

Subj: **NVC 112612 Thomas is Replaced**
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News, Views, and Clues

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Thomas is Replaced

For years we have used the Library of Congress “Thomas” data base to find legislation: historic, pending and current. “Thomas” has been replaced with www.congress.gov which promises to be easier to navigate. See the Washington Post article below that Lynn found that explains the changes. Take a look and add it to your Favorites.

Congress.gov launches; THOMAS legislative database gets a face lift

By [Emi Kolawole](#)

This post has been updated.

If you have ever looked for legislation online, you’ve likely encountered the [THOMAS](#) database and, well, groaned.

The database, a vestige of Web 1.0 in many ways, went live in January 1995 with just three weeks between the time the database was requested by the 104th Congress and its launch.

But all of that changed Wednesday when the Library of Congress, in conjunction with the Senate, House of Representatives and Government Printing Office, announced the launch of [Congress.gov](#).

The new Congress.gov has a number of updated features for easier access to legislative data.

The new site is currently in beta, where it is expected to stay for roughly a year. It was created in-house using the open-source SOLR search platform. Deputy Library of Congress Robert Dizard Jr. led the project.

Meetings to determine the scope and layout started last October, and development began in January. The site shows a bill’s status and includes common-sense, SEO-friendly, permanent URLs.

The new site also offers instructional videos on the legislative process:

“The team has been excited for an entire year,” Library of Congress web services chief Jim Karamanis said Wednesday.

The overhaul was funded within the regular operating budget. “There’s not really a way to put a number on it,” said Karamanis when asked how much the redesign cost. “This is us doing our job.”

According to Karamanis, the Congressional leadership has seen the site and has “been very supportive” of its development.

The new site also allows for faceted searches, meaning users can drill down by Congressional session number,

source, chamber, legislation type and subject, among other searches. And the pages employ a device-independent design — they expand and contract based on screen size. That's a boon for the growing population of mobile users.

The Library is also eager for comments, offering a feedback button on every page, alongside the social media sharing feature.

"The new, more robust platform reaffirms the 21st century Congress's vision of a vital legislative information resource for all Americans," Librarian of Congress James H. Billington said in a statement Wednesday.

Available on the site as of today: bill text, bill summary and status for the 107th Congress through the 112th Congress. By the end of the year, bill summaries and status from the 93rd Congress and bill text from the 103rd to the present are scheduled to be added. The Congressional Record and Index, House and Senate calendars, congressional reports, committee landing pages, nominations, treaties and executive communications will all be added before the end of the beta phase.

Update 2:35 p.m.: Noted information architect [Peter Morville](#), a paid consultant responsible for the high-level information architecture of the updated Congress.gov Web site, had this to say about the launch:

"It was an honor to work on the information architecture of the Congress.gov Web site. As an information architect, I felt a real sense of responsibility to make it easier for people to discover and learn about our nation's legislative information. During the project, we worked hard to make search better and faster. It was a tremendous multi-disciplinary team effort. I'm excited to see that the beta version has successfully launched

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Keep up the good work. Let me know when we can help.

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