

Burbank on Outsourcing the Treaty Function

Stephen Burbank (University of Pennsylvania Law School) has posted *Whose Regulatory Interests? Outsourcing the Treaty Function* on SSRN.

In this article I describe the status quo in the area of foreign judgment recognition, with attention to the tension between domestic interests and international cooperation. Precisely because the future of the status quo is in doubt, I then consider current proposals for change, particularly the effort to implement the Hague Choice of Court Convention in the United States. Prominent among the normative questions raised by my account is whose interests, in addition to the litigants' interests, are at stake - those of the United States, those of the several states, or those of interest groups waving a federal or state flag. A related question is whether, if the uniformity we seek is to be found in state rather than federal law, we can be, and be seen by other countries to be, serious about international cooperation. I describe in some detail the sequence of events that led to the Uniform Law Commissioners ("ULC") becoming involved in the process of drafting legislation to implement the Choice of Court Convention. I also explore reasons why the ULC has been successful in securing the lion's share of attention for its preferred approach to implementation, which the ULC calls "cooperative federalism," but which has come to resemble cooperative redundancy. Recounting how, and offering suggestions why, the ULC ultimately rejected a package of compromises proposed by the State Department's Legal Adviser, even though almost all compromises were in favor of the ULC, I conclude with observations about the ULC's ambitions in the international arena. My argument is that, if the ULC were successful in taking over the negotiation or implementation of private international law treaties, international cooperation would be if not a fortuity, then not a priority, because we would have regressed to a position of privileging not just federal but state law uniformity over international uniformity. And the state law we privileged would be anything but "indigenous."

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