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Effective date: April 12, 2021; Ohio Revised Limited Liability Company Act effective January 1, 2022

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SUMMARY

Ohio Revised Limited Liability Company Act

- Creates the Ohio Revised Limited Liability Company Act.
- Replaces the existing Ohio Limited Liability Company Act effective January 1, 2022, for all limited liability companies formed or registered to do business in Ohio on or after that date.
- Designates two situations in which a series LLC will be considered to have been formed to avoid paying the commercial activity tax (CAT), and requires such a series to file and pay the tax as a single combined taxpayer.

Unclaimed Funds Law

- Authorizes the Ohio Access to Justice Foundation to hold attorney unclaimed funds.
- When requested by the Department of Commerce, requires holders of attorney unclaimed funds to send a copy of the unclaimed funds report to the Ohio Access to Justice Foundation.
- Requires holders of attorney unclaimed funds to send 100% of the unclaimed funds to the Director of Commerce, which can then be claimed for holding purposes by the Ohio Access to Justice Foundation.
- Restricts the funds held by the Ohio Access to Justice Foundation to be used to provide (1) financial assistance to legal aid societies, (2) to enhance or improve access to justice, or (3) to operate the Foundation.
- Requires that, if a claim is made by the owner of attorney unclaimed funds held by the Ohio Access to Justice Foundation, the Foundation must reimburse the Unclaimed Funds Trust Fund the amount claimed, with interest.

- Requires that the Director of Commerce or the Director’s designee serve on the board of directors of the Ohio Access to Justice Foundation which holds attorney unclaimed funds.

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DETAILED ANALYSIS

General summary

The act establishes the Ohio Revised Limited Liability Company Act (ORLLCA). The ORLLCA is a revision of the existing Ohio Limited Liability Company Act creating a new Chapter 1706 of the Revised Code. The ORLLCA replaces the existing law effective January 1, 2022 for all limited liability companies (LLCs) formed or registered to do business in Ohio on or after that date. Ohio LLCs in existence before that date will continue to be subject to Chapter 1705 (existing law) until January 1, 2022, when Chapter 1705 is repealed and all LLCs become subject to the new Chapter 1706. All records filed on or after that date with the Secretary of State by either an Ohio or foreign LLC must comply with the filing requirements of the ORLLCA. In regards to any pending or future litigation implicating the existing law, the act specifies that the repeal of a statute by the act does not affect an action commenced, proceeding brought, or right accrued prior to January 1, 2022.¹

¹ R.C. 1706.02, 1706.83, and Sections 3, 4, and 5 of the act.

There are many differences between the ORLLCA and the existing law. Some of these differences are substantive in nature while others are not. The three most important are as follows:

1. Under the existing law, an LLC may be managed by its members or by managers, and the law spells out the authority members and managers have in each scenario. The act does away with this distinction and instead provides that a person's authority to bind the LLC must be determined by referencing the operating agreement, decisions of the members in accordance with the operating agreement, or the ORLLCA's default rules.²
2. Also under the existing law, there are no statutory penalties for an LLC that fails to maintain a statutory agent, although there may be other legal consequences.³ The act requires the Secretary of State to cancel an LLC that fails to maintain a statutory agent, but allows the company to be reinstated upon appointment of a new agent.⁴
3. Lastly, in contrast to the existing law, the act allows an LLC to establish one or more designated series of assets that are associated with at least one member and that have separate rights, powers, duties, liabilities, purposes, or investment objectives.⁵

Knowledge and notice

Existing law does not describe what constitutes knowledge or notice of certain facts by certain persons, which may be relevant for evidentiary standards in litigation or other actions. The act specifies that under the ORLLCA a person knows a fact when either of the following is met:

- The person has actual knowledge of the fact;
- The person is deemed to know the fact under law other than the ORLLCA.

A person has notice of a fact when any of the following is met:

- The person knows of the fact;
- The person receives notification of the fact;
- The person has reason to know the fact from all the facts known to the person at the time;
- The person is deemed to have notice of the fact.

² R.C. 1706.08 through 1706.082.

³ See, e.g., *John W. Judge Co. v. United States Freight, LLC*, 2018-Ohio-2658 (holding that an LLC that did not receive service of process due to its neglect to maintain a statutory agent cannot establish excusable neglect and thereby avoid the judgment entered against it for unpaid services).

⁴ R.C. 1706.09 and 1706.46.

⁵ R.C. 1706.76 through 1706.7613.

A person notifies another of a fact by taking steps reasonably required to inform the other person in ordinary course, whether or not the other person knows the fact. And a person is deemed to have notice of (1) matters included in an LLC's articles of organization upon the filing of the articles, (2) an LLC's dissolution, 90 days after a certificate of dissolution becomes effective, and (3) an LLC's merger or conversion, 90 days after a certificate of merger or certificate of conversion becomes effective.

A member's knowledge, notice, or receipt of a notification of a fact relating to the LLC is not knowledge, notice, or receipt of a fact by the LLC solely by reason of the member's capacity as a member.⁶

Nature and duration

Under the ORLLCA, an LLC is a separate legal entity, which is not affected by its status for tax purposes. An LLC has perpetual duration.⁷

Powers and privileges

In general, an LLC is both a "creature of contract" and a creature of statute. The "contract" is the LLCs operating agreement. Although the ORLLCA is to be construed to give maximum effect to the principles of freedom of contract, the act also provides specific rules governing LLCs and their operating agreements, which will be explained in this analysis. In general, the act permits an LLC to carry on any lawful activity, whether or not for profit. An LLC may make contracts of guaranty and suretyship and enter into interest rate, basis, currency, hedge, or other swap agreements, or cap, floor, put, call, option, exchange, or collar agreements, derivative agreements, or other similar agreements.

A series LLC (a separate series of assets established by the LLC that is associated with at least one member of the LLC and that has separate rights, powers, duties, liabilities, purposes, or investment objectives than the LLC) established under the ORLLCA may, in the series' own name, do all of the following:

- Sue and be sued;
- Contract;
- Hold and convey title to assets of the series; and
- Grant liens and security interests in assets of the series.⁸

Rules of construction and governing law

Every LLC is subject to the ORLLCA's provisions, regardless of whether it has one or more members or whether it is formed by a filing under the ORLLCA or by merger, consolidation,

⁶ R.C. 1706.03, 1706.16, 1706.471, 1706.712, 1706.722, and 1706.761(B)(3).

⁷ R.C. 1706.04.

⁸ R.C. 1706.05 and 1706.76 through 1706.7613.

conversion, or otherwise. As stated above, the ORLLCA is to be construed to give maximum effect to the principles of freedom of contract and to the enforceability of operating agreements. And, unless displaced by particular provisions of the ORLLCA, principles of law and equity supplement the ORLLCA.

The act specifies that Ohio law governs all of the following:

- The organization and internal affairs of an LLC;
- The liability of a member as a member for the LLC's debts, obligations, or other liabilities;
- The authority of an LLC's members and agents;
- The availability of an LLC's assets or series thereof for the LLC's obligations or another series thereof.

The ORLLCA prohibits the strict construction of any of its provisions based solely on the fact that those provisions are in derogation of the common law. In addition, it explicitly exempts any interest in an LLC from the operation of certain requirements relating to secured transactions.⁹

Relation to Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act

The ORLLCA explicitly states that it modifies, limits, and supersedes the federal Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act. This federal law was enacted to facilitate the use of electronic records and electronic signatures in interstate and foreign commerce by ensuring the validity and legal effect of contracts entered into electronically. The act does not, however, modify, limit, or supersede the consumer disclosure provisions of that act or authorize electronic delivery of certain notices described in that act.¹⁰

Application

Unless expressly stated to the contrary in the act, all amendments of the act apply to LLCs and members and agents whether or not existing as such at the time of the enactment of any such amendment.¹¹

An LLC formed and existing under the ORLLCA may conduct its activities and affairs, carry on its operations, and have and exercise the powers granted by the ORLLCA in any state, foreign country, or other jurisdiction.¹²

⁹ R.C. 1706.06 and 1706.061 and R.C. 1309.406 and 1309.408, not in the act.

¹⁰ R.C. 1706.81 and 15 United States Code (U.S.C.) 7001 *et seq.*, 7001(c), and 7003(b).

¹¹ R.C. 1706.84.

¹² R.C. 1706.82.

Conforming changes

The act references newly created Chapter 1706 sections in existing Revised Code sections that currently reference the corresponding Chapter 1705 sections.¹³

Formation

Name

An LLC's name must contain the words "limited liability company" or the abbreviation "L.L.C.," "LLC," "limited," "ltd.," or "ltd." And except in certain cases such as those mentioned below or in the case of a reorganization, merger, or consolidation with another business entity, the Secretary of State must not accept for filing the articles of organization of an LLC if the company name set forth in the articles is not distinguishable on the Secretary of State's records from the name of any registered domestic or foreign LLC, corporation, partnership, or any trade name to which the exclusive right, at the time in question, is registered with the Secretary of State.

Despite this general prohibition on indistinguishable names, the act allows an LLC to apply to the Secretary of State for authorization to use a name that is not distinguishable from the above if the LLC obtains and files the consent of the other person using the name or with the exclusive right to use the name. This consent must be on a form prescribed by the Secretary of State, in writing, and signed by the authorized person.

If a judicial sale or other transfer by order of a tribunal involves the right to use the name of an LLC or of a foreign LLC, then the above prohibition is not applicable with respect to any person that is subject to the order.

Any person that wishes to reserve a name for a proposed new LLC, an LLC that intends to change its name, or an assumed name for a foreign LLC whose name is not available may apply for the exclusive right to use a specified name as the name of the company. If the Secretary of State finds that the specified name is available for use, the Secretary must file the application. The applicant has the exclusive right for 180 days from the date of the application to use the name. The right may be transferred by the applicant or other holder of the right by filing with the Secretary a written transfer that states the name and address of the transferee.¹⁴

¹³ R.C. 111.16, 122.16, 122.173, 135.14, 135.142, 135.35, 150.05, 718.01, 1329.01, 1329.02, 1701.03, 1701.05, 1701.791, 1702.05, 1702.411, 1703.04, 1729.36, 1729.38, 1745.461, 1751.01, 1776.69, 1776.82, 1782.02, 1782.432, 1785.09, 3345.203, 3964.03, 3964.17, 4701.14, 4703.18, 4703.331, 4715.18, 4715.22, 4715.365, 4715.431, 4717.06, 4723.16, 4725.33, 4729.161, 4729.541, 4731.226, 4731.228, 4732.28, 4733.16, 4734.17, 4755.111, 4755.471, 4757.37, 5701.14, 5715.19, 5733.04, 5733.33, 5733.42, 5747.01, and 5751.01.

¹⁴ R.C. 1706.07.

Operating agreement

Scope, functions, and limitations

Subject to the below exceptions, under the act an operating agreement governs relations among the members as members and between the members and the LLC, and to the extent that the operating agreement does not provide for a particular matter, the act's remaining provisions govern that matter.¹⁵

Exceptions

To the extent that a member, manager, or other person has duties, including fiduciary duties, to the LLC, or to another member or to another person that is a party to or is otherwise bound by an operating agreement, those duties may be expanded, restricted, or eliminated by a written operating agreement. However, an operating agreement may not eliminate the implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing.

A written operating agreement may provide for the limitation or elimination of liabilities for breach of contract and breach of duties, including fiduciary duties. However, an operating agreement may not limit or eliminate liability for any act or omission that constitutes a bad faith violation of the implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing. Also, a member, manager, or other person is not liable to an LLC or to another member or to another person that is a party to or is otherwise bound by an operating agreement for breach of fiduciary duty for the member's or other person's good faith reliance on the operating agreement.¹⁶

Permissible operating agreement provisions

An operating agreement may specify penalties or consequences for members or assignees who do not comply with the operating agreement. These penalties or consequences may include any of the following:

- Reducing or eliminating the defaulting member's or assignee's proportionate interest in an LLC;
- Subordinating the member's or assignee's membership interest to that of nondefaulting members or assignees;
- Forcing a sale of the member's or assignee's membership interest;
- Forfeiting the defaulting member's or assignee's membership interest;
- The lending by other members or assignees of the amount necessary to meet the defaulting member's or assignee's commitment;

¹⁵ R.C. 1706.08(A).

¹⁶ R.C. 1706.08(B)(1) to (3).

- A fixing of the value of the defaulting member's or assignee's membership interest by appraisal or by formula and redemption or sale of the membership interest at that value;
- Any other penalty or consequence.¹⁷

Prohibited operating agreement provisions

An operating agreement may not do any of the following:

- Vary the nature of the LLC as a separate legal entity;
- Unless a person who is not a member, dissociated member, or assignee is provided rights under an operating agreement, restrict the rights of that person;
- Vary the power of a court under the act's provisions governing what happens when a person is aggrieved by the failure of another person to sign or deliver a record under the act;
- Eliminate the implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing;
- Eliminate or limit the liability of a member or other person for any act or omission that constitutes a bad faith violation of the implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing;
- Waive the provision that a promise by a member to make a contribution to an LLC or series thereof is not enforceable unless it is in a signed writing;
- Waive the prohibition on issuance of a certificate of a membership interest in bearer form;
- Waive certain requirements relating to a series of an LLC.¹⁸

Effect on LLC and persons admitted as members; pre-formation agreement

Under the act, an LLC is bound by and may enforce its operating agreement, whether or not it has itself manifested assent to the agreement. A person that is admitted as an LLC member becomes a party to and assents to the operating agreement subject to the provision that a promise by a member to make a contribution to an LLC or series thereof is not enforceable unless it is in a signed writing.

Two or more persons intending to be the initial LLC members may make an agreement providing that upon the formation of the LLC the agreement will become its operating agreement.

