



IN LEAGUE REPORTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ST. LOUIS

8706 Manchester Road, Ste. 104,

St Louis, MO 63144

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www.lwvstl.org

DECEMBER 2011

2011-2012 LWVSTL BOARD of DIRECTORS

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REDISTRICTING IN MISSOURI

We are in the last stages of redistricting in Missouri. Redistricting occurs following each decennial census to reflect the movement of population. It occurs in all levels of government, the U.S. House of Representatives, state government and our local cities. In Missouri the Office of Administration provides technical and geographic mapping support. Redistricting is suppose to be based on equal population in all districts, compactness, contiguous and maintaining community of interest. However other issues come into the discussions such as: the political party voting results of a particular election, the number of safe seats, the residence of elected or potential candidates, and how to handle minority representation. There are attempts at compromise and negotiation as to where particular boundaries may be drawn which are sometimes successful and sometimes not.

Because Missouri did not gain enough population in relation to others states, we lost one congressional seat. The Missouri General Assembly passed legislation to redraw the congressional districts from 9 to 8. Governor Nixon vetoed the legislation but the General Assembly over road the veto establishing the new 8 districts. The legislation has been challenged in court with questions of compactness and other issues. The court has not yet ruled on the case but has until February 18, 2012, the first day of filing for state wide elective office.

The redistricting of the Missouri House and Senate is assigned to separate Commissions of equal Democrats and Republicans. This year neither of the Commissions were able to agree on a map of redrawn districts so the task was passed on to a set of judges as provided for in the state constitution. The plan should be announced no later than December 15, 2011. Once the judges announce the maps, the districts are set, and there is not any kind of appeal.

Linda McDaniel

CALENDAR of EVENTS

| | | | |
|------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Sat. Dec. 3rd | 9:30am | Privatization Committee | Nancy Thompson's (p7) |
| Sat. Dec. 10th | 11:15am | Holiday Luncheon | Crowne Plaza |
| Tues. Dec. 13th | 7:00 pm | Environmental Quality Comm. | League Office |
| Mon. Dec 19th | 5-10:00pm | Winter Wonderland | Tilles Park |
| Dec. 26 - Jan. 2 | | OFFICE CLOSED FOR THE HOLIDAYS | |

FEATURE ARTICLES

| | |
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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENTS

Gearing up for 2012: They Want the League of Women Voters!

With critical issues at our local, state and national levels to decide in the 2012 election season, we have our work cut out for us! We have spent the last few months getting ready to launch Vote411 in March for the April local elections in St. Louis City and St. Louis, St. Charles, Jefferson, Lincoln, Warren, and Franklin Counties. With tight budgets and increasing demands for services, these local elections are already attracting high interest. We expect to cover over 1,000 candidates and at least 50 ballot initiatives.

We will hardly catch our breaths before rolling into what looks like hotly contested primaries and then the November general election. If you are watching the news you know that our high quality non-partisan information and voter service is needed more than ever. We already have requests for candidate forums and public presentations.

We are working hard to oppose measures that would make it more difficult to vote in Missouri and monitoring Voter ID legislation in other states. Our national president, Elisabeth MacNamara testified before Congress this week, voicing the League's opposition to **voter suppression**. We will work hard to make sure that voters in our state understand the difference between a caucus and a presidential primary so that they know what their participation really means.

Various community groups have asked to partner with us to better educate citizens and future voters. We will be working with Kids Vote to provide students and teachers with candidate and ballot initiatives to complement their voting programs. We will be linking our information to various media and organization websites. And we will strive to answer every request to register voters, conduct candidate and ballot issue forums, and provide speakers to community and school groups. You, our committed volunteers clocked over 2,000 hours last year to provide essential voter service. Look for opportunities to serve in 2012.

In order to meet our community's needs we have taken several steps to increase our membership and raise the funds necessary to do our work. We welcome Sheryl Foster-Gadkari of Strategic Impact Inc. to our staff as a part-time fundraiser. Sheryl has a Ph.D. in Public Policy Analysis and Administration as well as extensive experience with non-profits, a perfect fit for the League.

