



---

**Statement of Sara Monalea McMahon, on behalf of the Law Librarians of New England, to the  
Joint Committee on the Judiciary in Support of H. 1522 – Enacting the Uniform Electronic  
Legal Material Act**

**Public Hearing – October 3, 2023**

Chair Eldridge, Vice Chair Edwards, Chair Day, Vice Chair Barber, and Members of the Joint Committee:

My name is Sara Monalea McMahon, and I am here today as the President of the Law Librarians of New England (LLNE) to testify in support of H. 1522 (HD. 219), the Uniform Electronic Legal Material Act (UELMA). LLNE is an organization of over 250 members representing academic libraries, federal and state courts and agencies, county and public law libraries, corporate legal departments, publishers, vendors and private law firms in the six New England states. We are a chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL). I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H. 1522.

LLNE strongly urges the committee to approve UELMA, which will ensure that Massachusetts' online state legal material **deemed official** will be preserved and made permanently available to the public in an unaltered form. As more information becomes available online, people have come to expect access anytime from anywhere, and in our role as librarians we are expected to provide access to those we serve: judges, attorneys, self-represented litigants, researchers, and citizens like you, to trustworthy legal material that is authentic, verified, and unaltered.

As governments reduce print formats in favor of providing online legal material, the concern for authenticated online material is higher. If online legal material is not authenticated, verified, and unaltered then courts may not accept cites to online materials, researchers may not be able to rely on online materials, and publishers may not accept electronic citations. UELMA provides the framework to ensure that online state legal material, **deemed official**, will be preserved and made permanently available to the public in an unaltered form.

UELMA covers a range of material including the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, session laws, the general laws, state agency rules and decisions, other material published in the Massachusetts Register or the Code of Massachusetts Regulations, and reported decision of the Supreme Judicial Court, the Appeals Court, and the Massachusetts Trial Courts.

UELMA has been passed in 22 states, as well as Washington, DC and the US Virgin Islands. It provides the principles but leaves it up to the state to determine the best ways to ensure that official legal material is reliable online. With the adoption of UELMA, Massachusetts will establish itself as a leader among states that have recognized that official, electronic legal material must be authenticated, preserved, and made permanently available to the public, which further promotes access to justice for ALL. UELMA is supported nationally by the Uniform Law Commission, the American Association of Law Libraries, and the American Bar Association.

LLNE implores the Committee to report favorably on H. 1522 (HD. 219). Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to you today.