

## Legislation and Legislative Histories J 230

**BACKGROUND:** Legislation consists of texts of individual laws of jurisdictions and also compilations of such laws. Compilations may be general (e.g., the United States code); organized around a topic (e.g., a jurisdiction's laws related to business); or session laws, which are laws enacted by a legislature during a particular session or sessions.

Legislative histories are collections of the texts of committee hearings, reports, floor debates, etc., leading up to the enactment of a law. Legislative histories are important for determining the legislative intent of a particular statute.

This instruction sheet provides guidelines on the assignment of genre/form terms to legislation and legislative histories.

**1. General rule.** Assign terms in accordance with J 110 and the special provisions below.

### **2. Legislation.**

**a. Texts of legislation.** Assign the term **Statutes and codes** to texts of individual laws and to general or topical codes and compilations of laws passed by a legislature. *Examples:*

*Title:* The patient protection and affordable care act.  
*[individual law]*

*Title:* The code of Virginia.  
*[general code]*

*Title:* Compilation of laws relating to American agriculture.  
*[topical code]*

If the resource consists of a more specific type of legislation, assign a more specific term.  
*Examples:*

*Title:* City of Des Plaines zoning ordinance.  
*Term:* Municipal ordinances.

**2. Legislation.**

**a. Texts of legislation. (Continued)**

*Title:* Acts and laws, passed by the legislature of the state of Vermont :  
at their session at Manchester, the second Thursday of October,  
1788.

*Term:* Session laws.  
[monograph record]

*Title:* Laws passed by the ... General Assembly of the state of Illinois at  
their ... session ...

*Term:* Session laws.  
[serial record]

**b. Commentaries with the text of legislation.** Assign the term **Law commentaries** to a resource that contains a commentary and the text of the legislation. Also assign a genre/form term describing the text of the legislation (see sec. 2.a above) if the law is difficult to find and/or when the entire text of the law is presented separately from the commentary.

**3. Legislative histories.** Assign the term **Legislative histories** to a resource containing one or more legislative histories. *Examples:*

*Title:* American landmark legislation: primary materials.

*Title:* Black Lung Benefits Reform Act : a chronology of legislative actions.