Make your registrations for the December 10th Holiday Brunch, bring your donations and a friend or two. It is a great time to visit with your League friends and be inspired by our speaker to work even harder to help our community deal with these hard times. We have so much to be grateful for.

Linda C. McDaniel

Kathleen Farrell

Co-Presidents, LWV St. Louis

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EDUCATION STUDY REPORT

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The Education Committee completed the final presentation of the national study, Role of the Federal Government in Public Education at all five Unit meetings in November. Thanks to the many members who attended and participated in the consensus process. Common Core Standards and Equity and Funding are important issues. Lively discussions prevailed with differing opinions voiced by members at each presentation.

The League of Women Voters of St.Louis Board of Directors approved the consensus on November 16, 2011. After approval, results were sent to the LWVUS for the national study committee to analyze the data from consensus and write the position paper for the “Role of the Federal Government in Public Education”. Please keep in mind that this is a national study, and many Leagues in the United States will be submitting their consensus.

In March, 2012 the LWVUS Board of Directors will review the consensus results for comment and approval of the position for the “Role of the Federal Government in Public Education”. When the LWVUS Board of Directors approves the position, it immediately becomes the League’s position and is the basis for action on the issue. This type of member involvement in the consensus process tends to ensure member commitment to the resulting positions. In addition, members have the opportunity at each Convention to decide whether or not to re-adopt these positions or update them.

As Committee Chair, I wish to express my grateful thanks to the committee members, Rosalie Brasch, Doris Buzzell, Bob Elgin, Joan Esserman, Mary Beth Reynolds, and Pat Soraghan for their outstanding commitment and participation. We hope you found the study and consensus process interesting.



*Committee members, left to right: Bob Elgin, Mary Beth Reynolds, Joan Esserman, Doris Buzzell, Marti Ott, Chair, Pat Soraghan
Not present for the picture: Rosalie Brasch*

Please watch for our next scheduled meeting date in the January, 2012 In League Reporter. If you have an education concern or issue of interest for our consideration, please share your thoughts. We are open to suggestions!

Marty Ott, chair

The LWV STL has sent a letter to County Council opposing the Closure of County Parks using our Natural Resource and Social Justice positions.

As individuals – please go the Pledge Site and sign the Pledge to Save our County Parks <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/1/save-stl-county-parks/> or send your own letter to County Council!

Impressions of the Missouri Fall Conference by a first time attender– Nov 5, 2011 Or why you would like to go to a statewide meeting!

For the past 20 years, the Fall Conference has been held in Sedalia, Missouri which has given the Sedalia LWV a chance to perfect both the social and educational parts of the meeting. The Sedalia League offered either hotel or home accommodations for those who came down on Friday. A tour of Sedalia architecture and history as a former cow town was offered on Friday afternoon. Lively League discussions began during the tradition soup, bread and desert dinner. Attendees could retire to the hotel or attend a play.

The Missouri League has two statewide meetings a year—one in the fall and one in the spring. The statewide meetings are an opportunity to meet leaguers from throughout the state and find out how the various Leagues are making a difference in their communities (STD education, approaches to voter service, etc.). It also gives a chance to meet and be inspired by leaguers who are interested in and working on national studies or topics of common interest. (Education, Privatization, voter suppression) In addition, it provides an opportunity to meet and influence leaguers who are serving at the state level (state president, legislative action chair, LWV-US Liaison).

On Saturday, the 6 hour conference had sessions including:

Redistricting: Linda McDaniel gave us up-to-date information on the redistricting of federal and statewide offices because of the census, what is still in play and factors that are influencing.

Vote411 Software: Kathleen Farrell and others educated Leagues about the Vote411 software (from LWV national) which St Louis is going to use to collect voter information for all the statewide offices, and recruited other Leagues to participate. Vote411 will simplify many processes---like remind candidates through email that their information has not been received.

Advocacy: Marcia Coccozza, the LWVMO Director who is Legislative Chair for Missouri, convened a group to determine the League Legislative priorities for the 2012 session. In her first year as League lobbyist she wants to find a balance in old and new League traditions for influencing the Legislature.

