

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 1120

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Judiciary, March 18, 2009

**Title:** An act relating to uniform laws.

**Brief Description:** Concerning uniform laws.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Pedersen, Rodne, Goodman and Morrell; by request of Uniform Legislation Commission.

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/23/09, 95-0.  
**Committee Activity:** Judiciary: 3/18/09 [DPA].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Kline, Chair; Regala, Vice Chair; McCaslin, Ranking Minority Member; Kohl-Welles and Roach.

**Staff:** Juliana Roe (786-7438)

**Background:** The Uniform Legislation Commission (Commission) was established to promote uniformity of legislation with other states. The Governor appoints the Board of Commissioners, which consists of three members who are typically judges, law professors, or other members of the bar. The Code Reviser serves as a member of the Board of Commissioners.

The commissioners are not compensated for their service but are reimbursed for travel expenses. In addition, expenses are allowed for one annual meeting of the board in Washington, and for the members to attend a conference of commissioners outside Washington no more than once per year.

**Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendments):** The Commission is renamed the Washington State Uniform Law Commission and its authorizing statute is updated and revised.

The Governor must appoint three qualified persons to serve on the Washington State Uniform Law Commission. A "qualified" person is defined as a resident of Washington

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State, a member of the State Bar Association of this state or another, who is or has been a judge, law professor, legislator, or practicing attorney. The Governor may also appoint any person who has served at least 20 years on the Commission and who is a life member in the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws or its successors.

The statutory charge of the Commission is modified. The Commission must identify areas of the law where uniformity of state laws is desirable and practicable, and either Congress lacks jurisdiction to act or it is preferable that the several states enact the laws.

The Commission is required to propose to the Legislature adoption of the uniform acts developed with other commissioners at the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY JUDICIARY COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments):** Removes the requirement that the commission make its proposals to the Governor.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill:** PRO: A majority of this bill is a "clean-up." The other part is largely about succession planning so that an individual who has experience in the position may be appointed while training someone new to take over the position.

Washington has been a member of the Uniform Law Commission since 1905. There have been a few commissioners along the way and ten or more that have served an excess of 20 years. In some states, commissioner positions are heavily fought over. When the governor changes in those states, the appointees change. Washington does not have that kind of history. The commission works like a legislature. It is comprised of 260+ members in addition to advisors from the American Bar Association and individuals from other countries. The commission meets over a seven-day period. It considers bills by reading aloud and then taking comments on the bills. Drafting committees work on bills for a minimum of two years. Huge amounts of work go into trying to coordinate these bills. The bills go through an approval or rejection process. Many bills are mundane, many are crucial. This bill would allow well-versed members to be lifetime members. It would also allow for the training of a new individual to take over the commission. This work is important.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Pederson, prime sponsor; Marlin Appelwick, Washington Uniform Law Commission.