

Abstract for the Student Research Conference

The Vermont Legislative Research Service (VLRS) of the James M. Jeffords Center provides non-partisan policy research for legislators in Vermont. Teams of undergraduate students research current policy issues requested by state legislators and produce high quality reports under the supervision of Anthony Gierzynski and Kate Fournier. The service is an integral aspect of the political environment in Vermont. Like many other small states in the country, we have a citizen legislature; by this I mean they are not professional politicians. Furthermore, there is hardly any funding from the state for full-time policy analysts. Thus, prior to the introduction of VLRS it was extremely difficult for legislators to receive concise and un-biased information regarding policies and proposed laws. Research areas are not restricted to any topic area and policy areas have included education, health care, government, and the environment. In addition to researching current policy issues, the students and I attend Committee meetings, and work at the State House thereby making legislators aware of our services. Some of the reports that teams have recently produced include:

- Smart Meters, Wireless Networks and Human Health
- Marijuana Decriminalization
- Synthetic Drugs
- Transportation and DUI Courts
- Firing Ranges: Lead, Water and the Environment of the Green Mountain State
- Election Lawn Sign Restrictions
- Physician-Assisted Death
- Immunization Trends and Immunization Exemption Policies
- Bureaucratic Efficiency and the Cost of Red Tape

All of the VLRS reports can be found online at <http://www.uvm.edu/~vlrs/>.

My hope is to be able to showcase some of our work at the Student Research Conference with a poster presentation. We will inform others of the connection we are making between the University of Vermont and Vermont lawmakers. Additionally, illuminating the useful research service we are providing.