•**SALSA** – software that creates e-blasts ---emailing members on federal and state legislation that is coming up for vote which the League has positions.

The conference was fast moving and inspirational---League members are good at educating on a topic and giving background as well as direction for the future. The next statewide meeting will be in St Louis on May 5th, 2012. Put it on your calendar now. You'll come back with lots of ideas, information and inspiration as to how you can Make a Difference for democracy.

Becky Clausen, 1st time attender

Sheryl Foster-Gadkari Joins LWVSTL

We are very excited to welcome Sheryl to the staff of LWVSTL as a part-time fundraiser. She is currently president of Strategic Impact, Inc., a strategic planning firm. She has a Ph.D. in Public Policy Analysis and Administration as well as extensive experience with non-profits.



HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

December 10th, 11:15–2:00pm

Crowne Plaza

7750 Carondelet Ave., Clayton 63105



11:15–12:00 Social Time

12:00 A plated hot lunch will be served

1:00pm Speaker: Ms Amy Smoucha

“Health Care and the Pending Affordable Health Care Act”

Health Care Organizer for St. Louis Jobs with Justice

This year, instead of treating ourselves, we’re treating others.

Please bring new children’s books for all ages (unwrapped) for a child newborn to 16 years old or a gift certificate for \$10-\$20 redeemable at K-Mart, Target, Walgreens, Sears, Toys R Us, jcpenny’s, etc. Lois Bliss will have some children's books from the library sale available for purchase at the event..

Gifts will be donated to parent’s shopping day at local food pantries

The cost for the event is \$25.00. To register and/or pay online, go to www.lwvstl.org or send check, email address and names of attendees to LWVSTL, 8706 Manchester, Suite 104, St. Louis, MO 63144

Registration is Due Dec. 3rd. Garage Parking is included

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WINTER WONDERLAND

They want us back! The St. Louis County Parks have chosen us to work again at the Winter Wonderland. This is a beautiful display so be sure to let all your friends know about it and that League volunteers will be working again this year.

We will work the evening of Monday, December 19th. We will need 6 volunteers at all times and will have two shifts 5:00-7:30 p.m. and 7:30-10:00 p.m.

For giving our time, the League of Women Voters Information Service will receive a check for \$500.

It can be wet—it can be cold so dress warmly—and it is a lot of fun. There are a few time slots still available, so please call Barbara Elbrecht at 314.962.2821 to let her know when you would like to volunteer and we do thank you for your help.

As you leave, you get to drive through the park to enjoy this great display!

Barbara Elbrecht, Chair

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THE MISSOURI WOMEN'S NETWORK INVITES YOU TO A:

**WOMEN'S ISSUES LEGISLATIVE RETREAT
A WEEKEND WITH FRIENDS, FOOD, AND POLITICS!**

LEARN HOW THE NEW LEGISLATORS WILL MAKE AN IMPACT IN JEFFERSON CITY AND WHAT CAN BE EXPECTED FROM THE 2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6 - SATURDAY, JANUARY 7, 2012
RICKMAN CENTER, JEFFERSON CITY, MO

Tentative Schedule Friday, January 6

8:00 pm
Workshop/Legislative Discussion
Saturday, January 7
8:00 am Breakfast
8:30-9:30 Welcome, Introductions, Review of 2011 Legislative Session
9:30-9:45 Break
9:45-12:00 Speaker/Presentations

12:00-12:30 Lunch at Rickman Center
12:30-2:30 Set Legislative Priorities

Bring a Friend - Everyone is Welcome

DOOR PRIZES

- Single Room, Friday night \$55.00
- Breakfast, Saturday morning . . . \$10.00
- Double/Triple (Share) room (each) . . . \$37.00
- Lunch, Saturday noon \$10.00

(Includes Breakfast and Lunch)

NO ROOM RESERVATIONS MADE WITHOUT PREPAYMENT

**IF YOU HAVE SPECIAL FOOD REQUIREMENTS, LET US KNOW IN ADVANCE;
WE WILL TRY TO ACCOMMODATE YOU. RICKMAN CENTER HAS AN ELEVATOR.**