One person intending to be the initial LLC member may assent to terms providing that upon the formation of the LLC the terms will become the operating agreement. The operating

¹⁷ R.C. 1706.08(B)(4) and (5).

¹⁸ R.C. 1706.08(C), 1706.082(B), 1706.171, 1706.281(A), 1706.341(D), and 1706.761(B).

agreement of an LLC having only one member is not unenforceable by reason of there being only one person who is a party to the operating agreement.¹⁹

Effect on third parties and relationship to records effective on behalf of LLC

The act allows an operating agreement to be amended upon the consent of all the LLC's members or in such other manner authorized by the operating agreement. If an operating agreement provides for the manner in which it may be amended, including by requiring the approval of a person who is not a party to the operating agreement or the satisfaction of conditions, it may be amended only in that manner or as otherwise permitted by law; except that the approval of any person may be waived by that person and any conditions may be waived by all persons for whose benefit those conditions were intended.

An operating agreement may provide rights to any person, including a person who is not a party to the operating agreement, to the extent set forth in the operating agreement.

The obligations of an LLC and its members to a person in the person's capacity as an assignee or dissociated member are governed by the operating agreement. An assignee and dissociated member are bound by the operating agreement.²⁰

Statutory agent and service of process

Appointment of statutory agent

Each LLC and registered foreign LLC must maintain continuously an Ohio agent for service of process ("statutory agent") on the company. The statutory agent must be a natural person who is an Ohio resident or a business entity that has a business address in Ohio.

If the statutory agent is an entity other than a domestic corporation, the statutory agent must meet the requirements of the Ohio Corporation and Partnership Laws for an entity of the statutory agent's type to transact business or exercise privileges in Ohio. The act prohibits the Secretary of State from accepting an LLC's original articles of organization or a foreign LLC's original registration for filing unless both of the following accompany the articles or registration:

- A written appointment of a statutory agent that is signed by an authorized representative of the LLC or foreign LLC;
- A written acceptance of the appointment that is signed by the designated statutory agent on a form prescribed by the Secretary of State.

In cases other than the original filing of articles or registration, the company must appoint the statutory agent and file with the Secretary of State, on a form prescribed by the Secretary of State, a written appointment of that statutory agent that is signed by an

¹⁹ R.C. 1706.081 and 1706.281(A).

²⁰ R.C. 1706.082.

authorized representative of the company and a written acceptance of the appointment that is signed by the designated statutory agent.

The written appointment of a statutory agent must set forth the name and address in Ohio of the statutory agent and must otherwise be in such form as the Secretary of State prescribes. The Secretary of State must keep a record of the names of LLCs and foreign LLCs, and the names and addresses of their respective statutory agents.²¹

Change of statutory agent or agent's address

If any statutory agent dies, resigns, or moves outside of Ohio, the LLC or foreign LLC must immediately appoint another statutory agent and file with the Secretary of State, on a form prescribed by the Secretary of State, a written appointment of the statutory agent and acceptance of appointment.

If the statutory agent changes the statutory agent's address, the statutory agent or the LLC or foreign LLC must file with the Secretary of State, on a form prescribed by the Secretary of State, a written statement setting forth the new address.

A statutory agent may resign by filing with the Secretary of State, on a form prescribed by the Secretary of State, a written notice of resignation that is signed by the statutory agent and by mailing a copy of that notice to the LLC or foreign LLC at the current or last known address of its principal office. The notice must be mailed to the company on or prior to the date that the notice is filed with the Secretary of State and must set forth the name of the company, the name and current address of the statutory agent, the current or last known address of the company's principal office, a statement of the resignation of the statutory agent, and a statement that a copy of the notice has been sent to the company within the specified time and manner. The authority of the resigning statutory agent terminates 30 days after the filing of the notice with the Secretary of State.

An LLC or foreign LLC may revoke the appointment of its statutory agent by filing with the Secretary of State a written appointment of another statutory agent and an acceptance of appointment and a statement indicating that the appointment of the former statutory agent is revoked.²²

Service of process

Any legal process, notice, or demand required or permitted by law to be served upon an LLC may be served upon the LLC by delivering a copy of it to the address of the statutory agent or, if the statutory agent is a natural person, to the statutory agent.

In certain circumstances, a party desiring service on the LLC or foreign LLC may serve the Secretary of State as the statutory agent. Service upon the Secretary of State is acceptable if all of the following apply:

²¹ R.C. 1706.09(A) to (C).

²² R.C. 1706.09(D) to (G).

- The statutory agent cannot be found or no longer has the address that is stated in the Secretary of State's records or the LLC or foreign LLC has failed to maintain a statutory agent.
- The party or its representative files with the Secretary of State an affidavit that states that one of those circumstances exists and states the most recent address of the company that the party has been able to find after a diligent search.
- The party or its representative delivers to the Secretary of State four copies of the process, notice, or demand, accompanied by a fee of \$5.

The Secretary of State then must give notice of that delivery to the company at either its principal office as shown upon the Secretary of State's records or at any different address specified in the affidavit of the party desiring service. The Secretary also must forward to the company at either address by certified mail a copy of the process, notice, or demand. Service upon the company is made when the Secretary of State gives the notice and forwards the process, notice, or demand.²³

Cancellation and reinstatement

If an LLC or foreign LLC fails to continuously maintain a statutory agent or file a change of name or address of a statutory agent, the Secretary of State must give notice of the failure by ordinary or electronic mail to the company. The notice must be sent to the electronic mail address provided to the Secretary or the address set forth in the agent's notice of resignation. Unless the default is cured within 30 days after the mailing or within any further period of time that the Secretary grants, the Secretary must cancel the LLC's articles or the foreign LLC's registration without further notice or action by the Secretary. The Secretary must make a notation of the cancellation on the Secretary's records.

An LLC or foreign LLC whose articles or registration have been canceled may be reinstated by filing, on a form prescribed by the Secretary, an application for reinstatement and the required appointment of statutory agent or required statement, and by paying the required filing fee. The rights and privileges of an LLC or foreign LLC whose articles or registration has been reinstated are subject to "**Cancellation and reinstatement**" below. The Secretary must furnish the Tax Commissioner a monthly list of all LLCs and foreign LLCs canceled and reinstated under the act.²⁴

Recordkeeping, other law, and signature requirements

The Secretary of State must keep a record of each process, notice, and demand that pertains to an LLC or foreign LLC and that is delivered to the Secretary's office under the act or another Ohio law that authorizes service upon the Secretary in connection with an LLC or

²³ R.C. 1706.09(H).

²⁴ R.C. 111.16(Q), 1706.09(L), and 1706.46.

foreign LLC. In that record, the Secretary of State must record the time of each delivery of that type and the Secretary 's subsequent action with respect to the process, notice, or demand.

The act does not limit or affect the right to serve any process, notice, or demand upon an LLC or foreign LLC in any other manner permitted by law.

In addition to the written appointment of a statutory agent, any other written statement filed by an LLC or foreign LLC with the Secretary must be signed by an authorized representative of the company.²⁵

Articles of organization

Original articles

Under the act, in order to form an LLC, one or more persons must execute articles of organization and deliver the articles to the Secretary of State for filing. The articles must set forth all of the following:

- The LLC's name;
- The name and street address of the LLC's statutory agent and a written acceptance of the appointment that is signed by the statutory agent;
- If applicable, a statement that the LLC may have one or more series of assets;
- Any other matters the organizers or the members determine to include in the articles of organization.

An LLC is formed when the articles of organization are filed by the Secretary of State or at any later date or time specified in the articles. The fact that articles are on file is notice of the matters required to be included by the first three bullet points above but is not notice of any other fact. An operating agreement may be entered into before, at the time of, or after the filing of the articles. Regardless of when the operating agreement is entered into, it may be made effective as of the filing of the articles or any other time provided in the operating agreement.²⁶

Amendment or restatement of articles

The act permits an LLC's articles of organization to be amended at any time or to be restated with or without amendment at any time.

To amend its articles of organization, an LLC must deliver to the Secretary of State for filing, on a form prescribed by the Secretary of State, a certificate of amendment containing the LLC's name and registration number and the changes the amendment makes to the articles.

Restated articles of organization must be delivered to the Secretary of State for filing in the same manner as an amendment. Restated articles must be designated as such in the

²⁵ R.C. 1706.09(I) to (K).

²⁶ R.C. 1706.16 and 1706.761(B)(3).

heading and state in the heading or in an introductory paragraph the LLC's name and the date of the filing of its articles. Any amendment or change effected in connection with the restatement of the articles is subject to any other provision of the ORLLCA, not inconsistent with this provision, that would apply if a separate certificate of amendment were filed to effect the amendment or change.

The original articles of organization, as amended or supplemented, are superseded by the restated articles. Thereafter, the articles, including any further amendment or changes, are the LLC's articles, but the original effective date of formation remains unchanged.²⁷

Records; certificate of full force and effect

Signing of records

Under the act, a record delivered to the Secretary of State for filing must be signed as provided below:

- An LLC's initial articles of organization must be signed by at least one person;
- A record signed on behalf of an LLC must be signed by a person authorized by the LLC;
- A record filed on behalf of a dissolved LLC that has no members must be signed by the person winding up the LLC's activities;
- A statement of denial by a person must be signed by that person;
- Any other record must be signed by the person on whose behalf the record is delivered to the Secretary of State.

Any record to be filed under the ORLLCA may be signed by an agent, including an attorney-in-fact. Powers of attorney relating to the signing of the record need not be delivered to the Secretary of State.²⁸

Signing and filing pursuant to judicial order

If a person required by the act to sign a record or deliver a record to the Secretary of State for filing does not do so, any other person that is aggrieved by that failure to sign may petition the appropriate court to order the person to sign the record or to deliver the record to the Secretary of State for filing or order the Secretary of State to file the record unsigned. A court may award reasonable expenses, including reasonable attorney's fees, to the prevailing party with respect to any claim made under such a petition.

If the petitioner is not the LLC or foreign LLC to whom the record pertains, the petitioner must make the LLC or foreign LLC a party to the action. A person aggrieved under the above paragraph may seek the remedies provided in that paragraph in a separate action against the

²⁷ R.C. 1706.161.

²⁸ R.C. 1706.17, 1706.20, and 1706.472(A) and (B).

person required to sign the record or as a part of any other action concerning the LLC in which the person required to sign the record is made a party.

A record filed unsigned pursuant to these requirements is effective without being signed.²⁹

Delivery to and filing of records by Secretary of State; effective time and date

Under the act, each record authorized or required to be delivered to the Secretary of State for filing under the ORLLCA must meet all of the following requirements:

- It must contain all information required by Ohio law to be contained in the record;
- It must be on or in a medium and in such form acceptable to the Secretary of State and from which the Secretary may create a record that contains all of the information stated in the record, and the Secretary may specify the means of delivery. The act imposes requirements on paper records, if they are permitted, and permits the Secretary to impose other reasonable requirements on both paper and electronic records.
- It generally must be in English, but records of a foreign person need not be in English if accompanied by a reasonably authenticated English translation. A person's name set forth in the record need not be in English if expressed in English letters or Arabic or Roman numerals.

Unless the Secretary of State determines that a record does not comply with the filing requirements of the ORLLCA, the Secretary must file the record and send a certificate and a receipt for the fees to the person who submitted the record. Upon request and payment of the requisite fee, the Secretary must furnish to the requester a certified copy of a requested record.

Except as otherwise provided in the act's provisions regarding the resignation of a statutory agent and the correction of filed records, a record delivered to the Secretary of State for filing under the ORLLCA may specify an effective time and a delayed effective date of not more than 90 days following the date of receipt by the Secretary of State. Subject to the act's provisions regarding the resignation of a statutory agent and the correction of filed records, a record filed by the Secretary of State is effective as follows:

- If the record does not specify an effective time and does not specify a delayed effective date, on the date the record is filed;
- If the record specifies an effective time but not a delayed effective date, on the date the record is filed at the time specified in the record;
- If the record specifies a delayed effective date but not an effective time, at 12:01 a.m. on the earlier of the specified date or the 90th day after the record is filed;

²⁹ R.C. 1706.171.

- If the record specifies an effective time and a delayed effective date, at the specified time on the earlier of the specified date or the 90th day after the record is filed.³⁰

Correction of filed record

An LLC or foreign LLC may file with the Secretary of State a certificate of correction to correct a record previously filed if at the time of filing the record contained incorrect or inaccurate information or was defectively signed. The certificate of correction must not state a delayed effective date and must do all of the following:

- Describe the record to be corrected, including its filing date, or attach a copy of the record;
- Specify the inaccurate information or the defect in the signing;
- Correct the incorrect or inaccurate information or defective signature.

When filed, a certificate of correction is effective retroactively as of the effective date of the record the statement corrects, but the statement is effective when filed as to persons that previously relied on the uncorrected record and would be adversely affected by the correction.³¹

Liability for incorrect or inaccurate information in filed record

A person who signs a record authorized or required to be filed under the ORLLCA affirms under the penalty for falsification that the facts stated in the record are true in all material respects. If a record filed with the Secretary of State contains incorrect or inaccurate information, a person harmed by reasonable reliance on the information may recover damages from a person that (1) signed the record, or caused another to sign it on the person's behalf, and (2) knew the information to be incorrect or inaccurate at the time the record was signed.³²

Certificate of full force and effect or registration

Under the act, the Secretary of State, upon request and payment of the requisite fee, must furnish to any person a certificate of full force and effect for an LLC if the Secretary of State's records show that the LLC has been formed under the Ohio law. The certificate must state the LLC's name and date of formation and that the LLC is in full force and effect on the Secretary of State's records.

Similarly, the Secretary of State, upon request and payment of the requisite fee, must furnish to any person a certificate of registration for a foreign LLC if the Secretary of State's records show that the Secretary of State has filed a certificate of registration for the foreign LLC, has not canceled the certificate, and has not filed a statement of cancellation of the

³⁰ R.C. 1706.09(F), 1706.172, and 1706.173.

