



Charlottesville/Albemarle
League of Women Voters
Newsletter
February 2012

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LWV C/A February Community Dialogue

"Privatization" - What Does it Mean?

Tuesday, February 7, 11:30 am to 1:00 pm

New County Office Building, 1600 Fifth St., Room B

For Lunch Reservations, box lunch \$8, contact the office, 970-1707,
by Thursday, February 2.

The US League of Women Voters has approved a study of "Privatization of Government Services, Assets and Functions," and asked local leagues to engage in study and come to consensus by May 1, 2012. With this deadline in mind, our International Relations/Federal Government Committee will devote committee meetings and two Community Dialogues for study and consensus. **The February 7 Community Dialogue will be a study session open to all LWV C/A members and the public.** At this meeting, we will look at legal issues, charter schools, and prisons, all of which have had some form of privatization. See pages 2 through 4 of this newsletter for study questions.

So what is "privatization"? Federal, state and local governments own extensive assets and are major employers. Governments often consider selling assets, and outsourcing some functions and services to the private sector, including "core" government services such as providing for the safety, security and general welfare (public well-being) of citizens, the economy, and our country. Privatization of these government assets, services and functions has been occurring for decades at all levels of government. The consequences of "privatizing" a government service or function, in particular, may enhance the function or service. Alternatively, it may reduce or alter functions and services. Government revenues may be reduced or lost and jobs may be cut. In some instances, this may have a detrimental effect on the "common good" or public well-being.

One state, for instance, has declared as a matter of state law and policy that *"using private contractors to provide public services formerly provided by state employees does not always promote the public interest. To ensure that citizens receive high quality public services at low cost, with due regard for tax payers and the needs of public and private workers, the (legislature) finds it necessary to regulate such privatization contracts throughout the state."*

The purpose of this study is to identify policies and parameters that should be considered when any governmental entity is planning to undertake some type of privatization process. So **please join us for this very important discussion on Tuesday, February 7, at 11:30 am, at the New County Office Building, 1600 Fifth St., Room B.**

This page is sponsored by Joan Jay of Roy Wheeler Realty Co.

PRIVATIZATION CONSENSUS QUESTIONS

Consensus questions one and two should be presented to the group at the outset of the meeting and then repeated after the other questions have been answered.

1. As a general matter, the extent to which government functions, services and assets have been privatized in the past decade is:

Much too much Too much About right Too little Much too little No consensus

2. Core government services and functions important to well-being of the people should remain with government and not be transferred to the private sector.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree No consensus

3. As a matter of good government policy, which of the following criteria should be applied when making decisions to transfer government services, assets and functions to the private sector?

a. Transparency and Accountability: All government contracts with private companies for services must ensure public access to relevant records and information regarding contracted services, functions and assets and provide for adequate government oversight and control.

High priority Lower priority Not a priority No consensus

b. Public Well-being: Provisions are in place to assure that, in the event any public services are to be privatized, there will be no increased risks to public well-being, especially to vulnerable populations.

High priority Lower priority Not a priority No consensus

c. Cost and Quality: Privatized services should not appreciably increase the costs or decrease the quality of services to the public.

High priority Lower priority Not a priority No consensus

d. Environmental and Natural Resources: Defined parameters should be in place to assure that environmental and natural resources are not compromised.

High priority Lower priority Not a priority No consensus

e. Contracts and Sales of Public Assets: All government contracts and privatized public assets should be subject to competitive bidding and comply with all laws regarding awarding contracts.

High priority Lower priority Not a priority No consensus

f. Economic Impact: Privatization should not result in a negative economic impact on the communities in which the services are provided.

High priority Lower priority Not a priority No consensus

g. Government Recovery of Services and Assets: Provisions should be in place to recover key services, assets and functions should the private sector fail to safeguard them.