**NAME ADDRESS
TELEPHONE
E-MAIL**

Return by January 3, 2012, to Grace Butler, 531 W. Botner Rd., Columbia, MO 65202
Telephone 573-449-8062 or 314-831-5359; FAX 314-831-3288.
For late reservations E-mail sbreeze@mindspring.com or gbutler1111@aol.com

DIRECTIONS: Follow Highway 54 one-half mile south of Jefferson City to the Rt.B/Wardsville exit. Go east on Rt. B to Christy Drive. Turn right. Then, take the second left, which is Bennett Lane. Go to the top of the hill. The temporary CCMA Regional Office is on the right. Rickman Center parking is on the left, and the Center main building is at the end of the road.



Commemorating the Bill of Rights One League Project at a Time

On December 15th, The League of Women Voters of St. Louis will mark the 220th anniversary of the adoption of the Bill of Rights with a call for inclusive political discourse and greater civic participation.

For more than 91 years, members of the League of Women Voters have defended civil liberties and promoted balanced, nonpartisan discussions on issues that are important to our community, and we continue this work today. Our mission is to increase public participation – to help empower individuals to exercise the rights that are afforded to them through our democracy.

As we reflect back on 2011 and witnessing democratic movements take hold around the world, there is much to celebrate. But, it is also a reminder that we cannot take our liberties for granted. Every day, League members work in our community to protect our liberties by encouraging voting, discussing critical issues, and holding elected officials accountable for their actions and decisions. In the highly partisan environment throughout our nation, our role in creating a ‘safe’ venue where all sides of the issues can be discussed civilly and thoughtfully is more critical than ever. We encourage all to join us and make their voices and opinions heard; it’s our right!

The protection of the individual liberties laid out in the Bill of Rights has been central to the League’s work throughout its history. During World War II, the League worked to balance the preservation of civil liberties with the importance of national security. During the Communist “witch hunt” period of the early 1950s, the League conducted a community education program known as the Freedom Agenda, providing Americans with the opportunity to discuss and learn about the Bill of Rights. More recently,

League members have promoted a diverse and independent judiciary, advocated against harmful elements of the PATRIOT Act, and worked for government transparency and accountability.

For more information, visit www.lwvstl.org or www.lwv.org.

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Membership in the League is open to men and women of all ages. With more than 91 years of experience and 800 local and state affiliates, the League is one of America’s most trusted grassroots organizations.

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TIPS FOR A SUSTAINABLE HOLIDAY

Did you know... Americans throw away an additional **5 million tons** of trash between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day — that's approximately **25%** more than usual!!

What You Can Do!

- Send electronic greeting cards - The 2.65 billion holiday cards sold every year in the US could fill a football field ten stories high! Reuse and recycle bows, ribbon, gift bags and boxes
- Give an adventure - theater tickets, dance lessons, a Spa treatment or a hot air balloon ride. Gifts for kids might include a membership to the Zoo or Science Center, a camping trip or a coupon book filled with fun ideas that can be redeemed throughout the year.

It's easy to forget the environment during the holidays, but a more sustainable festive season may not be as difficult as you think. **Follow these handy tips for a greener, more sustainable holiday:**

1. Use less gift wrap: Consider using something usable as wrapping paper. Some great ideas are dish towels, diapers, blankets, or even garbage bags. Small items can be stuck in a stocking cap or a pair of socks that is tied off with string.
2. If you must wrap with paper, try using materials from your recycling bin: newsprint, comics, paper shopping bags or your own decorated paper. If every American family wrapped just 3 presents in re-used materials, it would save enough paper to cover 45,000 football fields.
3. Save and re-use ribbon from year to year. If every family reused just two feet of holiday ribbon, the 38,000 miles of ribbon saved could tie a bow around the entire planet!
4. Don't throw your wrapping paper in the garbage or fireplace. More than 8,000 tons of wrapping paper will be used on presents, using the equivalent of 50,000 trees.



Reuse or recycle!

