



Uniform Law Commissioners

The National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws

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Polly Klaas Foundation Endorses UCCJEA

National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws
211 E. Ontario Street, Suite 1300, Chicago, IL 60611
312-915-0195, Fax 312-915-0187, www.nccusl.org

Contact: Michael Kerr, NCCUSL Deputy Executive Director, mkerr@nccusl.org
Katie Robinson, NCCUSL Communications Officer, krobinson@nccusl.org

FINAL PUSH FOR NATIONWIDE ENACTMENT OF UCCJEA The Polly Klaas Foundation Available to Assist Enactment Efforts

With 35 adoptions of the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act (UCCJEA), the importance of establishing national uniformity with regard to interstate custody matters grows increasingly significant. The UCCJEA is an important step forward in establishing clarity and predictability with regard to interstate custody rules, and resolves several significant jurisdictional questions that arose over the years concerning the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act (UCCJA 1968 is still in force in the remaining jurisdictions).

In the next year, NCCUSL is making a special effort to promote the adoption of the UCCJEA in all the states that have not yet done so. We are pleased to report that the Polly Klaas Foundation (PKF) has endorsed the national adoption of the UCCJEA, and will be actively working with NCCUSL to achieve that goal. Information about the foundation can be found at www.pollyklaas.org

The PKF is a nonprofit organization based in Petaluma, California, that is dedicated to helping locate missing children and to prevent them from going missing in the first place. It was founded 10 years ago after the abduction and murder of Polly Klaas, a 12-year-old girl from Petaluma.

In recent years, the PKF has actively lobbied the states to enact the "Amber Alert" system, which publicly broadcasts notices of a child abduction. Last year, by using a combination of tactics, including direct lobbying, a media campaign and grassroots pressure, the Foundation was an integral part of the effort which got the bill enacted in California. After that success, the PKF went on to lobby the other 36 states that did not yet have an Amber Alert system in place. So far, it has succeeded in getting 31 more states to adopt Amber Alerts.

More recently, the Polly Klaas Foundation has focused on the problem of family abduction and, more specifically, on what can be done to prevent abductions from occurring in the first place.

"From our research on the issue and the Foundation's 10 years of experience in working with families of

abducted children, it appears that passage of the UCCJEA by all 50 states would go a long way to reducing the number of children traumatized by family abductions every year,” said Jenni Thompson, Director of Public Affairs for the PKF. “The Foundation is familiar with the NCCUSL’s role in writing UCCJEA and how important it has been in the effort to see that all 50 states adopt the UCCJEA. The Foundation would like to join in that effort.”

Why States Should Upgrade to the UCCJEA

- UCCJEA avoids potential conflicts by making the child’s home state the priority ground for original jurisdiction, consistent with federal law.
- UCCJEA provides for continuing exclusive jurisdiction by the original state and temporary emergency jurisdiction by any state.
- UCCJEA expands protections for victims of domestic violence.
- UCCJEA clarifies the rules under which a second state can modify an existing custody order.
- UCCJEA details interstate enforcement procedures with a range of options, including registration, expedited enforcement, and civil remedies by prosecutors and law enforcement.

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tel: (312) 915-0195 | fax: (312) 915-0187 | e-mail: nccusl@nccusl.org