High priority Lower priority Not a priority No consensus

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PRIVATIZATION CONSENSUS QUESTIONS - Continued from previous page

4. Privatization is not appropriate: **a.** When the government lacks the will, ability or resources to adequately oversee contracts with the private entity and any successor thereto. Agree Disagree No Consensus
- b.** When there is no private entity able or willing to provide the service for the short and long term. Agree
 Disagree No Consensus
- c.** When it poses a potential threat to national security. Agree Disagree No Consensus
- d.** When it poses a risk to personal or security data. Agree Disagree No Consensus
- e.** When there has been evidence of potential corruption. Agree Disagree No Consensus
- f.** When the private entity's goals and purposes are not compatible with public well-being. Agree
 Disagree No Consensus
- g.** When the private entity has not complied with existing government requirements for public records, open meetings or publication of reports and audits. Agree Disagree No Consensus
- h.** When a loss of revenue decreases government support for mandated or critical services. Agree
 Disagree No Consensus
5. Some states have developed laws and regulations to control the process of privatization within their jurisdictions. As a general matter, should privatization be regulated? **a.** Yes, all privatization efforts should be regulated.
 b. Yes, some types of privatization efforts should be regulated.
 c. No, privatization efforts should never be regulated **d.** no consensus
6. Which of the following should be included in the regulatory process when privatizing public assets, services and functions? **a.** Timely public announcements regarding intentions to privatize and the clear and measurable expected benefits to the public Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree No consensus
- b.** Public and stakeholder (investors, shareholders, experts) input into the decision and terms of the contract.
 Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree No consensus
- c.** Feasibility study regarding performance, costs and benefits. Strongly agree Agree Disagree
 Strongly disagree No consensus
- d.** Adherence to all laws regarding public contracts.. Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree No consensus
- e.** Transition plans for displaced employees. Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree No consensus
- f.** Accountability and transparency provisions in all contracts. Strongly agree Agree Disagree
 Strongly disagree No consensus

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PRIVATIZATION CONSENSUS QUESTIONS - Continued from previous page

g. Regular performance evaluations including meaningful opportunity for public comment. ___Strongly agree ___Agree ___Disagree ___Strongly disagree ___No consensus

h. Provisions for transferring services and assets back to the government or another contractor in the event of inadequate performance. ___Strongly agree ___Agree ___Disagree ___Strongly disagree ___No consensus

i. Adequate resources for enforcement. ___Strongly agree ___Agree ___Disagree ___Strongly disagree ___No consensus

February, 2012, Community Dialogue

**2012 Finance Drive to Launch on
Saturday, January 28, 2012
9:00 am**

Spend a morning of fun as we write notes and stuff the fund drive letters. **In these tight financial times, our fund drive letters are critical--we need your help on Saturday, January 28.** Ruth Wadlington, our finance director, has sponsored these letter-writing mornings at her lovely home for the past several years. So join us--there are always lots of tasty goodies too!

Directions to Ruth's house: 1620 Keith Valley Rd.

*From the 250 Bypass going east, exit at Dairy Rd./Meadowbrook Hghts Rd., turn left at the end of the exit and go over the bypass, turning left at the end of the bridge onto St. Anne's Rd., then turn left again at Keith Valley Rd. to No. 1620. From 250 Bypass going west, exit at Dairy Rd./Meadowbrook Hghts Rd., make a left at the four-way stop sign (Grove Rd.), then bear right onto St. Anne's Rd., and then left at Keith Valley Rd. to No. 1620.
Phone: 293-5261*

Welcome New Members!

Paula Christman-Bracker

500 Crestwood Dr. Apt. 1602
Charlottesville, VA 22903
202-7367
paulachristman@comcast.com

Donna N. and James P. Bennett

6430 Sugar Hollow Rd.
Crozet, VA 22932
823-2636
slatebranch@me.com
jpb8u@me.com (James)

***Call for Nominations for
LWV C/A Board and Committees
for 2012-13***

by Kerin Yates, Chair
Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is starting its search for members willing to run to serve on the Board of Directors, the Finance Committee, the Nominating Committee, and the Mary Stamps White Committee.

Positions that will be open (both by election and appointment) include: president, secretary, newsletter editor & webmaster, membership, women's issues, natural resources, nominating committee, finance committee, and the Mary Stamps White committee. Please contact **Kerin Yates** by email: kerinyates@hotmail.com or by phone: 434 964 1840 with questions and /or suggestions of possible candidates.

Reminder: The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization. Anyone wishing to serve as League president may not participate actively in the upcoming presidential election.