5. Take public transportation to go Holiday shopping when possible. If using a car, make shopping lists and try to buy as many things as you can in a single trip. Not only will you save time and energy getting your shopping done, you will spend less in gas and reduce your emissions.
6. When shopping for gifts and holiday food, carry your own canvas bag or reuse shopping bags. Around 125,000 tons of plastic packaging are thrown away over the holiday season.
7. When buying presents, keep an eye out for those with minimal packaging, or items packed in recycled or recyclable materials (e.g. cardboard).
8. If you are buying toys or electrical goods that need batteries, buy rechargeable ones, then add a battery charger to your shopping list.
9. Recycle your beverage containers, including bottles from wine and plastic egg nog containers.
10. When you have finished eating all your chocolates and biscuits, keep the tins and reuse them as storage containers.
11. If you receive electric goods this season, don't throw your old ones away. Recycle or donate them using [Earth911's recycling locator](http://www.earth911.com/): <http://www.earth911.com/>
12. If you decorate with a tree, buy a locally grown Holiday tree and remember to recycle it after the holidays are over.
13. Should you receive any unwanted gifts or if you are replacing old possessions with new ones, then consider taking them to a charity shop instead of throwing them away. Take unwanted gifts to a Goodwill location or list them on sites like eBay or Craigslist. A Goodwill close to you can be found using Earth911's recycling locator (above).
14. Share these sustainable holiday tips with your family and friends! They can be a great conversation starter.
15. Make your New Year's resolution to live more sustainably in 2012!

(Modified from the WUSM Sustainability Power of One)

Mickey Croyle

EQ Chair

SUSTAINABLE

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

The Next EQ meeting will be **December 13 at 7 pm** at the League Office. Dessert will be provided. We will discuss the MSD possible ballot issue as well planning for a program. All members with interest in our natural resources and environmental quality are encouraged to attend. For information contact:

mcroyle@wustl.edu or 314.395.7876

Mickey Croyle, Chair



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EDUCATION COMMITTEE



The Education Committee will not meet in December.

Marty Ott, Chair

HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE

The Health Care Committee will not meet in December. In January, the committee will begin looking at Mental Health and the Issues surrounding it.

Katharine Kilpatric, Chair



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE



The International Relations Committee will not meet in December.

Judith Smart, Chair

PRIVATIZATION STUDY COMMITTEE

Our local study committee for the LWVUS study on privatization (the process of government contracting out one of its services to the private sector) is now forming.

The first meeting will be on Saturday, Dec. 3, at 9:30 a.m. at chair Nancy Thompson's home. Coffee and homemade muffins promised. You can contact \

Nancy at nthompson@grgstl.org, or by leaving a message at 314.932.9404.



Nancy Thompson, Chair

LOCAL STUDY ON THE WORKINGS OF ST. LOUIS CITY AND ST. LOUIS

This committee has been cancelled.

Becky Clausen, Chair



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UNITS WILL NOT MEET DURING DECEMBER. MEETINGS WILL RESUME IN JANUARY

VOLUNTEER CORNER

As we draw to the end of 2011 we want to thank all our volunteers who contributed time and effort assisting with various tasks during this year. Thanks to Doris Buzzell, Esther Clark, Jim Clark, Becky Clausen, Marjorie Courtney, Sue Dellbringge, Kathleen Farrell, Agnes Garino, Betty Ann Gilbert, Mickey Hall, Barbara Harris, Ilene Horenstein, Pat Jones, Linda McDaniel, Nancy Miller, Cindy Mitchell, Marty Ott, Carol Portman, and Louise Reeves who helped this past month. If we neglected to mention anyone, please let us know and we will acknowledge you in the next newsletter.

If you are willing to volunteer some time, please contact our volunteer coordinator, Barbara Harris at 314.968.3609 or email Barbara -- volunteers@lwvstl.org

Best Wishes for 2012

Julie Behrens



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From the Executive Director's Desk - Anna Mennerick

Cold winds are blowing outdoors and hot air is warming up political campaigns, it must be December. Where will your friends, neighbors, family and co-workers get the information they need to make informed choices at the polls?

Expand your circle of influence in 2012, let others know about our Voters Guide and Candidate Forums. Invite a friend to help you explore privatization, collect cards or call candidates with the League. Think how relieved you would be to find this group of thoughtful, passionate citizens if you were lost in the desert of sound bytes and arrow slinging.

