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:

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

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