Use one or more of these shortcuts and strategies to quickly locate a 50-state law survey by topic.

**Subject Compilations of State Laws**

Now in its 23d volume, this long-running series became available on HeinOnline last year. Law review articles are the most prolific source of surveys and the SCSL citations to articles on HeinOnline are constructed as live links. Even the specific pages on which footnotes, tables, and charts appear are live links so that users can quickly move from the finding tool (the SCSL database) to the survey information.

The series/database consists of 18,000+ citations to articles, books, court opinions and briefs, government documents, looseleaf services, treatises, and websites. It includes items in the 50-state law collections found on LexisNexis and Westlaw. The database is updated quarterly and the print version is published annually.

Search or browse from hundreds of subjects; you can even combine subjects, such as "Child Abuse" and "Clergy" to find surveys that specifically include clergy as mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse.

Results are organized from most recent to oldest.

**LexisNexis & Westlaw**

Both vendors offer 50-state law survey databases:

- LexisNexis > 50 State Surveys, Legislation & Regulations
- Westlaw > 50 State Statutory Surveys (SURVEYS) (includes charts from Rich Leiter's *National Survey of State Laws*)

The survey formats are different: LexisNexis uses Excel spreadsheets and Westlaw provides tables comparing key issues and lists of legal authorities with section headings. Both formats contain live links to the full text of the cited sources.
The number of surveys (about 400) and topics addressed are similar. Many surveys concentrate on business organizations, civil procedure, criminal law, environmental law, finance and banking, health law, insurance, labor and employment, property and real estate, securities, taxation, and utilities. Each database contains subjects not covered by its competitor.

New surveys are added and existing surveys are updated throughout the year.

Both the LexisNexis and Westlaw databases are searchable; both also offer tables of contents to allow users to "drill down" to specific topics.

The LexisNexis surveys include statutes and regulations (as well as occasional references to constitutions and court rules). Westlaw includes a separate collection, 50 State Regulatory Surveys (REG-SURVEYS). References to the corresponding regulatory surveys are made in selected statutory surveys.
The Usual Suspects

If your initial searches of Subject Compilations of State Laws, LexisNexis, and Westlaw have been unsuccessful, consider the "usual suspects" approach. Usual suspects are associations and government agencies that are focused on the topic of your research. For instance, the Justice Department's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives has published
State Laws and Published Ordinances—Firearms for years (the 2007 volume was its 28th edition). The National Rifle Association's Institute for Legislative Action website also maintains a Compendium of State Firearms Laws.

The following list identifies examples of agencies and organizations that have, over time, proven to be reliable sources of 50-state law surveys.

- **Multiple Subjects**
  National Conference of State Legislatures, [http://www.ncsl.org](http://www.ncsl.org)
  If the subject is generating interest among legislators across the country, it is likely that the NCSL website is tracking it. Start with a website search or browse the NCSL 50-State Legislative Tracking Web Resources page,

  Several ABA components produce and post state law surveys on the ABA's website, including the Commission on Domestic Violence, [https://www.abanet.org/domviol/home.html](https://www.abanet.org/domviol/home.html); the Commission on Law and Aging, [http://www.abanet.org/aging/](http://www.abanet.org/aging/); and the Section of Family Law, [http://www.abanet.org/family/](http://www.abanet.org/family/). Some material is available only to ABA members, but many of the state law surveys are on the public side of the website.

- **Abortion & Reproductive Rights**
  Guttmacher Institute, [http://www.guttmacher.org/](http://www.guttmacher.org/)
  The State Policies in Brief series covers abortion, adolescents, contraception, pregnancy, sexually-transmitted diseases and AIDS, and services and financing. These guides are regularly updated.

  NARAL/Pro-Choice America, [http://www.naral.org/](http://www.naral.org/)
  *Who Decides: The Status of Women’s Reproductive Rights in the United States* is updated annually.

- **Aged**
  National Center on Elder Abuse, [http://www.ncea.aoa.gov](http://www.ncea.aoa.gov)
  The "Laws" heading on the navigation strip leads to surveys on adult protective services and various types of elder abuse.

- **Agriculture & Farming**
  Follow the "State Compilations" link to discover topics on which 50-state surveys have been prepared. The current list includes agricultural liens, agri-tourism, biofuels, recreational use, the right to farm, and other subjects.
• **Animals & Pets**  
  Animal Legal & Historical Center, [http://www.animallaw.info/](http://www.animallaw.info/)
  Affiliated with the Michigan State University College of Law, the Center's website features a searchable database of statutes and cases covering a wide range of animal law issues, including assistance animals, cruelty to animals, dangerous dogs, equine activity and liability, and hunter harassment.

• **Child Abuse & Welfare**  
  The "State Statutes Search" leads to surveys on adoption, child abuse, and domestic violence.

• **Criminal Law**  
  American Prosecutors Research Institute, [http://www.ndaa.org/apri/index.html](http://www.ndaa.org/apri/index.html)
  The research arm of the National District Attorneys Association, APRI provides state law surveys on child abuse, rape, and terrorism.

  NCJRS is a Justice Department division that abstracts and indexes DOJ and other publications. Use the A-Z Topics page to narrow the search to your specific topic.

• **Education**  
  The "State Notes" section offers a wide variety of school law-related surveys.

• **Firearms**  
  The "Publications" section links to the latest edition of *State Laws and Published Ordinances—Firearms*.

  Visit the "Gun Laws" section for state and territorial laws on the purchase, possession, and carrying of firearms.

• **Gays & Lesbians**  
  "In Your State" covers adoption, civil unions, domestic partnerships, and employment discrimination.

• **Labor & Employment**  
  The Wage and Hour Division hosts a "State Labor Law Topics" page with surveys on child labor, minimum wage, and rest periods. The Employment and Training Administration offers the annual *Comparison of State Unemployment Laws*. 
• **News Media & Reporters**
  The "Reading Room" lists numerous surveys that have been published in *News Media and the Law*, the latest editions of which are found on the website. Subjects include access to electronic and other public records, to juvenile court proceedings, and to other public places; electronic surveillance; open records and meetings; and shield laws.

• **Traffic & Transportation**
  Look for the "State Info & Laws" section for charts dealing with aggressive driving, graduated driver licensing, sobriety checkpoints, and related issues.

  The "Laws & Regs" section includes summaries of state laws on topics such as automated enforcement, cell phone restrictions, drunk driving, and speed limits.

  Browse topics under the "Traffic Safety" section for surveys on seat belts, speed limits, and other subjects.

**No Luck?**

Of course, search Google, Bing, Clusty, USA.gov, etc. I've been successful with searches that include the following phrases:

- "states have laws on"
- "state law survey"
- "state statutes [legislation] on"

The "secret sauce search sentence" for online 50-state law surveys that include citations is:

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stat. ann. rev. code
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or a variation of that expression. Changing the order of these Bluebook abbreviations frequently retrieves different results. "Stat." is often processed by search engines as "state" so consider omitting it from the sauce. You will add words or phrases that capture the subject which you are researching.