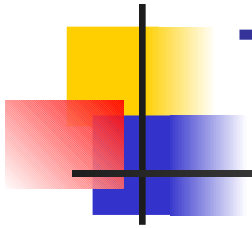
Beyond Transparency:
New Standards for Legislative Information Systems

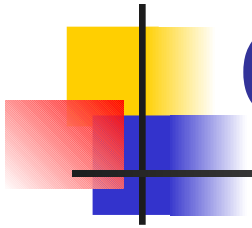
Jeffrey C. Griffith

Senior Advisor, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament



Topics

- Origins
- Proposed Criteria
- Research Findings
- Plugging the Gaps
- Why It Matters



Origins

- What's a "legislative information system"?
- Who makes them?
- Who uses them?
- Who cares about them?

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- The Supreme Court
- The Legislative Process
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- U.S. Constitution
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- More historical documents

Features

Publishing the Declaration of Independence
Speaker: Robin Shields
Running Time: 27 min.

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Focus

- Focus – all

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Articles

Vodka war may soon be at an end

Consumers - 18-06-2007 - 11:46

How do you like your vodka? A question barstaff the world over may ask, but for the last few years this question has divided EU producers. Traditional producers say "vodka" is distilled from cereals or potatoes (some also accept sugar beet molasses). Currently in Europe vodka is also made from grapes and fruit. Now, after lengthy negotiations, MEPs will look at a compromise proposal on updating EU spirits legislation and in particular the definition of vodka

Read more»

June 18-21 plenary session: pensions, EU Summit, postal services

Institutions - 18-06-2007 - 08:00

The June Plenary session of the European Parliament sees MEPs discuss pension rights, debate a report on the "Equitable Life" pension crash and consider whether the EU should ban cat and dog fur. The definition of what exactly constitutes vodka will also be considered. You can watch all the debates and votes from Strasbourg live on the Parliament's website. The EP will also return to the situation in the Middle East, adopting a formal position, and discuss the outcome of the recent G-8 summit.

Read more»

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Website highlights

Act of Union 1707
Visit Parliament's site marking the 300th anniversary of the Act of Union with Scotland

eConsultation
Take part in our eConsultation on Local Government and the Draft Climate Change Bill

Abolition of the Slave Trade
Visit Parliament's site marking the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade

Interview with the Clerk of the Parliaments
The Clerk of the Parliaments discusses his role and responsibilities

Quick links

House of Commons
Read daily news, track committees and learn about the work of MPs

House of Lords
Today's business, committee news and role of the second chamber

Today's business

Mental Health
The Commons will debate the remaining stages of the Mental Health Bill

Greater London Authority

Latest news

New Research Papers
Recent Commons Library research papers for 2007 include:
Sustainable Communities Bill: committee stage report
- 12 July 2007

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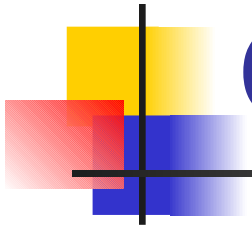


Origins

- What's a "legislative information system"?
- Who makes them?
- Who uses them?
- Who cares about them?

Origins – (continued)

- Creation of THOMAS for the public
  - Change in House majority
  - Decision by the new Speaker
  - Quality of first system
  - Reaction of the public

Origins – (continued)

- Conclusions from U.S. Experience
  - Transparency necessary but not sufficient
  - Additional standards had to be met:
    - Accuracy
    - Timeliness
    - Completeness
    - Clarity
    - Context

Proposed Criteria

- Accuracy. Is document correct? Is it the correct document? How are errors detected and corrected?
- Timeliness. Within hours? Same day? Next day? What is required? Effect on accuracy.
- Completeness. Everything that is relevant. And can it be found?

Proposed Criteria -- (continued)

- Clarity. Is document clear or explained? Is the process explained? Do timeliness and clarity conflict?
- Context. Can the user understand the purpose and context of the proposal and its possible effect on policy? Is the legislative context explained? Should we include the arguments for and against?

