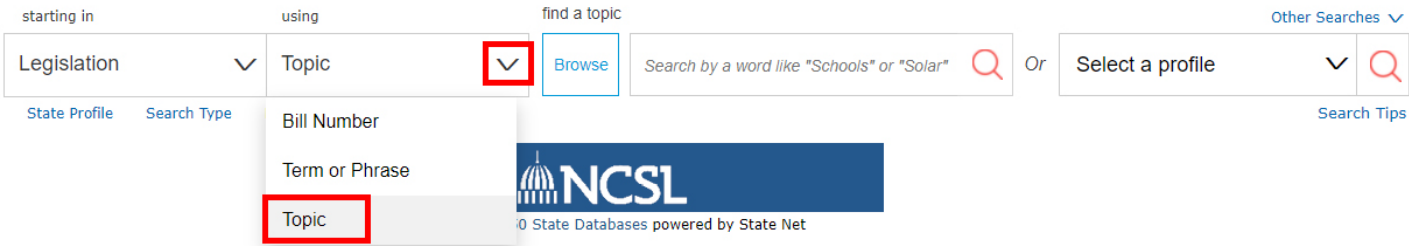 - Example: (security or data) SAME (breach or compromise$).

Found below the global search bar, the following options are available to narrow the focus of your term or phrase search:

1. **State Profile:** Click and select individual states, or a combination of states, D.C. and Congress.
2. **Date Range:** Click and select the search's start date.
3. **Advanced Search:** Click and create, save and run searches, search archived legislation or other search options.
4. **Legislation Title/Summaries Only:** Check this box to limit your search to words in the title or bill summary.

Search by Topic

In the global search bar across the top of the main page, click on the "using" dropdown to select Topic. Additional topic search functions will appear to the right where you can browse or search the various topics. Topic searches are crafted by Lexis Nexis State Net and can be an alternative to crafting your own term search. You can also combine multiple sub topics or add a major topic to your search to collectively run all sub-topic searches.
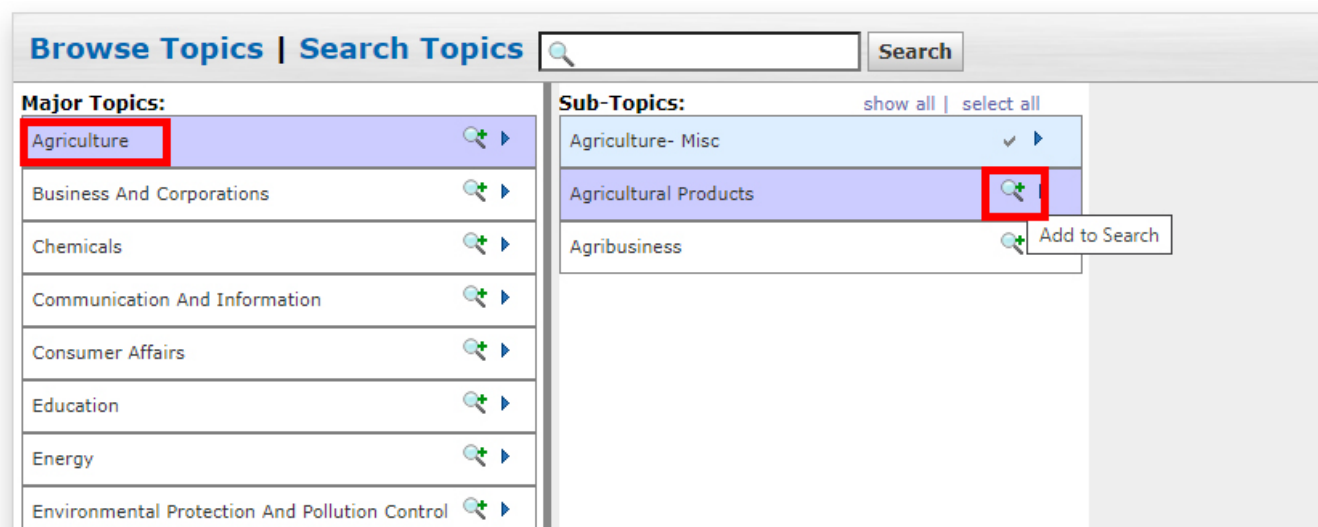
Browsing Topics

Click Browse to browse or search the list of topics. Click on the magnifying glass icon to the right of each topic you want to include in your search. Click on the name of the topic to see additional sub-topics that can also be added to your search.

