



Charlottesville/Albemarle
League of Women Voters
Newsletter
March 2012

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LWV C/A March Community Dialogue

"Privatization" - Consensus Meeting

Tuesday, March 6 , 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, March 1.

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. The purpose of the study is to identify policies and parameters that should be considered when any governmental entity is planning to undertake some type of privatization process. With this deadline in mind, our International Relations/Federal Government Committee has devoted committee meetings and two Community Dialogues for study and consensus. The February 7 Community Dialogue was a study session open to all LWV C/A members and the public. At that meeting, we looked at legal issues, charter schools, and prisons, all of which have had some form of privatization. At the Community Dialogue on Tuesday, March 6, we will now deal with finding consensus for these study questions. See pages 2 through 4 of this newsletter for study questions. **Please join us for this very important consensus meeting on Tuesday, March 6, at 11:30 am, at the New County Office Building, 1600 Fifth St., Room B.**

Natural Resources Committee Meeting on Thursday, March 1, at 4:15 pm

County Office Building, Room 246 (Chris Greene Room)

401 McIntire Rd. (old Lane High School)

Guest Speaker: Elaine Echols, Principal Planner

Albemarle County Department of Planning and Community Development

Our regularly scheduled monthly Natural Resources Committee meetings have been changed to the first Thursday of the month, and this month, we will be meeting on Thursday, March 1, at 4:15 pm, in the County Office Building at 401 McIntire Rd., Room 246. Our guest speaker is Elaine Echols, principal planner, Albemarle County Department of Planning and Community Development, who will discuss "Land-use Planning in Crozet: Water, Roads, Economic Development." Elaine has been principal planner for the County from 1997 to the present. With a citizens' committee, she developed a major Comprehensive Plan amendment, "The Neighborhood Model," promoting New Urbanism in the County's growth areas, and now she is overseeing its application in Crozet and elsewhere. Please join us for a very enlightening discussion.

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

International Relations/Federal Government News

by Gerry Kruger

Our January 25 meeting in Shirley Munson's home began with a continuation of **Deborah Brooks'** explanation of the legal basis of privatization. The federal government generally has no problem including clauses in contracts that protect transparency when it deals with private companies. This tends to be more problematic in deals made with local and state governments.

Jean Minehart's report was on CREDO, a study that included 70% of students in charter schools from 15 states and the District of Columbia that were paired with "virtual twins" in public schools. The primary finding was the 17% of the charter schools did better than public, 37% did worse, and for 46% there was no statistical difference. According to Albert Shanker's critique of the study, the question is not "whether some charters do better or worse, but rather why...."

The meeting in my home on February 8 continued our study of privatization. **Marian Rothman** reported on a Baltimore charter school that closed due to expenses that went beyond those of the public school in its district by 16%.

Next **Rosemary Simari** gave us an in-depth study of the former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, who served from 1977 to 1990. England prospered under the sweeping conservative changes she brought about, but she did nothing to upgrade the position of women. She did, however, leave intact England's socialistic system of health care.

The International Relations/Federal Government committee is now wrapping up its study of privatization of government assets, services, and functions. **Marge Cox**, chair of the privatization committee, led us in a discussion of the Consensus questions in order to prepare us for the final Consensus meeting on March 6. We all owe a special thanks to **Leslie Wilcox, Deborah Brooks, Jean Minehart**, and Marge for their expert guidance through this study. See the calendar on the back for dates and places of future IR/FG meetings.

Finance Drive is Launched!

Kudos to all the wonderful Leaguers who spent Saturday morning last January 28, working assembly-line style to get the finance drive letters stuffed and addressed:

Kerin Yates, Anne Linden, Marge Cox, Michele Kellermann, Emerald Young, Marion Rothman, Deborah Brooks, Debora Hoard, Jane Foster, Wayne Harbaugh, and Gerry Kruger.

Also, a special thanks to **Wayne Harbaugh** and **Jane Foster**, both of whom handwrote many notes on the form letter. And many thanks to all who brought goodies to share and especially to **Marge Cox**, who brought a sinfully delectable apple cake that was the highlight of the refreshments.