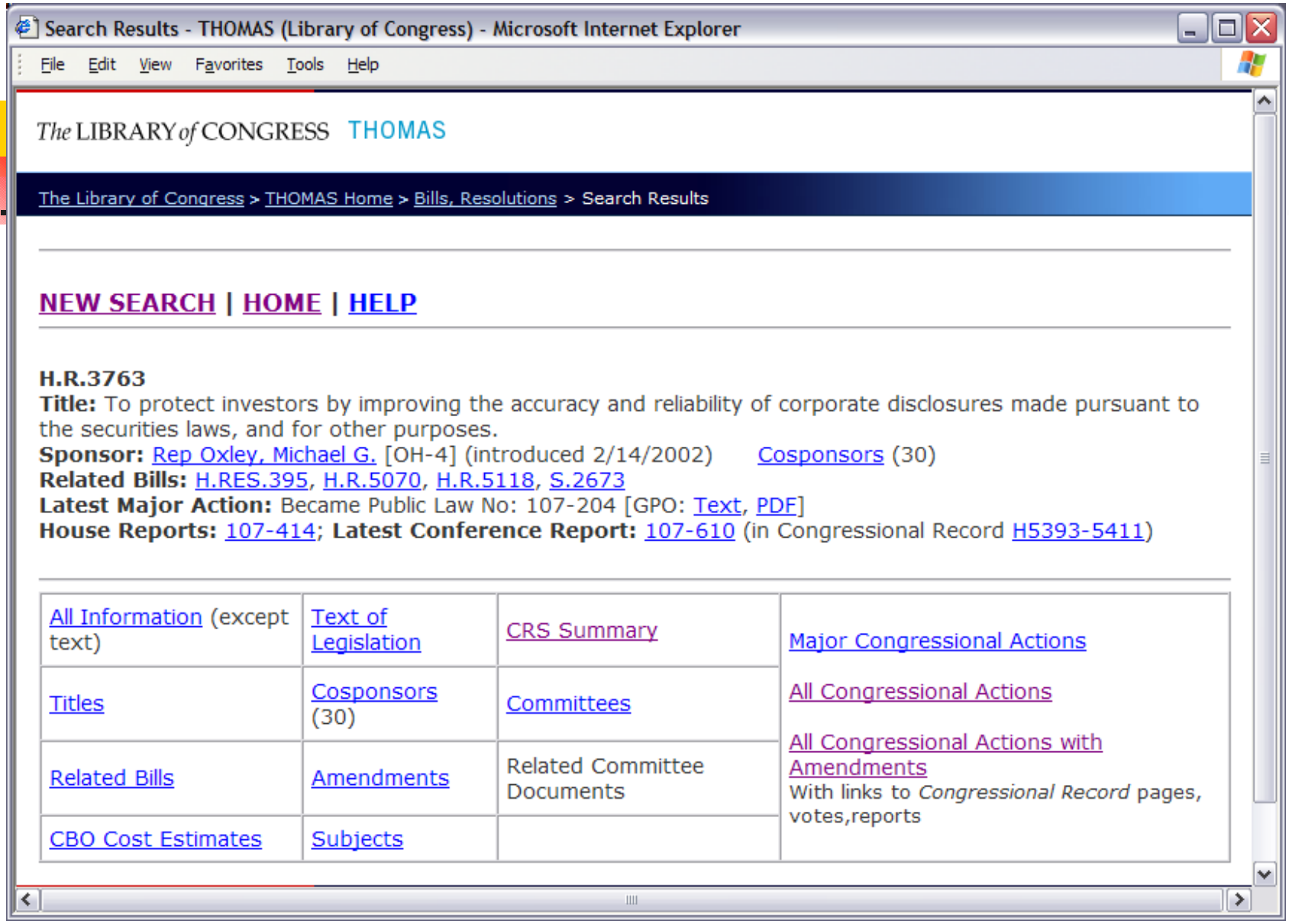
Research Findings

- A comparative study
  - European Parliament
  - U.S. Congress
- Observer for five months
- Search for best practices
- Views from other parliaments:
  - House of Commons
  - Tweede Kamer

Research Findings: Summary

- Accuracy – Very good (+8)
- Timeliness – Good (+7)
- Completeness – Acceptable (+5); need better integration of related information/documents
- Clarity – Acceptable (+5); needs to be more timely
- Context – More work to be done