Topics you've selected to include in your search will show a gray check mark to the right of the topic (instead of the magnifying glass icon). To review your selected topics, in the Actions pane on the right, you'll find a list of all of the selected topics below the search button. If you need to remove any from the search criteria, click on the gray "x" button.

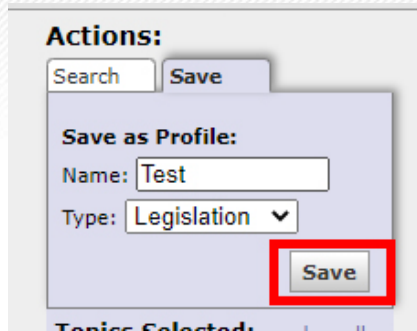 Add topic to search   Topic is selected for search   Remove topic from search

To run your search, click the Search button in the Actions pane on the right.

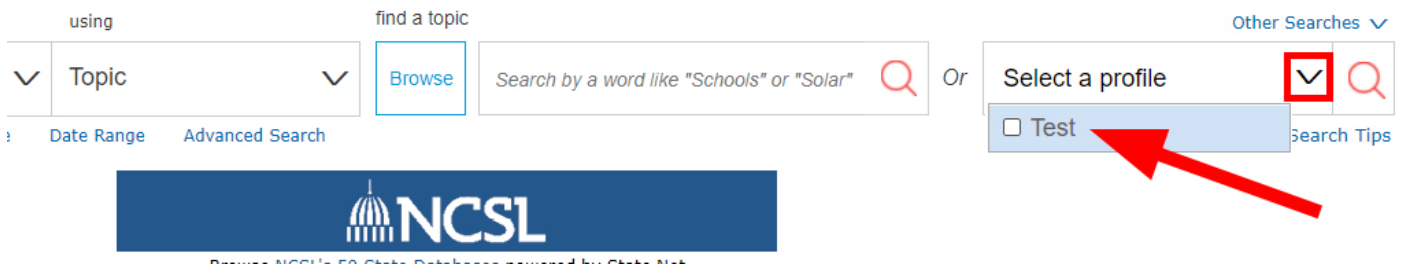## Saving a Browsed Topic Search

You can also save your search profile by clicking on the Save tab in the Actions pane on the right. Enter a name and type of the profile and click Save.
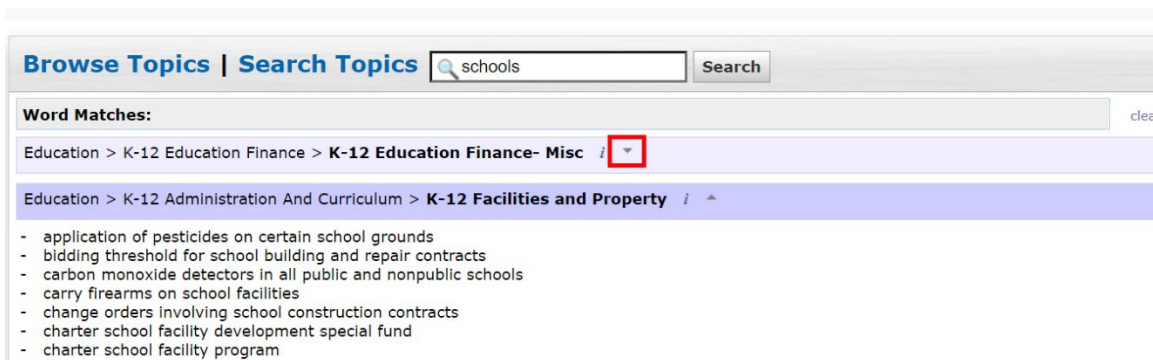
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To load this search again, select the search name from the Select a Profile dropdown in the global search bar when searching by topic.

