

Researching the Law: Finding Cases and Judicial Documents

Part 2 – An Introduction to Judicial Dockets, Oral Argument, and Court Records and Briefs

Court Dockets, Records, and Briefs

Commercial and Government Resources

U.S. Supreme Court Website | <https://www.supremecourt.gov/>

United States Supreme Court Docket | www.supremecourt.gov/docket/docket.aspx. Docket sheets, full text of opinions, oral argument transcripts and audio files, briefs (decided 2017 and later), and information on the Supreme Court and Justices.

PACER | <https://www.pacer.gov/>

Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) is a fee-based electronic public access service that allows users to obtain case and docket information online from federal appellate, district, and bankruptcy courts, and the PACER Case Locator [<https://www.pacer.gov/>]. Individual registration is required.

- [Search the PACER Case Locator](#) (registration required)
- [Search Individual Court Websites](#)
- [PACER Video Training Site](#)

RECAP and CourtListener's RECAP Archive

RECAP (<https://free.law/recap/>) is a free extension for Firefox or Chrome, used to capture PACER records from U.S. Federal District and Bankruptcy Courts and help build a free and open repository of public court records.

- **CourtListener's RECAP Archive** [<https://www.courtlistener.com/recap/>] is a searchable database of uploaded PACER documents.
- Learn more: <https://free.law/mission/>

Making of Modern Law: U.S. Supreme Court Briefs (1832 - 1978) | [[proxied link](#)]

Making of Modern Law: U.S. Supreme Court Briefs is a fully searchable database of approximately 11 million pages and more than 350,000 separate documents (records and briefs) in the period 1832-1978. Approximately 150,000 Supreme Court cases are featured, the majority consisting of those for which the Court did not give a full opinion.

ProQuest Supreme Court Insight (1975-2017) | [[proxied link](#)]

Supreme Court Insight, 1975-2017, is a complete online collection of full opinions from Supreme Court argued cases, including per decision, dockets, oral arguments, joint appendices and amicus briefs. Content associated with each case is compiled on a dynamic page organized to facilitate understanding of the judicial process, and is also retrievable on a document by document basis. This module covers content from the 1975/1976 Term through the 2016/2017 Term. [<https://libraries.indiana.edu/proquest-supreme-court-insight>] (Research guidance, see <https://proquest.libguides.com/supremecourtinsight/tips>).

NexisUni | [[proxied link](#)]

NexisUni: Contains amicus and merits briefs for cases granted certiorari and joint appendices. Covers 1979 to present (with selected earlier documents from 1936 to present).

U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of the Solicitor General | <https://www.justice.gov/osg/supreme-court-briefs>

U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of the Solicitor General – Contains petitions for writ of certiorari and briefs filed by the Solicitor General, including briefs at the petition response stage, merits stage, and amicus briefs. Covers 1985 to present.

SCOTUSblog | <https://www.scotusblog.com/case-files/terms/>

SCOTUSblog contains briefs in cases granted certiorari. Covers 2007 to present. Locate the page for a particular case by searching the blog by party names or docket number.

Legal Research Databases

Bloomberg Law

Case and docket information from federal appellate, district, and bankruptcy courts. Unrestricted search and alert capabilities for court dockets and filings. Dockets Overview (www.bna.com/dockets-overview/). Breaking Complaints (for litigation relevant to business and finance), overview (www.bna.com/breaking-complaints-overview/).

Lexis Advance

Coverage: U.S. Supreme Court briefs, earliest brief dated August 12, 1936 through current; United States Courts of Appeals Briefs & District Court Briefs, earliest brief dated 2000 through current; state court briefs, earliest briefs dated 2000 through current.

- **“Dockets”** gives you the docket sheet, without links to the underlying filings.
- **“Briefs, Pleadings and Motions”** contains Federal and State Briefs, Motions, Pleadings and other court filings, spanning a collection of more than 28 million documents. Provides access to PDFs of the documents. Advanced Search: use document segments/fields to search by name, number, court, citation, attorney, judge, etc.

Westlaw

Coverage: U.S. Supreme Court briefs, begins with 1930; United States Courts of Appeals Briefs & District Court Briefs, earliest briefs dated from 1972; coverage varies by circuit with start dates from 1972-2000; state court briefs, earliest briefs dated from around 2000 for most states.

- **Dockets:** “All Dockets Combined” contains docket information on cases filed in State Courts, U.S. District Courts, U.S. Courts of Appeal, U.S. Bankruptcy Courts and the U.S. Supreme Court.
- **“Briefs”** contains selected briefs from the U.S. Supreme Court, Courts of Appeals, Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, U.S. Tax Court, 51 state courts and the District of Columbia. Selected Petitions for Writ of Certiorari are also included.
- **“Trial Transcripts & Oral Arguments”** is a multibase of transcripts of selected oral arguments and trials. The oral arguments were heard in the various state and federal courts.
- **Dockets and court documents are also accessible from the “Filings” tab of a case.** From the case, click on the “Filings” tab > View Appellate Court Documents, Trial Court Documents, Dockets, or All Results.

Paper and Microfiche

Paper Briefs

- **“Records and Briefs of the United States Supreme Court.”** 1925— . The Jerome Hall Law Library is one of ten repositories of U.S. Supreme Court Records and Briefs.
- **“Records and briefs of the United States Court of Appeals (7th Circuit)”** (1982 to 2000)
- **“Indiana Supreme Court briefs”** (1938 to present)
- **“Indiana Court of Appeals briefs”** (1980 to present)
- Use [IUCAT](#) to retrieve paper briefs from the Bloomington Auxiliary Library Facility (B-ALF).

Briefs in Microfiche

- U.S. Supreme Court, and the 2nd, 7th, 9th, and D.C. Circuit Courts of Appeals
- [Microforms Finding List](#) includes holdings and location information

Oral Argument

The Oyez Project | <https://www.oyez.org/>

Oyez is a multimedia archive providing a complete and authoritative source for all of the Court’s audio since the installation of a recording system in October 1955.

- Offers transcript-synchronized and searchable audio, plain-English case summaries, illustrated decision information, and opinions.
- Click on “Cases” and then the particular case name to access a synopsis and a link to the oral argument.

General Information

Court Records | <https://www.uscourts.gov/court-records>

Information on Locating case files and court records.

Federal Records Centers, Locations | <https://www.archives.gov/frc/locations>

Most cases created before 1999 are maintained in paper format only. Access paper case files from the court, where the case was filed, or at one of the Federal Records Centers (FRCs). Contact the court where the case was filed for more information. When court records and case files are eligible for permanent preservation, they are transferred to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) for storage and preservation. These records can be accessed directly from NARA. (<http://www.archives.gov/research/>)

Glossary of Supreme Court Terms | <https://www.scotusblog.com/reference/educational-resources/glossary-of-legal-terms/>