³¹ R.C. 1706.173.

³² R.C. 1706.174 and R.C. 2921.13, not in the act.

certificate. The certificate must state the foreign LLC's name and that the foreign LLC is authorized to transact business in Ohio.³³

Subject to any qualification stated in the applicable certificate, the certificate is, for a period of 30 days after the date of the certificate, conclusive evidence that the LLC is in existence or the foreign LLC is authorized to transact business in Ohio.³⁴

Power and authority

Power to bind the LLC

The act prohibits any person from having the power to bind an LLC, or a series thereof, except to the extent:

- The person is authorized to act as the agent of the LLC or series pursuant to the operating agreement;
- The person is authorized to act as the agent of the LLC or series regarding the direction and oversight of the activities and affairs of the LLC or series;
- Provided in "**Statement of authority**" below, or by law other than the act's provisions.³⁵

Statement of authority

Under the act, an LLC, on behalf of itself or a series thereof, may deliver to the Secretary of State for filing on a form prescribed by the Secretary a statement of authority, that must include the name and registration number of the LLC. It also may state the authority of a specific person or position to enter into transactions on behalf of the LLC or series.

To amend or cancel a statement of authority, an LLC must, on behalf of itself or a series thereof, deliver to the Secretary of State for filing an amendment or cancellation stating all of the following:

- The name and registration number of the LLC;
- The date of filing of the statement of authority to which the amendment or cancellation statement pertains;
- The contents of the amendment or a declaration that the statement to which it pertains is canceled.

An effective statement of authority generally is conclusive in favor of a person that gives value in reliance on the statement.

³³ R.C. 1706.175(B).

³⁴ R.C. 1706.175.

³⁵ R.C. 1706.18 and 1706.30(A).

Upon filing, a certificate of dissolution filed pursuant to the act's dissolution provisions operates as a cancellation of each statement of authority. After a certificate of dissolution becomes effective, an LLC may, on behalf of itself or a series thereof, deliver to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of authority that is designated as a post-dissolution or post-cancellation statement of authority.

Upon filing, a statement of denial filed pursuant to "**Statement of denial**" below operates as an amendment of the statement of authority to which the statement of denial pertains.³⁶

Statement of denial

If a person is named in a filed statement of authority, the person may deliver to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of denial that states the name and registration number of the LLC, states the date of filing of the statement of authority to which the statement of denial pertains, and denies the person's authority.³⁷

Members

Liability of members to third parties

Under the act, an LLC member is not liable, solely by reason of being a member, for a debt, obligation, or liability of the LLC or a series thereof; or for the acts or omissions of any other member, agent, or employee of the LLC or a series thereof. The failure of an LLC or any of its members to observe any formalities relating to the exercise of the LLC's powers or the management of its activities is not a factor to consider in, or a ground for, imposing liability on the members for the LLC's debts, obligations, or liability.³⁸

Admission, contributions, and distributions

Admission

The act provides that in connection with an LLC's formation, a person is admitted as an LLC member upon the formation of the LLC if the organizer was authorized by one or more persons intending to be LLC members to file the articles of organization on their behalf. Otherwise, each organizer has the authority of an LLC member upon the formation of the LLC until the admission of the initial member of the LLC.

After the LLC's formation, a person can only be admitted as an LLC member in the following manners:

- As provided in the operating agreement;
- As the result of a merger or conversion;

³⁶ R.C. 1706.19, 1706.20, and 1706.471(B)(1).

³⁷ R.C. 1706.20.

³⁸ R.C. 1706.26.

- With the consent of all the members;
- If, within 90 consecutive days after the occurrence of the dissociation of the last remaining member, both of the following occur:
 - All holders of the membership interest last assigned by the last person to have been a member consent to the designation of a person to be admitted as a member;
 - The designated person consents to be admitted as a member effective as of the date the last person to have been a member ceased to be a member.

A person may be admitted as a member without acquiring a membership interest and without making or being obligated to make a contribution to the LLC. A person may also be admitted as the sole member without acquiring a membership interest and without making or being obligated to make a contribution to the LLC.³⁹

Contributions

Under the act, a contribution of a member to an LLC, or a series thereof, may consist of cash, property, services rendered, or a promissory note or other binding obligation to contribute cash or property or to perform services. A promise by a member to make a contribution is not enforceable unless set forth in a writing signed by the member.

A member's obligation to make a contribution is not excused by the member's death, disability, or other inability to perform personally. If a member does not make a contribution required by an enforceable promise, the member or the member's estate is obligated, at the election of the LLC, or a series thereof, to contribute money equal to the value of the portion of the contribution that has not been made. The election is in addition to, and not in lieu of, any other rights that the LLC or series may have under the operating agreement or applicable law.

The obligation of a member to make a contribution to an LLC may be compromised only by consent of all the members. A conditional obligation of a member to make a contribution to an LLC may not be enforced unless the conditions of the obligation have been satisfied or waived as to or by that member. Conditional obligations include contributions payable upon a discretionary call of an LLC before the time the call occurs.

The obligation of a member associated with a series to make a contribution to the series may be compromised only by consent of all the members associated with that series. A conditional obligation of a member to make a contribution to a series may not be enforced unless the conditions of the obligation have been satisfied or waived as to or by that member. Conditional obligations include contributions payable upon a discretionary call of that series before the time the call occurs.⁴⁰

³⁹ R.C. 1706.27.

⁴⁰ R.C. 1706.28 and 1706.281.

Distributions

LLCs. The act provides that all members must share equally in any distributions made by an LLC before its dissolution and winding up. A member has a right to a distribution before the dissolution and winding up of an LLC as provided in the operating agreement. A decision to make such a distribution is a decision in the ordinary course of the LLC's activities. A member's dissociation does not entitle the dissociated member to a distribution.

A member does not have a right to demand and receive a distribution from an LLC in any form other than money. Except as otherwise provided in the act's provisions regarding payment of surplus upon dissolution, an LLC may distribute an asset in kind if each member receives a percentage of the asset in proportion to the member's share of contributions.

If a member becomes entitled to receive a distribution, the member has the status of, and is entitled to all remedies available to, a creditor of the LLC with respect to the distribution.⁴¹

Series. The above provisions do not apply to a distribution made by a series, but the act provides parallel provisions that are limited to the series. All members associated with a series (series member) share equally in any distributions made by the series before its dissolution and winding up. A series member has a right to such a distribution as provided in the operating agreement. A decision of the series to make such a distribution is a decision in the ordinary course of series' activities. A member's dissociation from a series does not entitle the dissociated member to a distribution.

A series member does not have a right to demand and receive a distribution from the series in any form other than money. Except as otherwise provided in the act's provisions regarding payment of surplus upon the winding up of a series, a series may distribute an asset in kind if each series member receives a percentage of the asset in proportion to the member's share of distributions.

If a series member becomes entitled to receive a distribution, the member has the status of, and is entitled to all remedies available to, a creditor of the series with respect to the distribution.⁴²

Activities and affairs of an LLC or series

Under the act, the activities and affairs of the LLC are under the direction, and subject to the oversight, of its members or in the case of a series, subject to the oversight of the members associated with the series.

Except as provided in the below paragraphs, a matter in the ordinary course of activities of the LLC or series may be decided by a majority of the members or majority of members associated with the series.

⁴¹ R.C. 1706.29(A) and 1706.475(C).

⁴² R.C. 1706.29(B) and (C) and 1706.7613(C).

The consent of all members is required to do any of the following:

- Amend the operating agreement;
- File a petition of the LLC for relief under the federal Bankruptcy Code or a comparable federal, state, or foreign law governing insolvency;
- Undertake any act outside the ordinary course of the LLC's activities;
- Undertake, authorize, or approve any other act or matter for which the act requires the consent of all members.

The consent of all members associated with a series is required to do either of the following:

- Undertake any act outside the ordinary course of the series' activities;
- Undertake, authorize, or approve any other act or matter for which the act requires the consent of all the members associated with a series.

Any matter requiring the consent of members may be decided without a meeting, and a member may appoint a proxy or other agent to consent or otherwise act for the member by signing an appointing record, personally or by the member's agent.

The act does not entitle a member to remuneration for services performed for an LLC.⁴³

General standards of conduct

Generally, if a manager has been designated to supervise or manage the LLC's activities or affairs, the only obligation a member owes to the LLC and the other members is to discharge the member's duties and obligations under the ORLLCA and the operating agreement and exercise any rights consistent with the implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing. The operating agreement or a written agreement with a member can create additional fiduciary duties. But otherwise, the duties of loyalty and care under the act do not apply to such a member. If no managers have been designated to supervise or manage the LLC's activities, generally the only fiduciary duties a member owes to the LLC and the other members are the duty of loyalty and the duty of care set forth in the act.

A member's duty of loyalty to the LLC and the other members is limited to the following:

- To account to the LLC and hold for it any property, profit, or benefit derived by the member in the conduct and winding up of the LLC business or derived from the member's use of LLC property or appropriation of an LLC opportunity;
- To refrain from dealing with the LLC in the conduct or winding up of the LLC business as or on behalf of a party having an interest adverse to the LLC.

⁴³ R.C. 1706.30.

A member's duty of care to the LLC and the other members in the conduct and winding up of the LLC business is limited to refraining from engaging in grossly negligent or reckless conduct, intentional misconduct, or a knowing violation of law.

A member must discharge the member's duties to the LLC and the other members under the ORLLCA and under the operating agreement and exercise any rights consistent with the implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing. A member does not violate a duty or obligation under the ORLLCA or under the operating agreement merely because the member's conduct furthers the member's own interest.

All the members of an LLC may authorize or ratify, after full disclosure of all material facts, a specific act or transaction that otherwise would violate the duty of loyalty. It is a defense to a claim that a member dealt with the LLC having an adverse interest and any comparable claim in equity or at common law that the transaction was fair to the LLC. If, as permitted, by the ORLLCA or the LLC's operating agreement, a member enters into a transaction with an LLC that otherwise would be prohibited by the act's provisions regarding dealing with the LLC while having an adverse interest, the member's rights and obligations arising from the transaction are the same as those of a person that is not a member.

The provisions under "**General standards of conduct**" apply to a person winding up the LLC business as the personal or legal representative of the last surviving member as if the person were a member.⁴⁴

Manager fiduciary duties to LLC and members

The act provides that unless the operating agreement or a written agreement with a manager establishes additional fiduciary duties, the manager's only fiduciary duties to the LLC or its members are the duty of loyalty and the duty of care set forth below.

A manager's duty of loyalty to the LLC and its members parallels the duty of loyalty owed by members and is limited to the following:

- To account to the LLC and hold for it any property, profit, or benefit derived by the manager in the conduct and winding up of the LLC business or derived from a use by the manager of LLC property or from the appropriation of an LLC opportunity;
- To refrain from dealing with the LLC in the conduct or winding up of the LLC business as or on behalf of a party having an interest adverse to the LLC.

A manager's duty of care to the LLC in the conduct and winding up of the LLC activities differs from the duty owed by members and is limited to acting in good faith, in a manner the manager reasonably believes to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the LLC. A manager is not to be considered to be acting in good faith if the manager has knowledge concerning the matter in question that would cause reliance on information, opinions, reports,

⁴⁴ R.C. 1706.31.

or statements that are prepared or presented by any of the persons described below in **“Reliance on reports and information”** to be unwarranted.

In addition, a manager is liable for monetary relief for a violation of the manager’s duty of care only if it is proved that the manager’s action or failure to act was undertaken with deliberate intent to harm the LLC or undertaken with reckless disregard for the best interests of the company. This provision does not apply if, and only to the extent that, at the time of the manager’s act or omission, either of the following is true:

- The LLC’s articles or operating agreement state by specific reference to the ORLLCA that those provisions do not apply to the LLC;
- A written agreement between the manager and the LLC states by specific reference to the ORLLCA that those provisions do not apply to the manager.

All the members of an LLC may authorize or ratify, after full disclosure of all material facts, a specific act or transaction that would otherwise violate the duty of loyalty. It is a defense to a claim that a manager dealt with the LLC as or on behalf of a party having an adverse interest that the transaction was fair to the LLC. If, as permitted by this paragraph or the operating agreement, a manager enters into a transaction with the LLC that otherwise would be prohibited due to the manager acting with an adverse interest, the manager’s rights and obligations arising from the transaction are the same as those of a person that is not a manager.

A manager must discharge the duties to the LLC and the members under the act and under the operating agreement and exercise any rights consistently with the implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing.

The act states that nothing under **“Manager fiduciary duties to LLC and members”** affects the duties of a manager who acts in any capacity other than the manager’s capacity as a manager. If a manager of an LLC also is a member of the LLC, the actions taken in the capacity as a member of the LLC are subject to the provisions of **“General standards of conduct”** above. Nothing in **“Manager fiduciary duties to LLC and members”** affects any contractual obligations of a manager to the LLC.⁴⁵

Indemnification, advancement, reimbursement, and insurance

Under the act, an LLC, or a series thereof, may indemnify and hold harmless a member or other person, pay in advance or reimburse expenses incurred by a member or other person, and purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of a member or other person.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ R.C. 1706.311.

⁴⁶ R.C. 1706.32.

Right of members and dissociated members to information

Upon providing reasonable notice to the LLC, a member may inspect and copy during regular business hours, at a reasonable location specified by the LLC, any record maintained by the LLC, to the extent the information is material to the member's rights and duties under the operating agreement or the act. An LLC may charge a person that makes a demand under this provision the reasonable costs of labor and materials for copying.