Lively Legislative Luncheon on January 6

by Debora Hoard, Voter's Service Chair

On a perfect day, January 6th found more than 80 League members and friends gathered for the annual legislative lunch at the Boar's Head Inn. Four local state legislators, Delegates Rob Bell and David Toscano, and Senators Creigh Deeds and Bryce Reeves, headlined the event.

Topics addressed by the legislators who were on their way to the opening of the General Assembly in Richmond, ranged from uranium mining to voter's rights and to the opening of part of Meadowbrook Parkway, renamed the John Warner Parkway just that morning. Many questions from the audience dealt with funding including finding monies for early childhood education as well as for the Virginia Retirement System. When questioned, none of the legislators gave much hope to the prospect of increased revenues, or increased bi-partisan cooperation, or movement on the Equal Rights Amendment.

With the General Assembly about to open, each of the legislators related how fast and full the sessions are as they try to absorb and respond to Governor McDonnell's new budget in light of shifting state resources. The uranium issue is awaiting a review by the National Academy of Sciences of uranium mining in Virginia. It is just one of a myriad of bills that have appeared on legislators' desks in the last weeks.

The League would like to extend our thanks to each of the legislators and our many members and guests for making this informative luncheon a huge success.



International Relations/Federal Government News by Gerry Kruger

The International Relations Federal Government Committee in undertaking the Privatization Study will be reporting first on privatization as it relates to education, prisons, and water treatment plants. Marge Cox has already been gathering resource materials for us that present an unbiased view, and the US League has sent the Consensus questions.

The December 14th meeting at Jean Minehart's home was abuzz with discussion. **Lois Sandy** reported on the Arab spring and the rise of democracy in the Arab world. Democracy appears to be the desire of the Egyptians, and Turkey has become a full-fledged democratic region. Although neither Turkey nor Iran are Arab countries, they are competing for dominance in the Arab world.

Deborah Brooks continued her report on food supply. There is a growing concern that the dwindling supply of heirloom varieties could cause a food shortage. Ninety percent of vegetable and fruit varieties have vanished, and there is a bias toward more productive species. However, the plants that predominate at this time because they grow faster and larger than the older varieties are not as disease resistant. With fewer varieties there is less chance that there will be plants to replace the newer strains if they are destroyed by disease. Remedies for this are discontinuing monocropping and practicing intercropping (planting a crop like soybeans that add nitrogen to the soil one year and a crop that uses nitrogen the next). Genetic engineering, the use of antibiotics, and chemical fertilizers are discouraged.

The most controversial topic of the day was the second part of **Flora Patterson's** Fair Tax Bill-H.R. 25. Some of the positive aspects of this bill are:

- Replacing the payroll and federal income tax with a flat tax sales tax that would be simpler and less expensive to manage;
- Everyone receiving a pre-bate that would be based on the amount of money that a person at the poverty level spends on necessities, thus making it progressive;
- Social security and Medicare continuing;
- Taxing those that generate income illegally because they would be taxed on purchased goods;
- The cost of goods decreasing due to eliminating embedded taxes--as a result the US would be more competitive with other countries; and
- Eliminating the need for the IRS and all the complexities and expense of the present system

Opposing views may be reported on at a future meeting.

On January 11 we met in the home of Molly O'Brien and began our study of privatization with reports from **Leslie Wilcox** and **Deborah Brooks**. Leslie's in-depth report on prisons showed that there is no overwhelming evidence to support claims that private companies are able to run prisons more cost efficiently than the government. There are so many complexities that must be considered when comparing publicly run prisons to private ones that the two systems are difficult to compare. There is generally less transparency with privately run prisons and thus greater opportunity for corruption, but private companies can design and construct new prisons in half the time of a government construction project.

Deborah gave us the legal framework of transparency and accountability in regard to privatization. We learned that a contract between a private company and a public entity must be very carefully drawn to include specific transparency, accountability, and regulatory factors before the contract is concluded.

The upcoming IR/Federal Government meetings will include reports on privatization to prepare our members for the consensus questions in February. Everyone is welcome to attend these meetings and prepare to answer the questions. See the calendar at the end of the newsletter for places and dates of our meetings.