….we need more objective metrics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H.R.3763
Title: To protect investors by improving the accuracy and reliability of corporate disclosures made pursuant to the securities laws, and for other purposes.
Sponsor: Rep Oxley, Michael G. [OH-4] (introduced 2/14/2002) Cosponsors (30)
Related Bills: H.RES.395, H.R.5070, H.R.5118, S.2673
Latest Major Action: Became Public Law No: 107-204 [GPO: Text, PDF]
House Reports: 107-414; Latest Conference Report: 107-610 (in Congressional Record H5393-5411)
All Information (except text)
Text of Legislation
CRS Summary
Major Congressional Actions
Titles
Cosponsors (30)
Committees
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Related Bills
Amendments
Related Committee Documents
All Congressional Actions with Amendments
With links to Congressional Record pages, votes,reports
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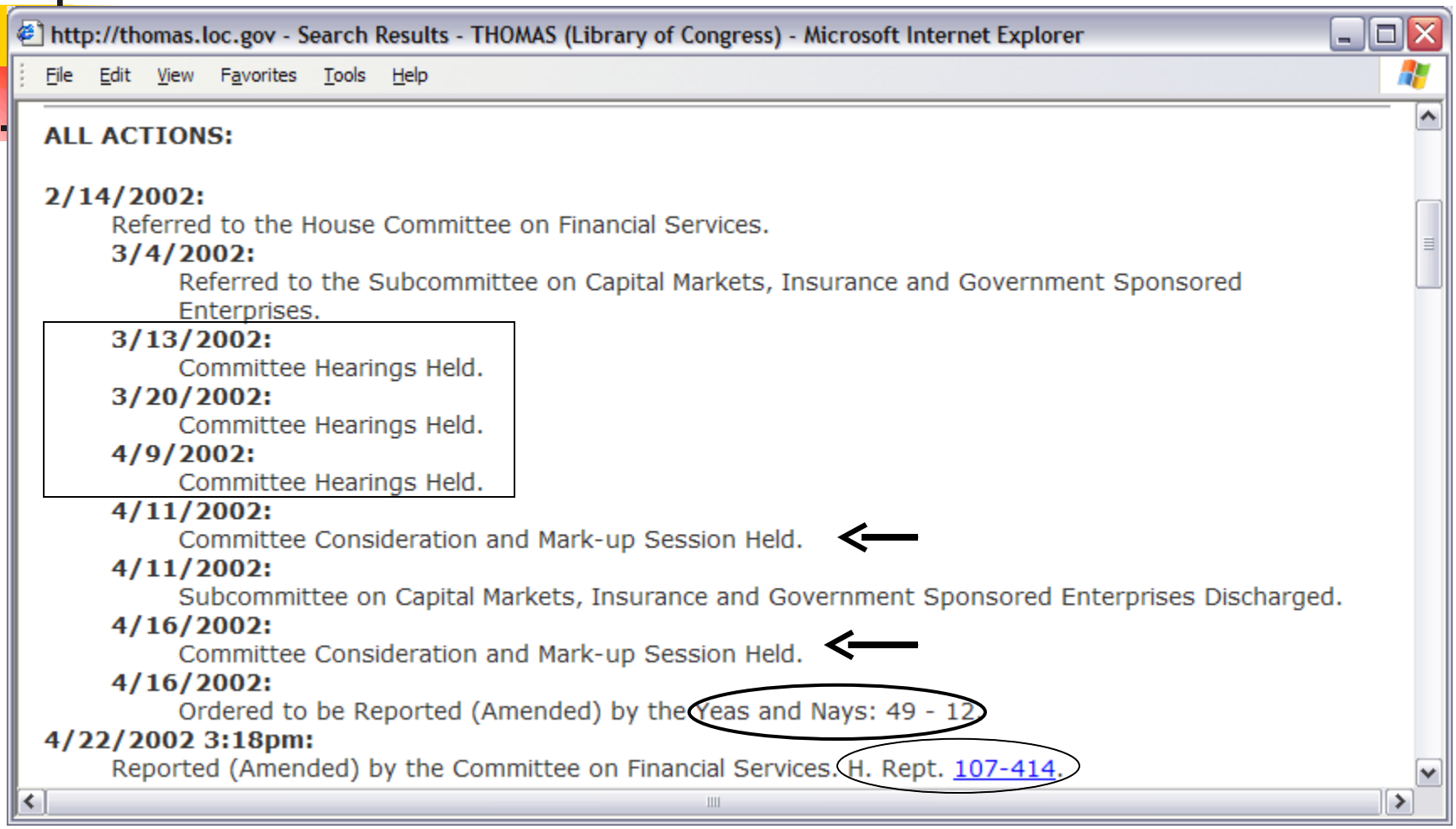
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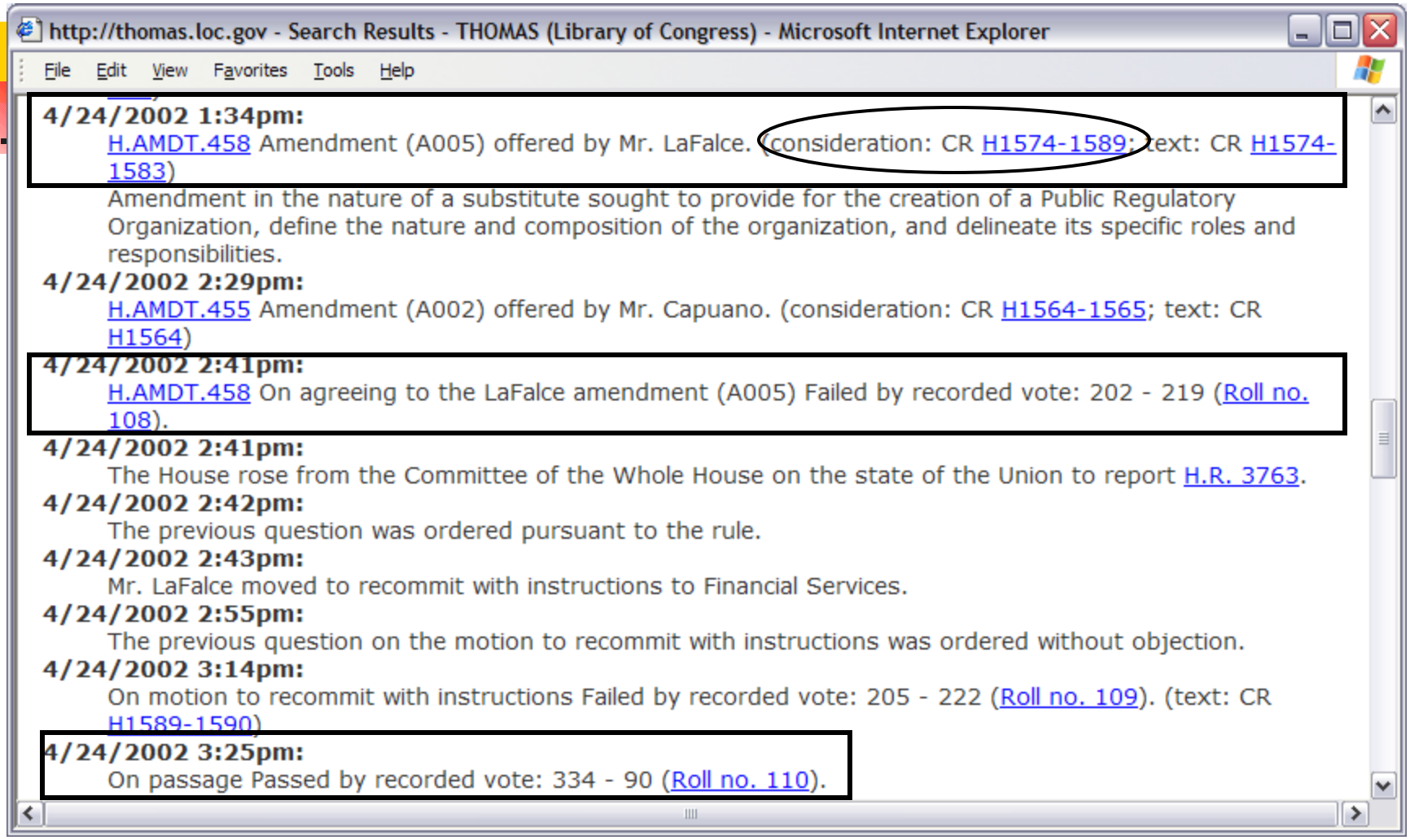
ALL ACTIONS:
2/14/2002:
Referred to the House Committee on Financial Services.
3/4/2002:
Referred to the Subcommittee on Capital Markets, Insurance and Government Sponsored Enterprises.
3/13/2002:
Committee Hearings Held.
3/20/2002:
Committee Hearings Held.
4/9/2002:
Committee Hearings Held.
4/11/2002:
Committee Consideration and Mark-up Session Held.
4/11/2002:
Subcommittee on Capital Markets, Insurance and Government Sponsored Enterprises Discharged.