A member or dissociated member may exercise rights under this provision through an agent or, in the case of an individual under legal disability, a legal representative. Any restriction or condition imposed by the operating agreement or by the confidential information provisions described under the bullet points below applies both to the agent or legal representative and the member or dissociated member.

The rights described in "**Right of members and dissociated members to information**" do not extend to an assignee who is not admitted as a member.

In addition to any restriction or condition stated in its operating agreement, an LLC, as a matter within the ordinary course of its activities, may do either of the following:

- Impose reasonable restrictions and conditions on access to and use of information to be furnished under this provision, including designating information confidential and imposing nondisclosure and safeguarding obligations on the recipient;
- Keep confidential from the members and any other persons, for such period of time as the LLC deems reasonable, any information that the LLC reasonably believes to be in the nature of trade secrets or other information the disclosure of which the LLC in good faith believes is not in the best interest of the LLC or could damage the LLC or its activities, or that the LLC is required by law or by agreement with a third party to keep confidential.⁴⁷

Reliance on reports and information

The act provides that each LLC member and agent is fully protected in relying in good faith upon the records of the LLC. The member and agent also is fully protected in relying in good faith upon information, opinions, reports, or statements presented by another member or agent of the LLC, or by any other person as to matters the member or the agent reasonably believes are within that other person's professional or expert competence, including information, opinions, reports, or statements as to any of the following:

- The value and amount of the assets, liabilities, profits, or losses of the LLC, or a series thereof;

⁴⁷ R.C. 1706.33.

- The value and amount of assets or reserves or contracts, agreements, or other undertakings that would be sufficient to pay claims and obligations of the LLC, or series thereof, or to make reasonable provisions to pay those claims and obligations;
- Any other facts pertinent to the existence and amount of assets from which distributions to members or creditors might properly be paid.⁴⁸

Power of personal representative of deceased member

If a member dies, the deceased member's personal representative or other legal representative may, for purposes of settling the estate, exercise the rights of a current member under "**Right of members and dissociated members to information**" above.⁴⁹

Assignment of LLC interest

A member's membership interest is personal property and is assignable.⁵⁰ The assignment, in whole or in part, does not by itself cause a member to cease to be a member of the LLC or cease to be associated with a series of the LLC. An assignment also does not by itself cause a dissolution and winding up of the LLC, or a series thereof. In addition, the assignment does not, subject to "**Power of personal representative of deceased member**" above, entitle the assignee to do either of the following:

- Participate in the management or conduct of the activities of the LLC, or a series thereof;
- Have access to records or other information concerning the activities of the LLC, or a series thereof.

Under the act, an assignee has the right to receive, in accordance with the assignment, distributions to which the assignor would otherwise be entitled.

A membership interest may be evidenced by a certificate of membership interest issued by the LLC, or a series thereof. An operating agreement may provide for the assignment of the membership interest represented by the certificate and make other provisions with respect to the certificate. The act prohibits certificates of membership interest from being in bearer form.

An LLC, or a series thereof, need not give effect to an assignee's rights until the LLC, or a series thereof, has notice of the assignment.

When a member assigns a membership interest, the assignor retains the rights of a member other than the right to distributions assigned and retains all duties and obligations of a member. This does not apply when a person assigns all of the person's membership interest, other than for security purposes, thereby dissociating the person from the LLC.

⁴⁸ R.C. 1706.331.

⁴⁹ R.C. 1706.332.

⁵⁰ R.C. 1706.34.

When a member assigns a membership interest to a person that is admitted as a member with respect to the assigned interest, the assignee is only liable for the member's obligations to make contributions to the extent that the obligations are known to the assignee when the assignee voluntarily accepts admission as a member.⁵¹

Charging order

The act provides that on application to a court of competent jurisdiction by any judgment creditor of a member or assignee, the court may charge the membership interest of the judgment debtor with payment of the unsatisfied amount of the judgment with interest. To the extent so charged and after the LLC has been served with the charging order, the judgment creditor has only the right to receive any distribution or distributions to which the judgment debtor would otherwise be entitled in respect of the membership interest.

After the LLC is served with a charging order, the LLC or any member is entitled to pay to or deposit with the clerk of the court issuing the charging order any distribution to which the judgment debtor would otherwise be entitled in respect of the charged membership interest. The payment or deposit discharges the LLC and the judgment debtor from liability for the amount paid or deposited and any interest that might accrue on it. Upon receipt of the payment or deposit, the clerk must notify the judgment creditor of its receipt. The judgment creditor must, after any payment or deposit into the court, petition the court for payment of so much of the amount paid or deposited as necessary to pay the judgment. Excess amounts must be distributed to the judgment debtor, and the charging order must be extinguished. The court may order the clerk to deposit, pending the judgment creditor's petition, any money paid or deposited with the clerk, in an interest bearing account at a bank authorized to receive deposits of public funds.

A charging order constitutes a lien on the judgment debtor's membership interest and does not affect the judgment debtor's status. A judgment debtor that is a member retains the rights of a member and remains subject to all duties and obligations of a member. A judgment debtor that is an assignee retains the rights of an assignee and remains subject to all duties and obligations of an assignee. The act does not deprive any member or assignee of the benefit of any exemption laws applicable to the member's or assignee's membership interest.

The charging order constitutes the sole and exclusive remedy by which a judgment creditor of a member or assignee may satisfy a judgment out of the judgment debtor's membership interest. The judgment creditor has no right to foreclose, under the ORLLCA or any other law, upon the charging order, the charging order lien, or the judgment debtor's membership interest. The judgment creditor has no right to obtain possession of, or otherwise exercise legal or equitable remedies with respect to, the judgment debtor's membership interest or the property of an LLC. Court orders for actions or requests for accounts and inquiries that the judgment debtor might have made to the LLC are not available to a judgment

⁵¹ R.C. 1706.341, 1706.281, and 1706.441(J).

creditor attempting to satisfy the judgment out of the judgment debtor's membership interest and may not be ordered by a court.⁵²

Dissociation

Wrongful dissociation

Under the act, a person is prohibited from voluntarily dissociating from an LLC. A person's dissociation from an LLC is wrongful only if one of the following applies:

- The dissociation is in breach of an express provision of the operating agreement;
- The person is expelled as a member by a determination of a tribunal;
- The person is dissociated by becoming a debtor in bankruptcy or making a general assignment for the benefit of creditors.⁵³

A person that wrongfully dissociates as a member is liable to the LLC and, subject to the act's derivative action provisions, to the other members for damages caused by the dissociation. The liability is in addition to any other debt, obligation, or liability of the member to the LLC or the other members.⁵⁴

Circumstances causing dissociation

A person is dissociated as a member from an LLC in any of the following circumstances:

- An event stated in the operating agreement as causing the person's dissociation occurs;
- The person is expelled as a member pursuant to the operating agreement;
- The person is expelled as a member by the unanimous consent of the other members if any of the following apply:
 - It is unlawful to carry on the LLC's activities with the person as a member;
 - The person is an entity and, within 90 days after the LLC notifies the person that it will be expelled as a member because the person has filed a statement of dissolution or the equivalent, or its right to transact business has been suspended by its jurisdiction of formation, the statement of dissolution or the equivalent has not been revoked or its right to transact business has not been reinstated;
 - The person is an entity and, within 90 days after the LLC notifies the person that it will be expelled as a member because the person has been dissolved and its activities are being wound up, the entity has not been reinstated or the dissolution and winding up have not been revoked or canceled.

⁵² R.C. 1706.342.

⁵³ R.C. 1706.41(A) and (B) and 1706.411(D).

⁵⁴ R.C. 1706.41(C) and 1706.61.

- On application by the LLC, the person is expelled as a member by a tribunal's order for any of the following reasons:
 - The person has engaged, or is engaging, in wrongful conduct that has adversely and materially affected, or will adversely and materially affect, the LLC's activities;
 - The person has willfully or persistently committed, or is willfully or persistently committing, a material breach of the operating agreement or the person's duties or obligations under the ORLLCA or other applicable law;
 - The person has engaged, or is engaging, in conduct relating to the LLC's activities that makes it not reasonably practicable to carry on the activities with the person as a member.
- In the case of a person who is an individual, the person dies, a guardian or general conservator is appointed for the person, or a tribunal determines that the person has otherwise become incapable of performing the person's duties as a member under the ORLLCA or the operating agreement;
- The person, other than a sole remaining LLC member, becomes a bankruptcy debtor, executes an assignment for the benefit of creditors, or seeks, consents, or acquiesces to the appointment of a trustee, receiver, or liquidator of the person or of all or substantially all of the person's property;
- In the case of a trust or a person acting as a member by virtue of being a trustee, the trust's entire membership interest in the LLC is distributed, but not solely by reason of the substitution of a successor trustee;
- In the case of an estate or a person acting as a member by virtue of being an estate's personal representative, the estate's entire membership interest in the LLC is distributed, but not solely by reason of the substitution of a successor personal representative;
- In the case of a member that is not an individual, the legal existence of the person otherwise terminates;
- There has been an assignment of all of the person's membership interest other than an assignment for security purposes.⁵⁵

Effect of dissociation

A dissociated person has no right to participate as a member in the LLC's activities and affairs and is entitled only to receive the distributions to which that member would have been entitled if the member had not dissociated. Upon dissociation, the member's duty of loyalty and duty of care continue only with regard to matters arising and events occurring before the dissociation, unless the member participates in winding up the LLC's business. Dissociation as a

⁵⁵ R.C. 1706.411.

member does not of itself discharge the person from any debt, obligation, or liability to an LLC or the other members that the person incurred while a member.⁵⁶

Delinquency

Cancellation and reinstatement

Except as otherwise provided in the act, upon reinstatement of an LLC's articles or a foreign LLC's registration, the LLC's rights and privileges existing at the time its articles or registration were canceled are fully vested in the company as if they had not been canceled. The LLC is again entitled to exercise the rights and privileges authorized by its articles. The name of a company whose articles have been canceled is reserved for a period of one year after the date of cancellation. If the reinstatement is not made within one year after that date and it appears that a corporate name, LLC name, limited liability partnership name, limited partnership name, trade name, or assumed name has been filed, the name of which is not distinguishable upon the record as provided in the act's LLC name provisions, the Secretary of State must require the applicant for reinstatement, as a condition prerequisite to such reinstatement, to amend its articles or registration by changing its name.

Upon reinstatement, both of the following apply to the exercise of or an attempt to exercise any rights or privileges on behalf of the company by an officer, agent, or employee of the company, after cancellation and prior to reinstatement of the articles or registration:

- The exercise or attempt to exercise has the same force and effect that it would have had if the company's articles or registration had not been canceled, if it was within the scope of the company's articles that existed prior to cancellation and the person had no knowledge that the company's articles or registration had been canceled.
- The company is liable exclusively for the exercise or attempt to exercise, if the conditions set forth in the above bullet point are met.

Upon reinstatement, the exercise or attempt to exercise any rights or privileges, after cancellation and prior to reinstatement, does not constitute a violation of the act's statutory agent, cancellation, and reinstatement provisions, if the conditions set forth in the above bullet points are met.

The provisions described in "**Delinquency**" are remedial in nature and are to be construed liberally to accomplish the purpose of providing full reinstatement of an LLC's articles of organization or a foreign LLC's registration to the time of the cancellation.⁵⁷

Appeals

The act allows an LLC or foreign LLC to appeal a cancellation within 30 days after the effective date of the cancellation. The appeal must be made to one of the following:

⁵⁶ R.C. 1706.412, 1706.31(C) and (D), and 1706.472.

⁵⁷ R.C. 1706.46, 1706.07, and 1706.09.

- The court of common pleas of the county in which the street address of the LLC or foreign LLC's principal office is located;
- If the LLC or foreign LLC has no principal office in Ohio, to the court of common pleas of the county in which the street address of its statutory agent is located;
- If the LLC or foreign LLC has no statutory agent, to the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas.

The LLC or foreign LLC must commence its appeal by petitioning the appropriate court to set aside the cancellation or to determine that the LLC or foreign LLC has cured the grounds for cancellation and attaching to the petition copies of those records of the Secretary of State as may be relevant.

The appropriate court may take, or may summarily order the Secretary of State to take, whatever action the court considers appropriate. This order or decision may be appealed as in any other civil proceeding.⁵⁸

Dissolution

Events causing dissolution

The act provides that an LLC is dissolved, and that its activities must be wound up when any of the following occurs:

- An event or circumstance that the operating agreement states causes dissolution;
- The consent of all the members;
- An LLC with canceled articles has failed to cure the grounds for cancellation for three years or more and any member or person authorized pursuant to **"Power to bind the LLC"** above consents to the dissolution;
- The passage of 90 consecutive days after the occurrence of the dissociation of the last remaining member; provided that upon dissociation of the last remaining member pursuant to the act's provisions regarding the member's death, the appointment of a guardian or general conservator, or a determination by a tribunal that the member is incapable of performing the member's duties, the LLC is not dissolved if either of the following applies:
 - The operating agreement provides for the admission of a substitute member effective prior to the passage of such time period;
 - A substitute member has been admitted, as evidenced by a written record, prior to the passage of such time period, which admission is to be effective as of the date of such dissociation.

⁵⁸ R.C. 1706.461.