WOMEN'S LEGISLATIVE ROUNDTABLE: December 8, 2011 by Gerry Kruger

The filming of Steven Spielberg's movie on Abraham Lincoln was not the only action around the Capitol Building in Richmond on December 8. **Pat Hurst, Debora Hoard, Gerry Kruger, and Lois Sandy** entered this scene to attend the **Women's Legislative Roundtable**. Lulu Meese, a former president of the Virginia LWV, and one of the founders of the Roundtable, was on hand to pass on the history of this 30-year-old tradition. In 1981, many laws discriminated against women in Virginia. Several female legislators complained that their legislation was not getting the same consideration as that of their male colleagues. They invited organizations such as the League of Women Voters to attend a forum where delegates and senators would be invited to explain their bills. They asked that the League of Women Voters moderate the program, and so it has continued for the last 30 years.

Over the course of the morning we heard 18 speakers present their positions on key bills that will be debated in the upcoming January session. Among the issues addressed by the non-profit advocates were:

1. Ben Greenberg - **Virginia Organizing**: Committed to getting the average citizen involved. # 1 issue for the last few years has been Predatory Lending. They are looking for a cap on lending of 36%.
2. Jill Henken - **Virginia Poverty Law Center**: They focus on civil law. Keeping a close eye on the issue of developing Health Benefit Exchanges. In spite of the dire financial predictions, we were reminded that some programs actually save money in the long run. One example is prenatal care for legal immigrants
3. Becky Bowers - **B2L Consulting**: Focus on health and health care legislation. Suggested we keep our eye on Personhood Bill which has already been filed
4. Matt Cobb - **Health and Human Services Deputy Secretary**: Discussed complexity of developing Health Benefit Exchanges. Many issues still on the table from the Fed before the state can or will move forward on this issue, particularly what will be mandated.
5. Nathan Lott - **Virginia Conservation Network**: Network of environmental and community groups with a wide variety of issue interests including state commitments to safe water and land preservation.
6. David Spears - **State Geologist**: noted the advisory role he plays for General Assembly and their eagerness to read the report on Uranium Mining from the NSA.
7. Megan Rhyn - **Virginia Coalition for Open Government**: produces daily newsletter of access to information problems. Always looking for subtle lines in legislation that restrict access to information, among many other things.
8. Rick Weeks - **Virginia-Department of Environmental Quality**: Provides information to legislators on emissions, radon, refuse and water demand in mining and milling. Also monitors states progress on Chesapeake Bay cleanup, company emissions. Lifting the 30-year-old ban on uranium mining is under consideration this year. Also spoke on the need for Water Supply Plans to be shifted to the state level, not localities.

Note on Uranium Mining: Rock near Chatham contains possibly the largest deposit of uranium in the United States. The legislature is waiting on a study from the National Academy of Sciences to be completed before discussing this bill. The governor has already said he would sign it if the study shows no harmful effects. Many issues for the local community as well as issues of transportation, tailings and contamination

9. Lianne Rozzell - **Virginia Coalition for Juvenile Justice & Families and Allies for Virginia's Youth (FAVY)**: Key issues are (a) Juveniles being registered as sex offenders-a "lifetime sentence" even though only 2.5% of juveniles are never re-convicted and (b) Juveniles being tried as adults.

10. Michael Cassidy - **Commonwealth Institute of Fiscal Policy**: Fiscal policy research focused on how public policy impacts low and moderate income citizens. Working on new revenue sources and reforming tax breaks and loopholes.

11. Nancy Finch - **Virginia Redistricting Coalition**: Bipartisan coalition on redistricting. As a result of last year's partisan redistricting there were many unopposed incumbents and the lightest voter turnout in years.

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Women's Legislative Roundtable: December 8, 2011, Report

12. Hope Amezquita - **Virginia American Civil Liberties Union:** Working to defeat call for ID photos for voter ID. Called this a "modern-day poll tax" since it discriminates against youth, minorities, and the elderly. Also concerned with restoration of rights for felons

13. Andy Goddard - **Virginia Center for Public Safety:** Gun legislation is a nonpartisan issue. Worries about repeal of limited gun restrictions already on books. There will be an annual Vigil and Lobby Day in Richmond on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day-Jan. 16th from 2:00-3:00 for the victims of gun violence. It will take place at the Bell Tower on the Capitol Grounds.