4/16/2002:
Committee Consideration and Mark-up Session Held.
4/16/2002:
Ordered to be Reported (Amended) by the Yeas and Nays: 49 - 12
4/22/2002 3:18pm:
Reported (Amended) by the Committee on Financial Services. H. Rept. 107-414.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4/24/2002 1:34pm:
H.AMDT.458 Amendment (A005) offered by Mr. LaFalce. (consideration: CR H1574-1589; text: CR H1574-1583)
Amendment in the nature of a substitute sought to provide for the creation of a Public Regulatory Organization, define the nature and composition of the organization, and delineate its specific roles and responsibilities.
4/24/2002 2:29pm:
H.AMDT.455 Amendment (A002) offered by Mr. Capuano. (consideration: CR H1564-1565; text: CR H1564)
4/24/2002 2:41pm:
H.AMDT.458 On agreeing to the LaFalce amendment (A005) Failed by recorded vote: 202 - 219 (Roll no. 108).
4/24/2002 2:41pm:
The House rose from the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union to report H.R. 3763.
4/24/2002 2:42pm:
The previous question was ordered pursuant to the rule.
4/24/2002 2:43pm:
Mr. LaFalce moved to recommit with instructions to Financial Services.
4/24/2002 2:55pm:
The previous question on the motion to recommit with instructions was ordered without objection.
4/24/2002 3:14pm:
On motion to recommit with instructions Failed by recorded vote: 205 - 222 (Roll no. 109). (text: CR H1589-1590)
4/24/2002 3:25pm:
On passage Passed by recorded vote: 334 - 90 (Roll no. 110).