- On application by a member, the entry by the appropriate court of an order dissolving the LLC on the grounds that it is not reasonably practicable to carry on the LLC's activities in conformity with the operating agreement.⁵⁹

Effect of dissolution

What dissolution is not and does not do

An LLC's dissolution, in itself:

- Is not an assignment of the LLC's property;
- Does not prevent the commencement of a proceeding by or against the LLC in its LLC name;
- Does not abate or suspend a proceeding pending by or against the LLC on the effective date of dissolution;
- Does not terminate the authority of its statutory agent;
- Does not abate, suspend, or otherwise alter the application of the provisions under "**Liability of members to third parties**" above.⁶⁰

Permitted activities

Under the act, a dissolved LLC continues its existence as an LLC but generally may not carry on any activities, although it may preserve the LLC's activities and property as a going concern for a reasonable time. It may do the following to wind up and liquidate its activities and affairs:

- Collect its assets;
- Dispose of its properties that will not be distributed in kind to persons owning membership interests;
- Assign the LLC's property;
- Distribute its remaining property in accordance with "**Application of assets in winding up LLC's activities**" below;
- Discharge or make provisions for discharging its liabilities;
- Deliver to the Secretary of State for filing, on a form prescribed by the Secretary of State, a certificate of dissolution setting forth all of the following:
 - The LLC's name and registration number;
 - That the LLC has dissolved;

⁵⁹ R.C. 1706.47 and 1706.411(E).

⁶⁰ R.C. 1706.471, 1706.26, 1706.474(A), and 1706.71 through 1706.74.

- If it is not to be effective upon filing, the certificate’s effective date, which must be a date certain that is after the filing date;
- A copy of the notice it will publish pursuant to the act’s provisions in “**Other claims against dissolved LLC**”;
- Any other information the LLC considers proper.
- Prosecute, defend, or settle civil, criminal, and administrative actions or proceedings;
- Resolve disputes by mediation or arbitration;
- Merge or convert in accordance with “**Merger and conversion**” below.
- Do every other act necessary to wind up and liquidate its activities and affairs.⁶¹

Right to wind up business and activities

Generally, after dissolution, the remaining members, if any, and if none, a person appointed by all holders of the membership interest last assigned by the last person to have been a member, may wind up the LLC’s activities. The appropriate tribunal may order supervision of the winding up of a dissolved LLC, including the appointment of a person to wind up the LLC’s activities as follows:

- On application of a member, if the applicant establishes good cause;
- On application of an assignee, if the LLC has no members and, within a reasonable time following the dissolution, no person has been appointed pursuant to the paragraph above;
- In connection with a proceeding under the last bullet point of “**Events causing dissolution**” above.⁶²

Known claims against dissolved LLC

Under the act, a dissolved LLC may dispose of any known claims against it by following the procedures described below at any time after the effective date of the dissolution.

A dissolved LLC may give notice of its dissolution in a record to the holder of any known claim. The notice must do all of the following:

- Identify the dissolved LLC;
- Describe the information required to be included in a claim;
- Provide a mailing address to which the claim is to be sent;

⁶¹ R.C. 1706.471, 1706.26, 1706.474(A), and 1706.71 through 1706.74.

⁶² R.C. 1706.472, 1706.471(C)(5), and 1706.471(E).

- State the deadline by which the LLC must receive the claim, which must be at least 90 days after the notice's effective date.
- State that if not sooner barred, the claim will be barred if not received by the deadline.

Unless sooner barred by any other statute limiting actions, a claim against a dissolved LLC is barred if (1) a claimant who was given notice does not deliver the claim by the deadline, or (2) a claimant whose claim was rejected by the LLC does not commence a proceeding to enforce the claim within 90 days after the effective date of the rejected notice. Nothing in these provisions is to be construed to extend any otherwise applicable statute or period of limitations.

For purposes of the above provisions, "claim" includes an unliquidated claim, but does not include either a contingent liability that has not matured so that there is no immediate right to bring suit or a claim based on an event occurring after the effective date of dissolution.⁶³

Other claims against dissolved LLC

Notice

The act allows a dissolved LLC to publish notice of its dissolution and request that persons with claims against the dissolved LLC present them in accordance with the notice. The notice must meet all of the following requirements:

- It must be posted prominently on the principal website then maintained by the LLC, if any, and provided to the Secretary of State to be posted on the website maintained by the Secretary of State. The notice is considered published when posted on both websites or, if the LLC does not then maintain a website, when posted on the Secretary of State's website.
- It must describe the information that must be included in a claim and provide a mailing address to which the claim must be sent;
- It must state that if not sooner barred, the claim will be barred unless a proceeding to enforce the claim is commenced within two years after the publication of the notice.⁶⁴

When claims are barred

If a dissolved LLC publishes the above notice, unless sooner barred by any other statute limiting actions, the claim of each of the following claimants is barred unless the claimant commences a proceeding to enforce the claim against the dissolved LLC within two years after the publication of the notice:

- A claimant who was not given voluntary notice by the dissolved LLC of the LLC's dissolution described in "**Known claims against dissolved LLC**" above;

⁶³ R.C. 1706.473.

⁶⁴ R.C. 1706.474(A), (B), and (J).

- A claimant whose claim was timely sent to the dissolved LLC but not acted on by the dissolved LLC;
- A claimant whose claim is contingent at the effective date of the dissolution of the LLC, or is based on an event occurring after the effective date of the dissolution of the LLC.⁶⁵

A claim that is not barred under these provisions, any other statute limiting actions, or **“Known claims against dissolved LLC”** above may be enforced as follows:

- Against a dissolved LLC, to the extent of its undistributed assets;
- Except as provided below regarding security for contingent, unknown, and post-dissolution claims, if the assets of a dissolved LLC have been distributed after dissolution, against a member or assignee to the extent of that person’s proportionate share of the claim or of the assets distributed to the member or assignee after dissolution, whichever is less.

A person’s total liability for all claims cannot exceed the total amount of assets distributed to a person after dissolution of the LLC.⁶⁶

Determination regarding security

A dissolved LLC that published the notice described above may file an application with the appropriate court for a determination of the amount and form of security to be provided for payment of the following claims:

- Claims that are contingent;
- Claims that have not been made known to the dissolved LLC;
- Claims that are based on an event occurring after the effective date of the dissolution but that, based on the facts known to the dissolved LLC, are reasonably estimated to arise after the effective date of the dissolution.⁶⁷

Within ten days after the filing of the application regarding security, notice of the proceeding must be given by the dissolved LLC to each potential claimant.⁶⁸

Provision by the dissolved LLC for security in the amount and the form ordered by the appropriate court under the types of claims listed above satisfies the dissolved LLC’s obligation with respect to claims that are contingent, have not been made known to the dissolved LLC, or are based on an event occurring after the effective date of the dissolution of the LLC. These claims cannot be enforced against a person owning a membership interest to whom assets

⁶⁵ R.C. 1706.474(C) and 1706.473(B).

⁶⁶ R.C. 1706.474(D) and (H).

⁶⁷ R.C. 1706.474(E).

⁶⁸ R.C. 1706.474(F).

have been distributed by the dissolved LLC after the effective date of the dissolution of the LLC.⁶⁹

Guardian ad litem for unknown claimants

The appropriate court may appoint a guardian ad litem (a person who acts to protect the interests of certain designated persons) to represent all claimants whose identities are unknown in any proceeding brought under this provision. The reasonable fees and expenses of the guardian must be paid by the dissolved LLC.⁷⁰

Dissolved LLC website

Generally, the Secretary of State must make both of the following available to the public in a format that is searchable, viewable, and accessible through the internet (1) a list of all LLCs that have filed certificates of dissolution, and (2) for each dissolved LLC on that list, a copy of both the certificate of dissolution and the notice delivered under the act's notice provisions. After the materials relating to a particular LLC have been posted for five years, the Secretary of State may remove the information relating to that LLC from the website.⁷¹

Application of assets in winding up LLC's activities

Under the act, upon the winding up of an LLC, payment or adequate provision for payment, must be made to creditors, including members who are creditors, in satisfaction of liabilities of the LLC.

After complying with this requirement, the LLC must distribute any surplus first to each person owning a membership interest that reflects contributions made on account of the membership interest and not previously returned, in an amount equal to the value of the person's unreturned contributions. If the LLC does not have sufficient surplus to comply with this requirement, any surplus must be distributed among the owners of membership interests in proportion to the value of their respective unreturned contributions.

Then, the LLC must distribute any remaining surplus to each person owning a membership interest in the proportions in which the owners of membership interests share in distributions before dissolution.⁷²

Foreign LLCs

Governing law

The act provides that the law of the jurisdiction under which a foreign LLC is formed governs all of the following:

⁶⁹ R.C. 1706.474(H).

⁷⁰ R.C. 1706.474(G).

⁷¹ R.C. 1706.474(J).

⁷² R.C. 1706.475.

- The organization and internal affairs of the foreign LLC;
- The liability of a member as a member for the debts, obligations, or other liabilities of the foreign LLC or a series thereof;
- The authority of the members and agents of a foreign LLC or a series thereof;
- The liability of the assets of the foreign LLC, or a series thereof, for the obligations of another series or the foreign LLC.

A foreign LLC's application for registration as a foreign LLC may not be denied by reason of any difference between the laws of the jurisdiction under which the LLC is formed and Ohio law. But, a foreign LLC may only engage in activities in Ohio that Ohio law permits an LLC to engage in. Once, the registration is filed in Ohio, the foreign LLC has the same, and no greater, rights and privileges as an LLC and, except as otherwise provided by the ORLLCA, is subject to the same duties, restrictions, penalties, and liabilities imposed on an LLC.⁷³

Registration

In order for a foreign LLC or any of its series to transact business in Ohio, the act requires the foreign LLC to register with the Secretary of State, the registration be approved by the Secretary of State, and the foreign LLC or series otherwise be in compliance with the act's provisions governing foreign LLCs. The registration must state all of the following:

- The name of the foreign LLC and, if the name does not comply with the act's name provisions, the assumed name adopted pursuant to "**Noncomplying name**" below;
- The foreign LLC's jurisdiction of formation;
- The name and street address of the foreign LLC's statutory agent and a written acceptance of the appointment that is signed by the agent;
- That the foreign LLC is a foreign LLC;
- If the foreign LLC establishes or provides for the establishment of one or more series of assets, all of the following:
 - The fact that it provides for the establishment of one or more series of assets;
 - Whether the debts, liabilities, and obligations incurred, contracted for, or otherwise existing with respect to a particular series, if any, are enforceable against the assets of that series only, and not against the assets of the foreign LLC generally or any other series thereof;
 - Whether any of the debts, liabilities, obligations, and expenses incurred, contracted for, or otherwise existing with respect to the foreign LLC generally or any other series thereof are enforceable against the assets of that series.

⁷³ R.C. 1706.51.

A foreign LLC is authorized to transact business in Ohio from the effective date of its registration as a foreign LLC until the earlier of the effective date of its cancellation of a foreign LLC or the effective date of the Secretary of State's cancellation of the registration.

Upon any change in circumstances that makes any statement contained in its registration no longer true, the foreign LLC must deliver to the Secretary of State for filing an appropriate certificate of correction.⁷⁴

Actions not constituting transacting business

Under the act, a foreign LLC is not considered to be transacting business in Ohio within the meaning of the act's foreign LLC provisions by reason of its or any of its series' performing in Ohio any of the following actions:

- Maintaining, defending, or settling in its own behalf any proceeding or dispute;
- Holding meetings or carrying on any other activities concerning its internal affairs;
- Maintaining accounts in financial institutions;
- Maintaining offices or agencies for the assignment, exchange, and registration of the foreign LLC's or its series' own securities or interests or maintaining trustees or depositories with respect to those securities or interests;
- Selling through independent contractors;
- Soliciting or obtaining orders, whether by mail or electronic means or through employees or agents or otherwise, if the orders require acceptance outside Ohio before they become contracts;
- Creating, as borrower or lender, or acquiring indebtedness, mortgages, or security interests in real or personal property;
- Securing or collecting debts in its own behalf or enforcing mortgages or other security interests in real or personal property securing those debts, and holding, protecting, and maintaining property so acquired;
- Owning real or personal property;
- Conducting an isolated transaction that is not one in the course of repeated transactions of a like nature;
- Transacting business in interstate commerce.

Similarly, a foreign LLC is not considered to be transacting business in Ohio solely because it or any of its series:

- Owns a controlling interest in an entity that is transacting business in Ohio;

⁷⁴ R.C. 1706.511, 1706.07, 1706.09 and 1706.513.

- Is a limited partner of a limited partnership or foreign limited partnership that is transacting business in Ohio;
- Is a member of an LLC or foreign LLC that is transacting business in Ohio.

These provisions do not apply in determining the contacts or activities that may subject a foreign LLC, or a series thereof, to service of process, taxation, or regulation under Ohio law other than the ORLLCA. Similarly, these provisions do not limit or affect the right to subject a foreign LLC, or a series thereof, to the jurisdiction of Ohio courts or to serve upon it any process, notice, or demand required or permitted by law to be served upon it, pursuant to any other provision of law or the Rules of Civil Procedure.⁷⁵

Noncomplying name

A foreign LLC whose name does not comply with the act's name requirements may not file a registration as a foreign LLC until it adopts, for the purpose of transacting business in Ohio, an assumed name that complies with those requirements. A foreign LLC that adopts an assumed name and then files a registration as a foreign LLC under that assumed name does not need to file a name registration when transacting business under that assumed name. After filing the registration as a foreign LLC under an assumed name, it must transact business in Ohio under the assumed name unless it has filed a name registration under another name and is authorized to transact business in Ohio under that other name.

If a registered foreign LLC changes its name to one that does not comply with the act's name requirements, it cannot transact business in Ohio until it complies with those requirements by filing a certificate of correction.⁷⁶

Cancellation of registration

The act allows a registered foreign LLC to cancel its registration by filing a certificate of cancellation of registration of a foreign LLC with the Secretary of State. The certificate must set forth all of the following:

- The name and registration number of the foreign LLC, any assumed name adopted for use in Ohio, and the name of the jurisdiction under whose law it is organized;
- The name and street address of the statutory agent, or if a statutory agent is no longer to be maintained, a statement that the foreign LLC will not maintain a statutory agent, and the street address to which service of process may be mailed;
- That the foreign LLC, and all series thereof, will no longer transact business in Ohio and that it relinquishes its authority to transact business in Ohio;
- That the foreign LLC is canceling its registration as a foreign LLC;

⁷⁵ R.C. 1706.512.