Our country, state and communities need strong, principled leaders. An educated, informed and empowered electorate is needed now more than ever.

LWVSTL BEGINS PRIVATIZATION OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES STUDY

Join Us Locally to Discuss National LWV Privatization Study: Any Member Welcome!

Our local study committee for the LWVUS study on privatization (the process of government contracting out one of its services to the private sector) is now forming. The first meeting will be on Saturday, Dec. 3, at 9:30 a.m. at chair Nancy Thompson's home in Maplewood. Coffee and homemade muffins promised. You can contact Nancy through your membership directory, nthompson@grgstl.org, or by leaving a message at 314.932.9404.

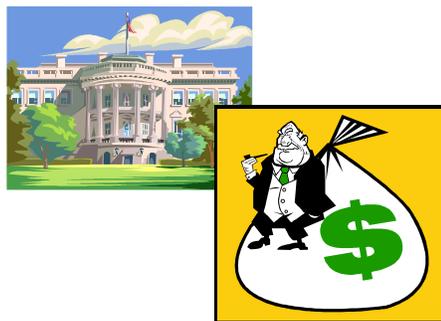
You do not even know how to spell privatization to join this committee. You don't have to understand the study process or have a lot of time. You'll just need a willingness to do a little reading and discuss your ideas with the committee. Together we'll decide how we present the unit meetings where we discuss the consensus questions with our membership. If you don't understand consensus, you will soon. No expertise required—just willingness to learn and explain to others what you've learned.

Experienced members might be surprised that we don't yet have the consensus questions. The sneak peak indicates they are numerous and multi-part, so it will be fun to distill the information.

To follow the very latest, here's the link: <http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Projects2&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=167&ContentID=17987>. Between now and publication, new articles and the consensus questions may be posted. Today there are articles on the legal background of privatization, and examples from prisons, railroads, wastewater treatment, and public education.

Other items being discussed on the listserv include libraries, schools, red light cameras, toll roads, food service for the military, and protection in war zones. (Any of you can join the listserv, by the way.) Here in St. Louis we've seen gradual but nearly complete privatization of solid waste collection.

The In League Reporter will give you background information every month between now and the consensus discussions in the April units. This month we reprint part of the Seattle League's 2009 study.



Following is the first of several information pieces concerning Privatization presented to members.

The best reading to come forth so far is from the Seattle League's 2009 study. Below we quote extensively from their conclusions in the Seattle Voter, September 2009, pages 31-35.

Potential Issues

Many issues are apparent when considering the merits of privatizing a government asset, service or function. The following issues have been brought up by concerned citizens and bear careful evaluation.

Accountability. Private companies are accountable to their owners (shareholders) and can exist and thrive only when they achieve the desired level of profitability. Managers of government enterprises have no corporate boards or shareholders to answer to regarding making profits.

Oversight/Evaluation. Effective government oversight of private sector performance is difficult, especially under the following circumstances.

- If government staff lack the expertise to evaluate industry-specific technical and business complexities,
- If there is a lack of transparency by the private company performing the government service,
- If there is inadequate funding available to the government departments charged with oversight,
- If there are insufficient watchdogs in the media or nonprofit advocacy organizations to ensure proper oversight or
- If there is insufficient political will among the policymakers to ensure proper oversight....

If multiple government bodies are involved in contracts to a single contractor, competing jurisdictions may lead to problems. Government auditing departments responsible for detecting and exposing corruption in government have little, if any, jurisdiction over private contracts. A national example is the private firm Blackwater's military contracts in Iraq.

Citizens may more easily exert pressure on government enterprises than on a corporation. Governments answer to no investors or corporate boards, but only to the public (which includes special interest groups and lobbyists.) Exposing problems in government is easier than exposing problems in private corporations due to laws such as the Freedom of Information Act, which demands transparency and disclosure in government.

Infrastructure. Local infrastructure must be maintained and be able to expand when necessary. Global corporations and large United States corporations have competing demands for capital and infrastructure from many customers around the globe. These corporations must invest their resources in areas that produce the highest return to stockholders and investors. They may not be willing or able to finance or prioritize local improvements due to competing higher priorities in their business plan.