14. Meg Gruber- **Virginia Education Association:** Commonwealth is constitutionally mandated to be a partner in education costs, yet costs are constantly passed onto localities,

15. Mira Signer -**National Association for Mental Illness Virginia:** Working to decriminalize mental illness and fighting against cuts to mental illness programs. Noted that Governor McDonnell has been an ally.

16. Kathy Greenier - **Women's Rights Project & Virginia ACLU:** Focusing on women's reproductive rights highlighted fact that 21 states have proposed a "personhood" bill including VA. When asked about ERA noted they were not working on its adoption this year.

17. Matt Cobb - **Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Resources:** Attention is on development of health exchanges that are to be in place by 2014 if the Affordable Health Care Act is upheld by the Supreme Court. (As a result of this act there will be 520,000 new people coming into the health system in Virginia. 20,000 more will be added to the already 90,000 on Medicaid. In 2014, 2015, 2016 the federal government pays for new members and then federal assistance begins to taper off.)

18. Holly Coy - **Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy:** Working with a large number of faith communities on helping people in need. Issues include childhood obesity, taxes, Medicaid, Medicare, hunger, at risk youth.

Richard Brown, the Virginia Secretary of Finance was able to join us at lunch . It came as no surprise that the 2008 recession and our slow economic recovery puts great stress on the state budget. In spite of Virginia's

unemployment rate being lower than the national average, its slow job growth puts a tremendous squeeze on resources. Not only does the state lose revenue from sales tax and income tax when the jobless population grows, but the demand for social services, health care, and food assistance increases. The state is asked to do much more with less.

Our luncheon speaker was **Donald Palmer**, Secretary of the State Board of Elections. He is hopeful that technology will improve the security and efficiency of Virginia's elections and also save money.

Unfortunately none of us were asked to be extras in the Spielberg movie, but our trip was an invaluable experience and we would highly recommend attending this forum. In the words of Lulu Meese:

"We were greatly challenged by the needs for law changes in 1981 but never more than we are being challenged today.... Let us cease to be patient. This has not worked for us in 2,000 years and will not work now.... Let us work with legislators who will listen to the voices of women as well as sensitive media and citizens as a whole."

Addenda to the 2011-12 LWV C/A Membership Directory

The following listings should be added/corrected:

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Meetings and Events for February 2012: *Mark Your Calendars Now!*

Date/Time	Event	Place	Contact
Sat., Jan. 28, 9 am	Finance Drive 2012 Letter Writing Campaign Launched	Home of Ruth Wadlington, 1620 Keith Valley Rd., 293-5261	For more information, contact the office, 970-1707
Wed., Feb. 1	League Day/Women's Roundtable (WRT)	Richmond Capitol Bldg.	For more information, contact Sue Lewis, 295-1485
Thurs., Feb. 2, 4:30 - 6:00 pm	Natural Resources Committee Meeting	Virginia Foundation for the Humanities: Boar's Head Inn complex, Ivy Rd.	For more information, contact Linda Goodling, 296-9865
Tues., Feb. 7, 11:30 am to 1:30 pm	LWV C/A Community Dialogue: "Privatization" study session. Open to members and public.	New County Office Bldg., 1600 Fifth St., Rm. B	For lunch reservations (by Thurs. Feb. 2) and more information, contact the office, 970-1707
Wednesdays, Feb. 8, 15, 22, and 29	Women's Roundtable (WRT)	Richmond Capitol Bldg.	For more information, contact Sue Lewis, 295-1485
Wed. Feb. 8, 9:30 am	International Relations/Federal Gov't. Committee Meeting	Home of Gerry Kruger, 989 Allendale Dr., 977-7617	For further information, contact Molly O'Brien, 245-9806
Mon., Feb 13, 4 - 6 pm	LWV C/A Board Meeting	Home of Debora Hoard, 7512 Greenwood Station, 540-456-6390	For more information, contact Pat Hurst, 978-4532
Wed., Feb. 22, 9:30 am	International Relations/Federal Gov't. Committee Meeting	Home of Lois Sandy, 1666 Franklin Dr., 296-8737	For further information, contact Molly O'Brien, 245-9806