⁷⁶ R.C. 1706.513 and 1706.07.

- That any assumed name with respect to the foreign LLC is withdrawn upon the effective date of the cancellation of registration.

The cancellation of registration is effective once it is filed by the Secretary of State, and the foreign LLC, and all series thereof, will be without authority to transact business in Ohio. The cancellation does not terminate the authority of the foreign LLC's statutory agent.⁷⁷

Effect of failure to register

Under the act, no foreign LLC, or a series thereof, transacting business in Ohio, nor anyone on its behalf, is permitted to maintain a proceeding in any Ohio court for the collection of debts unless an effective foreign LLC registration is on file with the Secretary of State.

A court may stay a proceeding commenced by a foreign LLC, or series thereof, until it determines whether the foreign LLC should be registered with the Secretary of State as an LLC. If the court determines that the foreign LLC should be registered as an LLC, the court may further stay the proceeding until the foreign LLC registers. If the foreign LLC subsequently delivers for filing to the Secretary of State a registration as an LLC, no proceeding in any Ohio court to which the foreign LLC, or a series thereof, is a party may, after the effective date of the registration, be dismissed by reason of the foreign LLC's prior noncompliance with the provisions described in "**Registration**" above.

But, the conducting of activities in Ohio by a foreign LLC, or a series thereof, without having a registration as a foreign LLC does not impair the validity of its acts or prevent it from defending any proceeding in Ohio.

If a foreign LLC, or a series thereof, conducts activities in Ohio without having on file in the records of the Secretary of State a registration as a foreign LLC, the foreign LLC is liable to this state for an amount equal to the fee as prescribed by the Secretary of State from time to time. No registration as a foreign LLC may be filed until the amounts due are paid. In addition, the amounts due may be recovered in an action brought by the Attorney General. In addition to or in lieu imposing a civil penalty, the court may issue an injunction restraining the foreign LLC and all of its series from further conducting activities exercising its rights and privileges in Ohio until all amounts plus any interest and court costs have been paid, and until the foreign LLC has otherwise complied with the act's foreign LLC provisions.

Neither a member nor agent of a foreign LLC nor a member associated with a series or agent of a series, is liable for the debts, obligations, or other liabilities of the foreign LLC, or a series thereof, solely because the foreign LLC, or a series thereof, conducted activities in Ohio without being registered.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ R.C. 1706.514 and 1706.09.

⁷⁸ R.C. 1706.515 and 1706.511.

Derivative actions

Right of derivative action

The act allows a member to commence or maintain a derivative action in the right of an LLC or series thereof to recover a judgment in favor of the LLC or series by complying with the provisions described below.⁷⁹

Standing

A member may maintain a derivative action in the right of the LLC only if the member meets both of the following conditions:

- The member fairly and adequately represents the LLC's interests in enforcing the right;
- The member either:
 - Was a member of the LLC at the time of the act or omission of which the member complains;
 - Acquired a membership interest through assignment by operation of law from a person who was a member at that time.

A parallel standard applies regarding the ability of a member associated with a series of an LLC to maintain a derivative action in the right of the series.⁸⁰

Demand

A member cannot commence a derivative action in the right of the LLC, or a series thereof, until 90 days after a written demand has been made to the LLC or the series to take suitable action, unless either of the following applies:

- The member has earlier been notified that the demand has been rejected by the LLC or the series;
- Irreparable injury to the LLC or the series would result by waiting for the expiration of the 90-day period.⁸¹

Stay of proceedings

For the purpose of allowing the LLC or the series thereof time to undertake an inquiry into the allegations made in the demand or complaint commenced pursuant to the act, the court may stay any derivative action for the period the court considers appropriate.⁸²

⁷⁹ R.C. 1706.61.

⁸⁰ R.C. 1706.611.

⁸¹ R.C. 1706.612.

⁸² R.C. 1706.613.

Dismissal

The act requires the court to dismiss the derivative action on motion by the LLC if a specified group has determined in good faith, after conducting a reasonable inquiry upon which its conclusions are based, that the maintenance of the derivative action is not in the best interests of the LLC.

Generally, this determination must be made by a majority vote of either (1) the LLC's independent members or (2) the members of a committee consisting of independent members appointed by a majority of the independent members. But, if the determination is not made in this fashion, the determination must be made by the person, or, in the case of more than one person, by a majority of the persons, sitting upon a panel of one or more independent persons appointed by a court upon a motion the LLC files with the court.

A parallel procedure and standard applies with regard to the dismissal of a derivative action in the right of a series of an LLC.

The presence of one or more of the following circumstances, without more, does not prevent a person from being considered independent for purposes of this provision:

- The naming of the person as a defendant in the derivative action or as a person against whom action is demanded;
- The approval by that person of the act being challenged in the derivative action or demand where the act did not result in personal benefit to that person;
- The making of the demand pursuant to “**Demand**” above or the commencement of the derivative action pursuant to these provisions.

The plaintiff in the derivative action has the burden of proving that any of the above requirements regarding the LLC's best interests have not been met.⁸³

Discontinuance or settlement

Under the act, a derivative action may not be discontinued or settled without the court's approval. If the court determines that a proposed discontinuance or settlement will substantially affect the interests of members of the LLC, or the interests of members associated with a series of the LLC, the court must direct that notice be given to the members affected.

A panel appointed by the court has the authority to continue, settle, or discontinue the derivative proceeding as the court may confer upon the panel subject to the above requirements.⁸⁴

Payment of expenses

On termination of the derivative action the court may do any of the following:

⁸³ R.C. 1706.614.

⁸⁴ R.C. 1706.614 and 1706.615.

- Order the LLC or series to pay the plaintiff’s reasonable expenses incurred by the plaintiff if the court finds that the derivative action has resulted in a substantial benefit to the LLC or series;
- Order the plaintiff to pay any defendant’s reasonable expenses incurred by the defendant if it finds that the derivative action was commenced or maintained without reasonable cause or for an improper purpose;
- Order a party to pay an opposing party’s expenses incurred because of the filing of a pleading, motion, or other paper, if it finds both of the following:
 - That the paper was not well grounded in fact or not warranted by existing law or a good faith argument for the extension, modification, or reversal of existing law;
 - That the paper was filed for an improper purpose, such as to harass or cause unnecessary delay or needless increase in the cost of litigation.⁸⁵

Applicability to foreign LLCs

The act provides that in any derivative action in the right of a foreign LLC, or a series thereof, the right of a person to commence or maintain a derivative action in the right of a foreign LLC, or a series thereof, and any matters raised in the action are governed by the law of the jurisdiction under which the foreign LLC was formed. But, any matters raised in the action covered by **“Stay of proceedings,” “Discontinuance or settlement,”** and **“Payment of expenses”** are governed by the Ohio law.⁸⁶

Direct actions by members

A member may maintain a direct action against another member or members or the LLC, or a series thereof, to enforce the member’s rights and otherwise protect the member’s interests. But, the member must plead and prove an actual or threatened injury that is not solely the result of an injury suffered or threatened to be suffered by the LLC, or series thereof.

A member may maintain a direct action to enforce a right of an LLC if all members at the time of suit are parties to the action. Similarly, a member associated with a series may maintain a direct action to enforce a right of the series if all members associated with the series at the time of suit are parties to the action.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ R.C. 1706.616.

⁸⁶ R.C. 1706.617, 1706.613, 1706.615, and 1706.616.

⁸⁷ R.C. 1706.62.

Merger and conversion

Merger

In general

The act allows an LLC to merge with one or more other constituent entities (a constituent entity is a party to a merger) pursuant to the provisions below and to an agreement of merger if all of the following conditions are met:

- The governing statute of each of the other entities authorizes the merger;
- The merger is not prohibited by the law of a jurisdiction that enacted any of the governing statutes;
- Each of the other entities complies with its governing statute in effecting the merger.

An agreement of merger must be in a record and must include all of the following:

- The name and form of each constituent entity;
- The name and form of the surviving entity (an entity into which one or more other entities are merged, whether the entity preexisted the merger or was created pursuant to the merger) and, if the surviving entity is to be created pursuant to the merger, a statement to that effect;
- The terms and conditions of the merger, including the manner and basis for converting the interests in each constituent entity into any combination of money, interests in the surviving entity, and other permitted consideration;
- If the surviving entity is to be created pursuant to the merger, the surviving entity's organizational documents that are proposed to be in a record;
- If the surviving entity is not to be created pursuant to the merger, any amendments to be made by the merger to the surviving entity's organizational documents that are, or are proposed to be, in a record.

In connection with a merger, rights or securities of or interests in the constituent entity may be cancelled or exchanged for or converted into cash, property, or rights or securities of or interests in the surviving entity or another entity.⁸⁸

Action on plan of merger by constituent LLC

To be effective, the act requires an agreement of merger to be consented to by all the members of a constituent LLC. After the agreement of merger is approved, and at any time before a certificate of merger is delivered to the Secretary of State for filing under "**Filings and effective date**" below, a constituent LLC may amend the agreement or abandon the

⁸⁸ R.C. 1706.71.

merger as provided in the agreement or, except as otherwise prohibited in the agreement, with the same consent as was required to approve the agreement.⁸⁹

Filings and effective date

After each constituent entity has approved the agreement of merger, a certificate of merger must be signed on behalf of each constituent LLC and each other constituent entity, as provided in its governing statute. The certificate of merger must include all of the following:

- The name and form of each constituent entity, the jurisdiction of its governing statute, and its registration number, if any, as it appears on the records of the Secretary of State;
- The name and form of the surviving entity, the jurisdiction of its governing statute, and, if the surviving entity is created pursuant to the merger, a statement to that effect;
- The date the merger is effective under the governing statute of the surviving entity;
- If the surviving entity is to be created pursuant to the merger, the articles of organization or other organizational document that creates the entity that is required to be in a public record;
- If the surviving entity exists before the merger, any amendments provided for in the agreement of merger for the organizational document that created the entity that are in a public record;
- A statement as to each constituent entity that the merger was approved as required by the entity's governing statute;
- If the surviving entity is a foreign entity not authorized to transact business in Ohio, the street address of its statutory agent;
- Any additional information required by the governing statute of any constituent entity.

Each constituent LLC must deliver the certificate of merger for filing with the Secretary of State. If the surviving entity is an LLC, the merger becomes effective when it is filed with the Secretary of State or as specified in the certificate of merger, whichever is later. Otherwise, if it is not an LLC, it becomes effective as provided by the governing statute of the surviving entity.⁹⁰

Effect of merger

Under the act, when a merger becomes effective, all of the following apply:

- The surviving entity continues or comes into existence;
- Each constituent entity that merges into the surviving entity ceases to exist as a separate entity;

⁸⁹ R.C. 1706.711.

⁹⁰ R.C. 1706.712.

- All property owned by each constituent entity, or series thereof, that ceases to exist vests in the surviving entity without reservation or impairment;
- All liabilities of each constituent entity, or series thereof, that ceases to exist continue as liabilities of the surviving entity;
- An action or proceeding pending by or against any constituent entity, or series thereof, that ceases to exist continues as if the merger had not occurred;
- Except as prohibited by other law, all of the rights, privileges, immunities, powers, and purposes of each constituent entity, or series thereof, that ceases to exist vest in the surviving entity;
- Except as otherwise provided in the agreement of merger, the terms and conditions of the agreement of merger take effect;
- Except as otherwise agreed, if a constituent LLC ceases to exist, the merger does not dissolve the LLC for the purposes of the act's dissolution provisions and does not dissolve a series for purposes of the act's series provisions;
- If the surviving entity is created pursuant to the merger, the organizational document that creates the entity becomes effective;
- If the surviving entity existed before the merger, any amendments provided for in the certificate of merger for the organizational document that created the entity become effective.

If before the merger a constituent entity was subject to being sued in Ohio on a liability, and if the surviving entity is a foreign entity, it is deemed to consent to the jurisdiction of Ohio courts to enforce the liability owed by the constituent entity. Service of process on a surviving entity that is a foreign entity and not authorized to transact business in Ohio for the purposes of enforcing a liability may be made in the same manner and has the same consequences as provided in the act's service of process provisions as if the surviving entity was a foreign LLC.⁹¹

Conversion

In general

Under the act, an entity other than an LLC may convert to an LLC, and an LLC may convert to an entity other than an LLC (a "converting entity" converts into a "converted entity") pursuant to the following provisions and a written declaration of conversion if all of the following apply:

- The governing statute of the entity that is not an LLC authorizes the conversion;
- The law of the jurisdiction governing the converting entity and the converted entity does not prohibit the conversion;

⁹¹ R.C. 1706.713, 1706.09, 1706.47 through 1706.475, and 1706.76 through 1703.7613.

- The converting entity and the converted entity comply with their respective governing statutes and organizational documents in effecting the conversion.

A written declaration of conversion must be in a record (inscribed on a tangible medium or stored in an electronic or other medium and retrievable in written or paper form through an automated process) and include all of the following:

- The name and form of the converting entity before conversion;
- The name and form of the converted entity after conversion;
- The organizational documents of the converted entity that are, or are proposed to be, in a record;
- The terms and conditions of the conversion, including the manner and basis for converting interests in the converting entity into any combination of money, interests in the converted entity, and other permitted consideration.