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Ranking Member
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Republican News

June 23, 2006 Press Release
Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee Schedule for the Week of June 26

June 22, 2006 Press Release
Media Advisory: Public Lands & Forests July 19 Subcommittee Hearing Scheduled

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H.R.6 - Royalty Relief for American Consumers Act of 2007

FEED

To reduce our Nation's dependency on foreign oil by investing in clean, renewable, and alternative energy resources, promoting new emerging energy technologies, developing greater efficiency, and creating a Strategic Energy Efficiency and Renewables Reserve to invest in alternative energy, and for other purposes.

1/18/2007--Passed House without amendment. (This measure has not been amended since it was introduced. The summary has been expanded because action occurred on the measure.) Creating Long-Term Energy Alternatives for the Nation Act of 2007, or the CLEAN Energy Act of 2007 - Title I: Denial more... >>

All Bill Titles >> | See Full Bill Text >> | See Full Voting History >> | Show All Actions >>

- Session: 110th Congress
- Bill Status: Considered by Senate.
- Introduced: January 12, 2007
- Latest Action: Jun 14, 2007: Considered by Senate.
- Committees: House Ways and Means, House Rules, House Budget, House Natural Resources

Sponsor:

Rep. Nick Rahall [D, WV-3]

Co-Sponsors:

Rep. Gary Ackerman [D, NY-5]

Rep. Thomas Allen [D, ME-1]

order to become a law, a bill must be approved by a majority vote in both the House and the Senate, and then must be approved by the President.