Politics. Business needs are sometimes not aligned with the public interests. Large corporations often pay public relations professionals to convince decision makers that privatization is a sensible idea, whether or not this is actually the case. Corporations typically have far more resources to procure expert testimony, advertisements and conferences advocating on their behalf than do governments or citizen groups.

Deregulation. Individuals working in the public sector can be influenced to change regulations that have a negative impact on businesses' bottom line. The removal of controls and oversight of public/private undertakings are types of deregulation that can hurt the public. An example is the deregulation of the financial services industry, which contributed to the recent bank failures.

Profits. Profit and public service are not always aligned. Private companies' primary goal is to maximize profits. Efficiency is paramount to profit. Achieving the lowest costs and increasing market share are keys to success. When costs for environmental cleanup, infrastructure improvements, and/or community welfare hinder profits, profits must prevail for a competitive business.

Profits from successful private companies end up in investors' hands around the globe and have no mandate to stay inside the communities that generate the profit.

Private for-profit contracts that receive compensation from the government based on the number of people served, such as those for immigrant detention centers, halfway houses and social welfare services, depend on

increasing the number of people served to increase revenues. This may present a conflict of interests.

Labor. Private firms have much more leeway regarding hiring practices than do government employers. Employment at will is the norm in private business, allowing firing for no cause. Lack of civil service restrictions on nepotism, job qualifications, equal opportunity, collective bargaining and many other protections impact the work force in a private business.

Businesses can hire subcontractors, thus shifting the risk and liability regarding violations of employment laws, such as hiring undocumented immigrants. Low wages and lack of benefits can be a strategy for increased profits in a labor market with high unemployment. The differential between executive pay and that of the rank and file tend to be greater in large private for-profit companies than in civil service systems.

Downsizing occurs more often in private companies, resulting in layoffs, high unemployment, and a more unstable work force. It is generally the government that picks up the costs for helping people who have lost their jobs, by providing services such as unemployment insurance and food stamps. In economic downturns, downsizing shifts risks from businesses to the public and the state.

Revolving Back Door. Government staff and elected officials who are directly involved in awarding contracts to and regulation of private companies may be hired by the same companies immediately upon leaving their government positions. Companies may hire relatives and friends of government officials and staff who are still working in government....

Lost Revenue. As governments divest themselves of the more “profitable” or revenue-producing segments of government services, they are left with the revenue-losing segments. In the past, “profitable” segments allowed the government to provide services to areas more remote or difficult to serve. If they are left with only the revenue-losing segments, the options will be to levy additional taxes or collect fees to pay for services to these areas, or to reduce or eliminate services. Construction and maintenance of roads to rural communities would be an example.

Rapacious Behavior. When private firms provide profitable functions such as debt collections, they can harass people to uncomfortable levels. The businesses profit as they add fines and interest payments, garnish wages and ruin reputations with the credit rating services accessible to employers. When penalties become lucrative sources of income as opposed to efforts to gain social compliance with laws, society can lose civility and cooperation. Examples include the Internal Revenue Service, which outsourced debt collections to private firms that profit from how much they collect. Student loans are also now run by private banking businesses with sophisticated collection agencies. Locally, towing companies and collections for parking tickets pose a problem for the poor.

Shifting Liability. In a case involving lawsuits against federal contracts, the United States Supreme Court recently ruled 5-4 that only individual agents, not corporations working for the government, may be sued for performance violations. The case concerned an inmate who lived in a fifth-floor room while serving a federal prison sentence for securities fraud. He was allowed to use the elevator because he suffered from congestive heart failure. When a guard had him climb the five flights, he had a heart attack, fell down the stairs and suffered an injury. He sued the company that ran the hallway house for the Federal Bureau of Prisons. (“Sotomayor’s Notable Court Opinions and Articles,” New York Times, May 26, 2009)

Corruption. It may be argued that any monopolized function faces risks that decisions may be made for political reasons or personal gain of the decision maker rather than for economic reasons. Corruption during the privatization process, however, can result in significant underpricing of the asset. This allows for more immediate and efficient corrupt transfer of value, not just from ongoing cash flow, but for the entire lifetime of the asset stream. Often such transfers are difficult to reverse.