Gratefully,
Ruth Wadlington
Finance Committee Chair

President's Message

General Assembly – In Session

As the 2012 General Assembly is currently in session, I would like to share with you some interesting facts and figures. The Regular Session convened on January 11 at noon and will run through March 10. The Virginia General Assembly is the oldest legislative body in the Western Hemisphere, established on July 30, 1619. It is a bicameral body consisting of a lower house, the Virginia House of Delegates, with 100 members, and an upper house, the Senate of Virginia, with 40 members. Combined together, the General Assembly consists of 140 elected representatives from an equal number of constituent districts across the commonwealth.

The 2012 General Assembly looks a little younger than last year. Members taking their seats for the first time are more likely to be men and less likely to have been born in Virginia. That's according to a Virginia Public Access Project analysis of how 20 new legislators have changed the overall demographics of each house. For photos and demographic information for each new Delegate and Senator, you can visit www.vpap.org/

Here are some specifics about the 2012 General Assembly:

- There are 115 men and 25 women, down from 27 women in the 2011 General Assembly.
- Incoming legislator's average age is 43, compared with 55 for the 2011 General Assembly for a 22 % decrease.
- In the Senate, there is an even 20-20 split between native and non-native Virginians. Over in the House, the number of Virginia-born will remain unchanged: 54 native Virginians and 46 members born outside the state.

There are a myriad of bills introduced this year. For daily statistics on the number of bills passed by each House and Senate Committee and for summaries, please visit <http://leg1.state.va.us/> and click on Statistics. Key numbers as of February 13, are given in the table below.

Bills Introduced	Passed House	Passed Senate	Passed	Approved
2558	851	675	358	3

Out of the 2558 bills introduced, only 3 have worked their way through the process and been approved by the Governor. Although the Session is over half-way, there are over three weeks remaining – perhaps long enough to match the 2011 passage of 890 approved out of the 2692 bills introduced that year.

The LWV-VA is watching closely bills related to priorities identified with input from the 14 local leagues. These are:

- Voting Issues (such as election laws and felons' voting rights)
- Women's Rights
- Transportation
- Education
- Environment

There is still time for you to attend a Women's Legislative Round Table, offered each Wednesday through February 29. If you come the day before, the League offers a free hotel stay so that you will easily be able to attend the WRT at 8:30 am to learn from legislators and lobbyists. You can also attend committee hearings and the House and Senate floor sessions and see our legislators in action. Please call: 978-4532, or email me, phurst@embrqmail.com if you would like more information.

Pat Hurst, President
League of Women Voters of Charlottesville/Albemarle



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

Date/Time	Event	Place	Contact
Feb. 29, 8:30-9:30 am	Women's Roundtable (WRT)	Richmond, General Assembly Bldg.	For more information, contact Pat Hurst, 978-4532
Thurs., March 1, 4:15 - 6:00 pm	Natural Resources Committee Meeting: Guest Speaker, Elaine Echols	County Office Bldg., 401 McIntire Rd., Room 246 (Chris Greene Room)	For more information, contact Linda Goodling, 296-9865
Tues., March 6, 11:30 am to 1:00 pm	LWV C/A Community Dialogue: "Privatization" Consensus Meeting	New County Office Bldg., 1600 Fifth St., Rm. B	For lunch reservations (by Thurs. March 1) and more information, contact the office, 970-1707
Tues. March 13, 4 - 6 pm	LWV C/A Board Meeting	Virginia Nat'l Bank Bldg., Arlington Blvd.	For more information, contact Pat Hurst, 978-4532
Wed., March 14, 9:30 am	International Relations/Federal Gov't. Committee Meeting	Home of Marge Cox, 514 Rosemont Dr., 245-5228	For further information, contact Molly O'Brien, 245-9806
Sunday, March 18, Noon - 3 pm	FOCUS Women's Fair exhibit	City Space	For more information, contact Pat Hurst, 978-4532
Wed., March 28, 9:30 am	International Relations/Federal Gov't. Committee Meeting	Home of Deborah Brooks, 3080 Branham Pl., 295-7696	For further information, contact Molly O'Brien, 245-9806