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In the News FEED

Corker Clean Fuel Amendment Provides Additional Alternatives To ...

JUNE 15, 2007

HR 6, the energy bill currently under consideration in the Senate, would increase the country's renewable fuel requirement to 8.5 billion gallons in 2008 ...

source: The Chattanoogan, TN

National Renewable Energy Standard Debate Will Likely Culminate in ...

JUNE 15, 2007

That vote would likely occur next Tuesday, when the next Senate considers HR.6, the energy package. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) said on the ...

source: The Tennessean

Reid Threatens Weekend Session Over Delays on Energy Bill

JUNE 15, 2007

Debate on the energy bill (HR 6) hit a roadblock this week when Democrats tried to amend the bill to require major utilities produce 15 percent of their ...

source: Congressional Quarterly, DC

37 more articles... »

Blog Coverage FEED

Update on the US Senate Energy Bill, Part 2

JUNE 15, 2007

Some 100 amendments to the energy bill under deliberation in the Senate emerged in the first three days of debate, among them being a proposal for a National Low-Carbon Fuel Standard (Obama, SA 1579) and another being a proposal to promote the development

source: Green Car Congress

Senate Energy Bill: No Voting Today

JUNE 15, 2007

This is very similar to HR 6, which passed the House in January. So yes, all that effort on HR6 this winter may finally come to fruition. The last, and most pertinent, action of the day was to declare, there will be no more votes until ...

source: Wildlife Promise

National Renewable Energy Standard Debate Will Likely Culminate in ...

JUNE 15, 2007

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Chairman Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) has proposed an amendment that would add the 15% by 2020 standard to the energy package, HR.6, but his colleague and ranking Republican on the energy committee, ...

source: WattHead

Roll Call Votes: 110th Congress

CSV XML

Senate Vote #211 (Jun 14, 2007)

On the Motion to Table (Motion to Table Domenici Amdt. No. 1538)

Result: Motion to Table Agreed to

Related Amendment: S.Amdt. 1538: To provide for the establishment of a Federal clean portfolio standard., amending H.R. 6: CLEAN Energy Act of 2007.

The Motion to Table is used to kill a legislative matter. An Aye vote in favor of the motion is a vote against the bill or amendment.

Totals & Party Breakdown

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Ayes:	56 (57%)	47	7	2
Nays:	39 (39%)	0	39	0
No Vote:	4 (4%)	2	2	0

Required: Simple Majority of 95 votes

Votes

Vote [Sort]	State [Sort]	Representative [Sort by Name] [Sort by Party]

Alabama

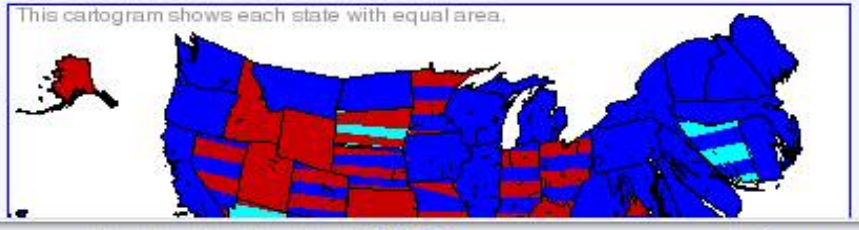
Primary Source

This information comes from Senate Vote #211 on the Senate website .

Geographic Voting Pattern

Cartogram (see below for info)

This cartogram shows each state with equal area.



Filling in the Gaps

- A more complete picture
  - Technical solutions
  - Political solutions
- Listening to citizens, encouraging dialog, achieving balance
- Testing the solutions

Why It Matters

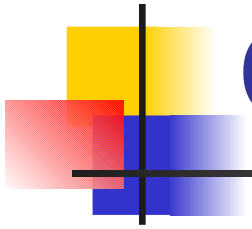
We need a non partisan and authoritative source of legislative information that serves as the starting point for discussions of public policy.

This source must present information that is accurate, timely, complete, clear, and presented in the broadest context possible.

Why It Matters

There must be also be the means for citizens and groups to share their views on legislation.

These forums for public discussion should be linked and integrated with official sources of information in a way that adds value and achieves balance.



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