In connection with a conversion, rights or securities of or interests in the converting entity may be cancelled or exchanged for or converted into cash, property, or rights or securities of or interests in the converted entity or another entity.⁹²

Action on declaration of conversion by converting LLC

A declaration of conversion must be consented to by all the members of a converting LLC. After it is approved, and at any time before a certificate of conversion is delivered to the Secretary of State for filing, the LLC may amend the declaration or abandon the conversion as provided in the declaration or, except as otherwise prohibited in the declaration, by the same consent as was required to approve the declaration.⁹³

Filings and effective date

After a declaration of conversion is approved, a converting LLC must deliver to the Secretary of State for filing a certificate of conversion, which must be signed under the same rules as initial articles of organization and include all of the following:

- A statement that the converting LLC has been converted into the converted entity;
- The name and form of the converted entity and the jurisdiction of its governing statute;
- The date the conversion is effective under the governing statute of the converted entity;
- A statement that the conversion was approved both as required by the ORLLCA and the governing statute of the converted entity;
- If the converted entity is a foreign entity not authorized to transact business in Ohio, the street address of its statutory agent.

⁹² R.C. 1706.72.

⁹³ R.C. 1706.721.

In addition, if the converted entity is an LLC, the converting entity must deliver to the Secretary of State for filing articles of organization which must include, in addition to the information required by the act's operating agreement provisions, all of the following:

- A statement that the converted entity was converted from the converting entity;
- The name and form of the converting entity;
- The jurisdiction of the converting entity's governing statute and a statement that the conversion was approved as required by that statute.

A conversion becomes effective when the articles of organization take effect, if the converted entity is an LLC. Otherwise, the conversion becomes effective as provided by the converted entity's governing statute.⁹⁴

Effect of conversion

The act provides that when a conversion takes effect, all of the following apply:

- All property owned by the converting entity, or series thereof, remains vested in the converted entity;
- All liabilities of the converting entity, or series thereof, continue as liabilities of the converted entity;
- An action or proceeding pending by or against the converting entity, or series thereof, continues as if the conversion had not occurred;
- Except as prohibited by law other than the ORLLCA, all of the rights, privileges, immunities, powers, and purposes of the converting entity, or series thereof, remain vested in the converted entity;
- Except as otherwise provided in the plan of conversion, the terms and conditions of the declaration of conversion take effect;
- Except as otherwise agreed, for all purposes of Ohio law, the converting entity, and any series thereof, is not required to wind up its affairs or pay its liabilities and distribute its assets, and the conversion is not deemed to constitute a dissolution of the converting entity, or series thereof;
- For all purposes of the Ohio law, the rights, privileges, powers, and interests in property of the converting entity, and all series thereof, as well as the debts, liabilities, and duties of the converting entity, and all series thereof, are not deemed to have been assigned to the converted entity as a consequence of the conversion;

⁹⁴ R.C. 1706.722, 1706.16(A), and 1706.723(B).

- If the converted entity is an LLC, for all purposes of Ohio law, the LLC is deemed to be the same entity as the converting entity, and the conversion constitutes a continuation of the existence of the converting entity in the form of an LLC;
- If the converted entity is an LLC, its existence is deemed to have commenced on the date the converting entity commenced its existence in the jurisdiction in which it first came into being.

A converted entity that is a foreign entity consents to the jurisdiction of Ohio courts to enforce any liability for which the converting LLC, or series thereof, is liable if, before the conversion, the converting LLC, or series thereof, was subject to being sued in Ohio on that liability. Service of process on a converted entity that is a foreign entity and not authorized to transact business in Ohio for purposes of enforcing a liability may be made in the same manner and has the same consequences as provided in the act's service of process provisions, as if the converted entity were a foreign LLC.⁹⁵

Restrictions on approval of mergers and conversions

Under the act, if a member of a constituent or converting LLC will have personal liability with respect to a surviving or converted entity, approval or amendment of a plan of merger or a declaration of conversion is ineffective without the consent of the member, unless both of the following conditions are met:

- The LLC's operating agreement provides for approval of a merger or conversion with the consent of fewer than all the members;
- The member has consented to the provision of the operating agreement described in the bullet point above.

A member does not give the consent required merely by consenting to a provision of the operating agreement that permits the operating agreement to be amended with the consent of fewer than all the members.⁹⁶

Act not exclusive

The act's provisions governing mergers and conversions do not preclude an entity from being merged or converted under law other than the ORLLCA.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ R.C. 1706.723 and 1706.09.

⁹⁶ R.C. 1706.73.

⁹⁷ R.C. 1706.74.

Series LLCs

In general

Under the act, an LLC's operating agreement may establish or provide for the establishment of one or more designated series of assets that has at least one member associated with each series and either or both of the following:

- Separate rights, powers, or duties with respect to specified property or obligations of the LLC or profits and losses associated with specified property or obligations;
- A separate purpose or investment objective.

A series so established may carry on any activity, whether or not for profit.⁹⁸

Limitation on liabilities of series against assets

The assets of a series of an LLC, the LLC, and other series are generally kept separate. The debts, liabilities, obligations, and expenses incurred, contracted for, or otherwise existing with respect to a series are enforceable against the assets of that series only, and are not enforceable against the assets of the LLC generally or any other series thereof. The act creates a reciprocal standard for the LLC itself. This limitation applies only if all of the following conditions are met:

- The records maintained for that series account for the assets of that series separately from the other assets of the company or any other series;
- The LLC's operating agreement contains a statement to the effect of the limitations;
- The LLC's articles of organization contain a statement that the LLC may have one or more series of assets subject to these limitations (statement of limitations).

Assets of a series may be held directly or indirectly, including in the name of the series, in the name of the LLC, through a nominee, or otherwise. If the records of a series are maintained in a manner so that the assets of the series can be reasonably identified, the records are considered to satisfy the act's requirement that records of a series' assets be maintained for that series separate from those of the LLC or other series.

The statement of limitations described above is sufficient regardless of whether the LLC has established any series under the ORLLCA when the statement of limitations is contained in the articles of organization or whether the statement of limitations makes reference to a specific series of the LLC.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ R.C. 1706.76.

⁹⁹ R.C. 1706.761 through 1706.763.

Dissociation from series

Member's power to dissociate; wrongful dissociation

The act prohibits a person from voluntarily dissociating from a series. A person's dissociation from a series is wrongful only if one of the following applies:

- The dissociation is in breach of an express provision of the operating agreement;
- The person is expelled as a member associated with the series by determination of a tribunal;
- The person is dissociated by becoming a debtor in bankruptcy or making a general assignment for the benefit of creditors.

A person that wrongfully dissociates as a member associated with a series is liable to the series and, subject to "**Right of derivative action**" above, to the other members associated with that series for damages caused by the dissociation. The liability is in addition to any other debt, obligation, or liability of the member associated with a series to the series or the other members associated with that series.¹⁰⁰

Events causing dissociation from series

A person is dissociated as a member associated with a series in any of the following circumstances:

- An event stated in the operating agreement as causing the person's dissociation from the series occurs;
- The person is dissociated as a member of the LLC;
- The person is expelled as a member associated with that series pursuant to the operating agreement;
- The person is expelled as a member associated with the series by the unanimous consent of the other members associated with that series and if any of the following applies:
 - It is unlawful to carry on the series' activities with the person as a member associated with that series;
 - The person is an entity and, within 90 days after the series notifies the person that it will be expelled as a member associated with that series because the person has filed a certificate of dissolution or the equivalent, or its right to transact business has been suspended by its jurisdiction of formation, the certificate of dissolution or the equivalent has not been revoked or its right to transact business has not been reinstated;

¹⁰⁰ R.C. 1706.764, 1706.61, and 1706.765(E).

- The person is an entity and, within 90 days after the series notifies the person that it will be expelled as a member associated with that series because the person has been dissolved and its activities are being wound up, the entity has not been reinstated or the dissolution and winding up have not been revoked or canceled.
- On application by the series, the person is expelled as a member associated with that series by a tribunal's order for any of the following reasons:
 - The person has engaged, or is engaging, in wrongful conduct that has adversely and materially affected, or will adversely and materially affect, that series' activities;
 - The person has willfully or persistently committed, or is willfully or persistently committing, a material breach of the operating agreement or the person's duties or obligations under the ORLLCA or other applicable law;
 - The person has engaged, or is engaging, in conduct relating to that series' activities that makes it not reasonably practicable to carry on the activities with the person as a member associated with that series.
- In the case of a person who is an individual, the person dies, a guardian or general conservator is appointed for the person, or a tribunal determines that the person has otherwise become incapable of performing the person's duties as a member associated with a series under the ORLLCA or the operating agreement;
- The person, other than a sole remaining member associated with a series, becomes a bankruptcy debtor, executes an assignment for the benefit of creditors, or seeks, consents, or acquiesces to the appointment of a trustee, receiver, or liquidator of the person or of all or substantially all of the person's property;
- In the case of a trust or a person acting as a member associated with a series by virtue of being a trustee, the trust's entire membership interest associated with the series is distributed, but not solely by reason of the substitution of a successor trustee;
- In the case of an estate or a person acting as a member associated with a series by virtue of being an estate's personal representative, the estate's entire membership interest associated with the series is distributed, but not solely by reason of the substitution of a successor personal representative;
- In the case of a member associated with a series that is not an individual, the legal existence of the person otherwise terminates.¹⁰¹

Effect of dissociation from series

Under the act, a dissociated person has no right to participate in the activities and affairs of that series and is entitled only to receive the distributions to which that member

¹⁰¹ R.C. 1706.765.

would have been entitled if the member had not dissociated from that series. A person's dissociation does not do any of the following:

- Discharge the person from any debt, obligation, or liability to that series, the LLC, or the other members that the person incurred while a member associated with that series;
- Cause the member to dissociate from any other series or require the winding up of the series;
- Cause the member to dissociate from the LLC.¹⁰²

Dissolution and winding up of series

In general

The act allows a series to be dissolved and its activities and affairs wound up without causing the dissolution of the LLC. The dissolution and winding up of a series does not abate, suspend, or otherwise affect the limitation on liabilities of the series. Under the act, a series is dissolved and its activities and affairs must be wound up upon the first to occur of the following:

- The dissolution of the LLC;
- An event or circumstance that the operating agreement states causes dissolution of the series;
- The consent of all of the members associated with the series;
- The passage of 90 days after the occurrence of the dissociation of the last remaining member associated with the series;
- On application by a member associated with the series, the entry by the appropriate court of an order dissolving the series on the grounds that it is not reasonably practicable to carry on the series' activities in conformity with the operating agreement.¹⁰³

What dissolution is not and does not do

A series' dissolution, in itself:

- Is not an assignment of the series' property;
- Does not prevent the commencement of a proceeding by or against the series in the series' name;
- Does not abate or suspend a proceeding pending by or against the series on the effective date of dissolution;

¹⁰² R.C. 1706.766.

¹⁰³ R.C. 1706.767 and 1706.768.

- Does not abate, suspend, or otherwise alter the application of “**Application of assets in winding up series’ activities**” below.¹⁰⁴

Permitted activities

A dissolved series continues its existence as a series but generally may not carry on any activities, although the remaining members associated with the series, if any, and if none, a person appointed by all holders of the membership interest last assigned by the last person to have been a member associated with the series, may preserve the series’ activities and property for a reasonable time. The members or person may do the following to wind up and liquidate its activities and affairs:

- Collect its assets;
- Dispose of its properties that will not be distributed in kind to persons owning membership interests associated with the series;
- Assign the series’ property;
- Distribute its remaining property in accordance with “**Application of assets in winding up series’ activities**” below;
- Discharge or make provisions for discharging its liabilities;
- Participate in lawsuits and resolve disputes;
- Do any other act necessary to wind up and liquidate the series’ activities and affairs.¹⁰⁵

Right to wind up business and activities of series

A tribunal may order supervision of the winding up of the series, including the appointment of a person to wind up the series’ activities for any of the following reasons:

- On application of a member associated with the series, if the applicant establishes good cause;
- On application of an assignee associated with a series, if there are no members associated with the series and, within a reasonable time following the dissolution, no person has been appointed to wind up the series;
- In connection with a proceeding to dissolve the series on the grounds that it is not reasonably practicable to carry on the series’ activities in conformity with the operating agreement.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ R.C. 1706.769 and 1706.7613.

¹⁰⁵ R.C. 1706.769 and 1706.7613.

¹⁰⁶ R.C. 1706.7610, 1706.768(E), and 1706.769(C).

Known claims against dissolved series

Under the act, a dissolved series may dispose of any known claims against it, at any time after the effective date of the dissolution of the series, by giving notice of the dissolution in a record to the holder of any known claim. The notice must do all of the following:

- Identify the LLC and the dissolved series;
- Describe the information required to be included in a claim;
- Provide a mailing address to which the claim is to be sent;
- State the deadline by which the dissolved series must receive the claim, which must be at least 120 days after the notice's effective date;
- State that if not sooner barred, the claim will be barred if not received by the deadline.

Unless sooner barred by any other statute limiting actions, a claim against a dissolved series is barred if (1) a claimant who was given the above notice does not deliver the claim to the dissolved series by the deadline or (2) a claimant whose claim was rejected by the dissolved series does not commence a proceeding to enforce the claim within 90 days after the effective date of the rejected notice.

Nothing in these provisions is to be construed to extend any otherwise applicable statute of limitations.

For purposes of these provisions, "claim" includes an unliquidated claim, but does not include a contingent liability that has not matured so that there is no immediate right to bring suit or a claim based on an event occurring after the effective date of dissolution.¹⁰⁷

Other claims against dissolved series

Notice. The act allows a dissolved series to publish notice of its dissolution and request that persons with claims against the dissolved series present them in accordance with the notice. The notice must meet all of the following criteria:

- It must be posted prominently on the principal website then maintained by the LLC, if any, and provided to the Secretary of State to be posted on the website maintained by the Secretary of State. The notice is considered published when posted on the Secretary of State's website.
- It must describe the information that must be included in a claim and provide a mailing address to which the claim must be sent.
- It must state that if not sooner barred, the claim will be barred unless a proceeding to enforce the claim is commenced within two years following the publication of the notice.

¹⁰⁷ R.C. 1706.7611.