Searching Topics

Type in a specific search term or phrase in the box to the right of the Browse link and press enter (or click the red magnifying glass icon) to run your search. In the search results, click on the down arrow to the right of the result to expand the list of relevant terms included in the topic search. The listed terms displayed will only be those relevant to your search term and are not comprehensive of all terms included in the State Net topic search.
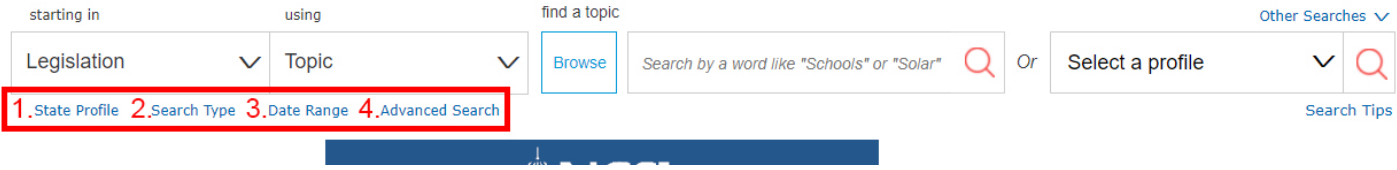
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i Hover your mouse over this icon next to each keyword to see a definition of what each topic search encompasses. This definition describes what the algorithm powering each topic search includes. This icon can be found by browsing or searching topics.
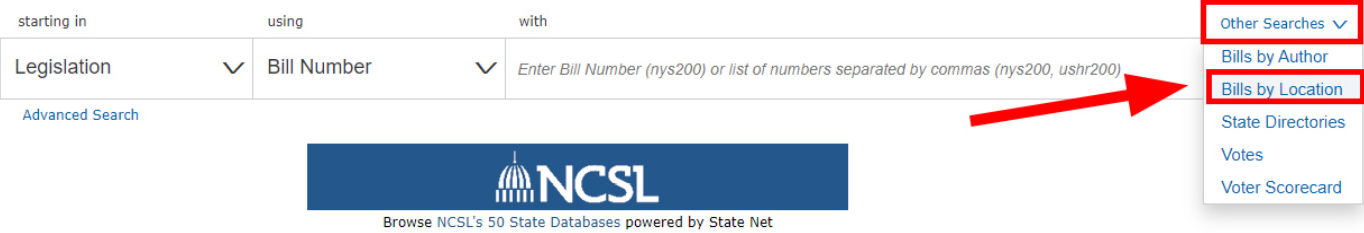
The following options are available to narrow the focus of your search:

1. **State Profile:** Click and select individual states, or a combination or states, D.C. and Congress.
2. **Search Type:** Click and select specific search types or dispositions.
3. **Date Range:** Click and select the search's start date.
4. **Advanced Search:** Click and create, save and run searches, archives legislation or other options.

Search by Bill Location

To the right of the global search bar, click on the Other Searches dropdown and select Bills by Location.

Select a specific state from the Search State dropdown and select the specific location in the box below. To select multiple locations, hold down the Ctrl button on the keyboard when clicking on the various locations. Select additional display and output options or click Advanced Options to see more search options. Click Search at the bottom to run the search.

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Legislation by Location

Search State *
AK

Select location:
Adopted
Ballot Measure
Became Law Without Governor's Signature
Chaptered

Display
◉ Basic
○ Comprehensive
○ Index
○ Table
○ Create New Display...

☑ Include client information

Output format
◉ HTML
○ Plain text
○ MS Word
○ Spreadsheet (.csv)

Advanced Options

Search