

VERMONT AND THE UNIFORM LAW COMMISSION

What is the Uniform Law Commission?

Since 1892, the Uniform Law Commission (ULC, also known as the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws) has worked for the improvement of state laws by drafting uniform state laws on subjects where uniformity is desirable and practicable. It is a non-profit unincorporated association, comprised of state commissions on uniform laws from each state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Each jurisdiction determines the method of appointment and the number of commissioners appointed. The commissioners serve for specific terms, and receive no salaries or fees for their work with the ULC.

Is there statutory authority governing the Vermont Uniform Law Commissioners?

Yes. Vt. Stat. Ann. Tit. 2 §201.

When did Vermont join the ULC?

Vermont joined the ULC in 1895.

How is the ULC funded?

The major portion of financial support for the ULC comes from state appropriations. Expenses are apportioned among the states by means of an assessment based on population. The ULC gets maximum results from a minimum budget because its major asset, drafting expertise, is donated. Commissioners devote hundreds and even thousands of hours – amounting in some cases to millions of dollars' worth of time – to the development of uniform and model acts, and take no compensation from anyone. No state could afford the bills for the legal expertise that is donated to the drafting of uniform laws.

What are the benefits to Vermont of ULC membership?

For a very modest investment, Vermont receives an extraordinary amount of services in return. Just consider how Vermont has benefited to date from uniform acts adopted in its legislature, which include important acts such as the Uniform Commercial Code, the Uniform Partnership Act, the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act, the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act, the Uniform Trust Code, the Uniform Unclaimed Property Act, and the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act. All of these acts were drafted and promulgated by the ULC, and have benefited the citizens of Vermont immeasurably. In fact, Vermont has enacted more than 90 uniform acts.

Who currently serves on Vermont's Commission on Uniform State Laws?

The Vermont Commission on Uniform State Laws consists of Richard T. Cassidy, Burlington; Ted C. Kramer, Brattleboro; Peter F. Langrock, Middlebury; Carl H. Lisman, Burlington; Luke Martland, Montpelier; and Stephanie J. Willbanks, South Royalton.

Is attendance at ULC annual meetings important?

Uniform Law Commissioners are hands-on people who get the job done. They spend the hours, debate the issues, research the fine points, tune the language, and ultimately, make the decision to promulgate a uniform act. Then the act comes to Vermont for adoption.

The ULC works as a cooperative venture of all the states. It only functions as well as each state's commitment to the uniform law movement. The Annual Meeting is the pinnacle of this process. It is an intensive working session lasting six to seven days. All the important substantive decisions about uniform state laws are made at that meeting. The quality of the uniform acts, their very integrity, depends upon the attendance of Uniform Law Commissioners from every state. Only if the Vermont Uniform Law Commissioners participate can you be assured that Vermont has been adequately represented in the development of an Act.

How important is the ULC?

Since 1892, the ULC has kept the commercial law current with the times, worked continuously to better family law, resolved conflicts between the law of the states, improved health law, helped fend off federal preemption, and championed the cause of state government and the state legislatures.

The cost is small, the benefits are great. In fact, no state can duplicate the benefits it receives from participation for the money spent. Supporting the Uniform Law Commission is supporting good, cost-effective government.