When claims are barred. If a dissolved series publishes the above notice, unless sooner barred by any other statute limiting actions, the claim of each of the following claimants is barred unless the claimant commences a proceeding to enforce the claim against the dissolved series within two years after the publication date of the notice:

- A claimant who was not given notice under the act's provisions regarding known claims;
- A claimant whose claim was timely sent to the dissolved series but not acted on by the dissolved series;
- A claimant whose claim is contingent at the effective date of the dissolution of the series, or is based on an event occurring after the effective date of the dissolution of the series.

A claim that is not barred under this provision, any other statute limiting actions, or "**Known claims against dissolved series**" above may be enforced against either of the following:

- A dissolved series, to the extent of its undistributed assets associated with the series;
- A member or assignee associated with the series to the extent of that person's proportionate share of the claim or of the assets of the series distributed to the member or assignee after dissolution, whichever is less, except as provided in the second to last paragraph of "**Other claims against dissolved series**," and only if the assets of a dissolved series have been distributed after dissolution.

A person's total liability for all such claims may not exceed the total amount of assets of the series distributed to a person after dissolution of the series.

Determination regarding security. A dissolved series that published the notice described above may file an application with the appropriate court for a determination of the amount and form of security to be provided for payment of the following claims:

- Claims that are contingent;
- Claims that have not been made known to the dissolved series;
- Claims that are based on an event occurring after the effective date of the dissolution but that, based on the facts known to the dissolved series, are reasonably estimated to arise after the effective date of the dissolution.

Within ten days after the filing of the application regarding security, notice of the proceeding must be given by the dissolved series to each potential claimant.

Provision by the dissolved series for security in the amount and the form ordered by the appropriate court satisfies the dissolved series' obligation with respect to claims that are contingent, have not been made known to the dissolved series, or are based on an event occurring after the effective date of the dissolution of the series. Those claims may not be enforced against a person owning a membership interest to whom assets have been distributed by the dissolved series after the effective date of the dissolution of the series.

Guardian ad litem. The appropriate court may appoint some guardian ad litem to represent all claimants whose identities are unknown in any proceeding brought under this provision. The reasonable fees and expenses of the guardian, including all reasonable expert witness fees, must be paid by the dissolved series.¹⁰⁸

Application of assets in winding up series' activities

The act requires that upon the winding up of a series, payment or adequate provision for payment be made to creditors of the series, including, to the extent permitted by law, members who are associated with the series and who are also creditors of the series, in satisfaction of liabilities of the series.

After a series complies with this requirement, any surplus must be distributed first to each person owning a membership interest associated with the series that reflects contributions made on account of that membership interest and not previously returned, in an amount equal to the value of the person's unreturned contributions. If the series does not have sufficient surplus to comply with this requirement, any surplus must be distributed among the owners of membership interests associated with the series in proportion to the value of their respective unreturned contributions.

Then, the series must distribute any remaining surplus to each person owning a membership interest associated with the series in the proportions in which the owners of membership interests associated with the series share in distributions prior to dissolution of the series.¹⁰⁹

Commercial activity tax on series LLCs

The act requires that, for purposes of the commercial activity tax (CAT), an LLC and all of its series must file as a single taxpayer if it is determined, based on either of two circumstances described below, that the series was created to avoid paying the CAT.

The CAT is imposed on the basis of a taxpayer's taxable gross receipts. Taxpayers with less than \$150,000 of such receipts do not pay the tax at all.¹¹⁰ This minimum receipts threshold creates the potential for a series LLC to minimize its tax liability: If each LLC in a series is a separate taxpayer, the tax owed by each LLC in the series will likely be less than if the entire series of LLCs was treated as a single taxpayer, and could be entirely eliminated.

In addition, under the CAT's nexus standards, a taxpayer is subject to the tax only if the taxpayer is domiciled or incorporated in Ohio or one of the following circumstances applies:

- It has gross receipts from Ohio sales of \$500,000 or more;
- It owns at least \$50,000 in property in Ohio;

¹⁰⁸ R.C. 1706.7612, 1706.474(J), and 1706.7611(B).

¹⁰⁹ R.C. 1706.7613.

¹¹⁰ R.C. 5751.03, not in the act.

- It has at least \$50,000 in Ohio payroll;
- At least 25% of its total property, payroll, and gross receipts are in Ohio.¹¹¹

These nexus thresholds likewise create an opportunity for tax avoidance: If each LLC in a series is a separate taxpayer, each entity will be more likely to fall below that threshold than if the entire series was considered a single taxpayer.

Under the act, a series LLC must file as a single taxpayer if one or more LLCs in the series would avoid the minimum tax or nexus threshold by filing as separate taxpayers. In such cases, the series is considered to have been created to avoid the CAT. The series' combined taxpayer group status, once required, may be discontinued only if authorized by the Tax Commissioner or the series' circumstances change.

Under continuing law, a CAT combined taxpayer group effectively pays and files the tax as a single taxpayer, with the taxable gross receipts of the entire group aggregated in computing the tax. In lieu of being required to file a combined taxpayer, an LLC and its series may instead elect to file as a consolidated CAT taxpayer. The difference between a consolidated and a combined group is that persons in a consolidated group are authorized to exclude from the CAT receipts from sales between members of the group in calculating the its taxable gross receipts, while taxpayers in a combined group receive no such exclusion.¹¹²

Definitions¹¹³

"Assignment" means a transfer, conveyance, deed, bill of sale, lease, mortgage, security interest, encumbrance, gift, or transfer by operation of law.

"Constituent entity" means an entity that is party to a merger.

"Contribution" means anything of value that a person contributes to an LLC, or a series thereof, in the person's capacity as a member.

"Debtor in bankruptcy" means a person who is the subject of an order for relief under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code, a comparable order under a successor statute of general application, or a comparable order under any federal, state, or foreign law governing insolvency.

"Distribution" means a transfer of money or other property from an LLC, or a series thereof, to another person on account of a membership interest.

"Entity" means a general partnership, limited partnership, limited liability partnership, limited liability company, association, corporation, professional corporation, professional association, nonprofit corporation, business trust, real estate investment trust, common law trust, statutory trust, cooperative association, or any similar organization that has a governing statute, in each case, whether foreign or domestic.

¹¹¹ R.C. 5751.01(H) and (I), not in the act.

¹¹² R.C. 5751.012(D).

¹¹³ R.C. 1706.01.

“Foreign limited liability company” or **“foreign LLC”** means an entity that is all of the following:

- An unincorporated association;
- Organized under the laws of a state other than Ohio or under the laws of a foreign country;
- Organized under a statute pursuant to which an association may be formed that affords to each of its members limited liability with respect to the liabilities of the entity; and
- Not required to be registered, qualified, or organized under any Ohio law other than the ORLLCA.

“Governing statute” means the law that governs an entity’s internal affairs.

“Limited liability company” or **“LLC,”** except in the phrase “foreign LLC,” means an entity formed or existing under the ORLLCA.

“Manager” means any person designated by the LLC or its members with the authority to manage all or part of the LLC’s activities or affairs on behalf of the LLC, which person has agreed to serve in such capacity, regardless of how designated.

“Member” means a person that has been admitted as a member of an LLC under the ORLLCA and that has not dissociated as a member.

“Membership interest” means a member’s right to receive distributions from an LLC or series thereof.

“Operating agreement” means any valid agreement, written or oral, of the members, or any written declaration of the sole member, as to the affairs and activities of an LLC and any series thereof. “Operating agreement” includes any amendments to the operating agreement.

“Organizational documents” means for an entity, generally, the basic records that create the entity, determine its internal governance, and determine the relations among the persons that own it, are members of it, or govern it. Specifically, it means any of the following:

- For a general partnership or foreign general partnership, its partnership agreement;
- For a limited partnership or foreign limited partnership, its certificate of limited partnership and partnership agreement;
- For a limited liability limited partnership or foreign limited liability limited partnership, its certificate of limited partnership and partnership agreement;
- For an LLC or foreign LLC, its articles of organization and operating agreement, or comparable records as provided in its governing statute;
- For a business or statutory trust or foreign business or statutory trust, its trust instrument, or comparable records as provided in its governing statute;

- For a for-profit corporation or foreign for-profit corporation, its articles of incorporation, regulations, and other agreements among its shareholders that are authorized by its governing statute, or comparable records as provided in its governing statute;
- For a nonprofit corporation or foreign nonprofit corporation, its articles of incorporation, regulations, and other agreements that are authorized by its governing statute or comparable records as provided in its governing statute;
- For a professional association, its articles of incorporation, regulations, and other agreements among its shareholders that are authorized by its governing statute, or comparable records as provided in its governing statute.

“Organizer” means a person executing the initial articles of organization filed by the Secretary of State in accordance with the ORLLCA.

“Person” means an individual, entity, trust, estate, government, custodian, nominee, trustee, personal representative, fiduciary, or any other individual, entity, or series thereof in its own or any representative capacity, in each case, whether foreign or domestic.

“Principal office” means the location specified by an LLC, foreign LLC, or other entity as its principal office in the last filed record in which it specified its principal office on the records of the Secretary of State. If no such location has previously been specified, then “principal office” means the location reasonably apparent to an unaffiliated person as the principal executive office of the limited liability company, foreign LLC, or other entity.

“Record” means information that is inscribed on a tangible medium or that is stored in an electronic or other medium and is retrievable in written or paper form through an automated process.

“Sign” means, with the present intent to authenticate or adopt a record, either of the following:

- To execute or adopt a tangible symbol; or
- To attach to or logically associate with the record an electronic symbol, sound, or process.

“State” means a state of the United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or any territory or insular possession subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S.

“Surviving entity” means an entity into which one or more other entities are merged, whether the entity preexisted the merger or was created pursuant to the merger.

“Tribunal” means a court or, if provided in the operating agreement or otherwise agreed, an arbitrator, arbitration panel, or other tribunal.

Unclaimed Funds Law

Unclaimed funds are intangible property (money, rights to money, or other intangible property) that are in the possession of another (the holder) and that the owner has permitted to become dormant. In general, under continuing law, revised in part by the act, the holder and

the Department of Commerce hold all or part of the unclaimed funds until the funds are found and retrieved by the owner.

The act permits a specific type of unclaimed funds, attorney unclaimed funds, to be held by the Ohio Access to Justice Foundation. The Ohio Access to Justice Foundation (Foundation) is a charitable, tax-exempt foundation established by the State Public Defender with the stated purpose to ensure that civil legal aid is available to all low-income Ohioans.¹¹⁴ The act defines “**attorney unclaimed funds**” as unclaimed funds that are any of the following:

1. Funds held in interest on lawyer trust accounts;
2. Funds held in interest on trust accounts established by title insurance agents and title insurance companies;
3. Residual settlement funds whether for named or unnamed plaintiffs, received by the Division of Unclaimed Funds, and held, paid out, or allocated by the Division pursuant to or consistent with the terms and conditions of the court order authorizing the settlement fund.¹¹⁵

Attorney unclaimed funds holder requirements

Continuing law requires every holder of unclaimed funds to provide an annual report to the Department of Commerce’s Division of Unclaimed Funds. This report contains information relating to the value of the unclaimed fund and all known information regarding the owner of the fund. The act requires that in addition to this requirement, the holder of attorney unclaimed funds must transmit, upon the Division of Unclaimed Funds’ request, a duplicate copy of this report to the Ohio Access to Justice Foundation.¹¹⁶

The general requirement, changed in part by the act, is that every reporting holder of unclaimed funds, at the time of filing, must pay to the Director of Commerce a specified amount of the unclaimed funds, depending on the value of the items shown on the report. If the item is worth \$50 or less, the entire amount must be paid to the Director. For items worth more than \$50, 10% of the aggregate amount must be paid to the Director. The Director may opt to have the holder retain the remaining funds or pay them to the Director. The act, instead requires the holder of attorney unclaimed funds to, at the time of filing, remit to the Director of Commerce 100% of the aggregate amount of attorney unclaimed funds as shown on the report. Then, these funds may be claimed for holding purposes by the Director of the Foundation.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ R.C. 120.521, not in the act. See also, Ohio Access to Justice Foundation Overview, <https://www.ohiojusticefoundation.org/about-us/overview/>.

¹¹⁵ R.C. 169.01(L).

¹¹⁶ R.C. 169.03(A) and (B) and conforming changes in R.C. 127.16, 169.13, and 4735.24.

¹¹⁷ R.C. 169.052(A); R.C. 169.05, not in the act.

Ohio Access to Justice Foundation administration of funds

If the Foundation holds the attorney unclaimed funds, interest must accrue on the funds in accordance with continuing law. Funds recovered by the Foundation are subject to call at the discretion of the Director of Commerce to be returned to the Department of Commerce. Funds held by the Foundation can only be used to provide (1) financial assistance to legal aid societies, (2) to enhance or improve access to justice, or (3) to operate the Foundation. These funds held by the Foundation may be assessed the actual and reasonable cost the Department incurs for administering the funds.

The act requires that if an owner makes a claim for a fund that is held by the Foundation, the Director of Commerce must notify the Foundation in writing of the payment of the claim and the Foundation must immediately reimburse the Unclaimed Funds Trust Fund in the amount of the claim, including interest.¹¹⁸

Ohio Access to Justice Foundation board of directors

The act requires that the Director of Commerce or the Director's designee serve on the Foundation's board of directors that holds attorney unclaimed funds.¹¹⁹

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	02-11-20
Reported, S. Judiciary	06-30-20
Passed Senate (32-0)	07-21-20
Reported, H. Civil Justice	12-14-20
Passed House (83-1)	12-17-20
Senate concurred in House amendments (29-0)	12-18-20

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¹¹⁸ R.C. 169.052(A), (C), and (D), and 169.08(F)(2).

¹¹⁹ R.C. 169.052(B).