



TO: John Sebert, Executive Director,
Uniform Law Commission
RE: Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act

Mr. Sebert:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Heirs' Property Retention Coalition (HPRC) in support of the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act, which helps to protect the interests and needs of the most vulnerable landowners. HPRC was formed in 2006 to address the needs of low-income and African-American heirs' property owners, and was heavily involved in the drafting process of the Act.

Without going into the specific details of the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act, which are explained more fully by my colleagues at HPRC, I do want to say that this topic is extremely important to the work we do at Tuskegee University. Since the founding of this university by Booker T. Washington in 1881, land ownership has been one of the cornerstone activities of its outreach and research units.

More recently, we have worked with African American and other minority landowners to protect their land assets through our Center for Minority and Community Security (1990) as well as through our Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Program (1994). And we are continually supplying our outreach colleagues with research-based information so that they can assist our clients in the most efficient and effective manner.

Our work has allowed African American farmers access to millions of dollars in loans for farm ownership, farm operating, and homes; and this success is tied directly to their ownership of family land, often heirs property. This is relevant for the economic well-being of not only the individuals involved but also for entire communities.

In conclusion, the Uniform Act is a major step to protect the rights of those who own this most important asset. It establishes a more equitable statutory regime for all heirs property co-owners, allowing families to hold onto their land yet also sell their land under the best of circumstances. I encourage you to strongly support the Uniform Act.

Sincerely,

Robert Zabawa, Ph.D.
Coordinator, Social Science and Rural Development Research
Director, Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers
Director, Center for Minority Land and Community Security

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