

Government Information Sources
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1. What can you tell me about Public Law No: 109-188?

Public Law is available through *Congress.gov*'s Bill Summary and Status page. The Public Law # is PL 109-188. This means that it was the 188th bill enacted by the 109th Congress (active 2005-2006). The bill number and title is H.R.2630 - To redesignate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1927 Sangamon Avenue in Springfield, Illinois, as the "J.M. Dietrich Northeast Annex." The bill was introduced to the House on May 25, 2005 and was approved on March 20, 2006. The full text of the bill (and a PDF file) is available on the *Congress.gov* website. This resource was described in our textbook and in class. This free electronic resource is published by the Library of Congress.

The designation was described during the 1st Session meeting at the House of Representatives, on July 13, 2005. Here former Congressman Charlie Dent described:

James Michael Dietrich was an earnest lifelong postal employee. He began his career as a letter carrier in 1970. In 1983 he was promoted to supervisor of Delivery and Collections, and finally he earned the position of Customer Service Supervisor in 1989. Regardless of his rank or duties with the postal service, Dietrich gained the respect of his peers through his friendly demeanor, leadership, and hard work. / Mike Dietrich died in September, 2003. He was a tremendous asset to the postal service and a terrific individual who is worthy of this fitting honor by the House. So I encourage my colleagues to join with the distinguished gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LaHood) and me in renaming the Northeast Annex in Springfield, Illinois as the "J.M. Dietrich Northeast Annex."

Cited:

Congress.gov, <https://www.congress.gov/public-laws/109th-congress> (Accessed October 8, 2019) and <https://www.congress.gov/bill/109th-congress/house-bill/2630>
Congress.gov, <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2005/07/13/house-section/article/H5759-1>

2. I have a patron who is about to take the US citizenship exam. What types of questions are likely to be on the test?

I found the *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services* website through a long browse starting at UI-UC's Government Information LibGuide and passing through "Undocumented and DACA Resources." To become a U.S. Citizen, one must pass the naturalization test—or rather *interview*—which is separated into two parts: Civics and English. The Civics test includes 10 questions that are pulled from a list of a possible 100 questions; This complete list of questions and their answers are available on this website for study. During the English test the candidate will be tested on speaking, reading, and writing. A list of vocabulary words one should know for the English test is available on this website. This website also includes study materials in the form of downloadable PDFs, Flashcards, audio files, and videos. One can also find information about exemptions and accommodations to the standard naturalization test at this website. This website is authoritative, which is evidenced by its .gov address.

Cited:

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, <https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/learners/study-test> (Oct 8, 2019)

3. What are the most recent travel warnings from the Department of State? What other travel updates does the Department of State publish?

Our coursebook describes that “For patrons seeking travel-specific information, the U.S. Department of State provides a website with information on travel to other countries. Country profiles include a list of embassies and consulates; entry, exit, and visa requirements; safety; local laws; healthcare; and in-country transportation. In addition, the website lists current Travel Alerts and Travel Warnings.” (Oh my, I wish I knew of this website before any of my earlier foreign travels!)

The U.S. Department of State website has a tab for “Countries & Areas” that lists all alphabetically and are available through a search bar. Each Country and Area then has a webpage with a Fact Sheet, information regarding Embassies & Consulates, Information on Ambassadors from the U.S. in the selected area, information about the area’s relationship to the U.S. basic travel information, and Travel Advisories.

The Travel Advisories at travel.state.gov are reissued and updated regularly after periodic review. So even though the last update regarded Switzerland, which was updated to Level 1, it was Level 1 before the update as well, things are fine. Same for Liechtenstein. Hong Kong was recently updated to a Level 2 (down from before, most likely, and recently updated to include updates since October 4, 2019 regarding Emergency Regulations Ordinance and a new requirement that protests must have permits or else they are illegal. And there are 12 countries that are a “Level 4: Do Not Travel.” (This resource is fascinating.)

Cited:

“Travel Advisories” *Travel.State.Gov: U.S. Department of State – Bureau of Consular Affairs*, <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html>

4. I need statistics about hunger, can you help me?

Our course textbook recommends Data.gov as an authoritative resource in public data that is available to everyone. Through a convoluted hunt across this website I discovered data records at the *United States Department of Agriculture – Economic Research Service* website which has information on Food Security in the United States. It seems that the official terminology for “hunger” is now “food security.”

At the “Food Security in the United States” page, one can find numerous data sets that include national surveys through the Documentation link including Population surveys from the Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement data files, and USDA’s National Household Food Acquisition and Purchase Survey. Some of these data sets are freely available to the public (and include access details and data access and documentation information) and some are available through request. Data.gov and *United States Department of Agriculture – Economic Research Service* also offers a wealth of reports and data visualizations that were created from these data sets.

Cited:

“Agriculture,” *Data.gov*, <https://www.data.gov/food/>
“Food Security in the United States,” *United States Department of Agriculture – Economic Research Service*, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-security-in-the-united-states/> and “Documentation: overview of surveys,” <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-security-in-the-united-states/documentation/>

***Favorite Resource:** The U.S. Department of State website for “Countries & Areas” and the Travel Advisories resources were my favorite. I lost a few hours this week to looking up different countries and updating myself on information. Did you know that there is some anti-American sentiments in Hong Kong because some people believe that the U.S. is working with China against them? Or that there was an

earthquake last week in Chile? Or that there is a place called Liechtenstein? The information about visas is also really important. Some countries allow you to stay up to 90 days on a travel visa, which I knew, but there are details that one should know such as that some countries will not let you enter if your passport will expire within 90 days, even if you plan to leave that country a few days after entering and thus probably never thought it would bar you from entry. Good stuff to know. (As well as all the emergency preparedness info no matter where you are traveling, just in case!)