Corruption may also take the form of “kickbacks,” i.e., bribes after the fact. In a recent case in Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Juvenile Court judges were accused of receiving kickbacks from operators of private detention centers for increased commitments of youth. Many of the juveniles sent to detention had committed minor infractions or no crimes at all.

Absence of Competition. Privatization can not result in true competition if a natural monopoly exists. Natural monopolies are by definition not subject to competition and are better administered by the state.

consumers have no options to change vendors, then companies have little incentive to keep prices or costs low or to provide optimum quality. It is difficult to know if an enterprise is efficient unless there are competitors to compare against.

Changing Owners/Leveraged Buyouts. Private companies providing critical human needs such as water and energy are susceptible to leveraged buyouts if they become mired in debt, or have conflicts of interests on their respective boards of directors. Companies in charge of critical functions are subject to changing ownerships and thereby changing priorities of the parent company.

Capital Needs. Issue of private sector debt may be a problem. Large corporations, striving for dominance, engage in rapid expansion to control market share. To do this, they take on large debt load each time they buy out a competitor. The two most likely options for paying the debts are raising prices and selling assets. Companies with too much debt are susceptible to leveraged buyouts and takeovers.

According to bond rating company Standard and Poors, “ratings benefit from favorable regulatory cost-recovery mechanisms, stable cash flows, absence of competition within existing service territories and relatively low operating risk support. “ (American Water Capital Corp, “Remarketed Water Facility Bond Rating,” May 7, 2009) Large investors are drawn to these types of investments. Using corporate bonds instead of municipal bonds may add to the costs of projects, since corporate bonds typically offer a higher return.

Donor Fatigue and Disappearing Partners. Depending on private partners who may be unable or unwilling to perform in the future can present difficulties for governments. A recent example is the Seattle Art Museum (SAM)’s newly constructed downtown building. The project was stunned by the loss of its key partners, Washington Mutual Bank (WAMU). The city of Seattle guaranteed the bonds for the SAM building, and the rent from WAMU for the top floors was an important revenue stream to repay the bonds. Should SAM not be able to find a replacement, the city could end up with the risk.

Constant fundraising from the public can lead to donor fatigue and an unequal sharing of the costs, especially where serving the poor in an economic downturn.

Potential Benefits or Private/Public Partnerships

The following benefits have been identified by citizens who support privatizing government services, functions and assets. Private businesses are better able to:

Bring in expertise. Large corporations are better able to hire experts in increasingly complex fields such as transportation, utilities, insurance, investments and medicine. It is difficult for the government to compete with large corporations, which can offer higher executive salaries, for top-tier professional staff.

Provide services more efficiently. Because of their size and volume, larger businesses are able to work with suppliers to get the lowest possible costs.

Because so many large businesses are not unionized and many government workers are unionized, large businesses are better able to negotiate lower wage rates and work conditions for the rank and file. Businesses are better able to downsize in downturns, making the operations more efficient.

Provide good customer service and products. In competitive environments, businesses driven by the profit motive must strive for efficiency and maximum sales. This results in many innovations for ways to do things more efficiently. Businesses can pass on these innovations and cost savings to customers in the form of better products at lower prices and better customer service, in an effort to gain increased market share and profits.

Raise more capital. Large corporations are better able to attract the large amounts of capital investments needed by today’s growing cities by offering higher returns on investments than local governments can offer.

Nonprofit private organizations are able to raise money from the public for projects near and dear to the hearts of local citizens, thereby removing the responsibilities and costs from governments.

Involve the public. Corporations and nonprofit private organizations are able to devote public relations resources to encourage citizens to contribute to community issues.

The Cato Institute, a conservative think tank and a strong advocate for privatization, offers these three reasons to privatize government services, assets and functions.

1. Privatization would cut the budget deficit by selling government assets.
2. Privatization would reduce the responsibilities of the government so that policymakers could better focus on their core responsibilities.
3. Privatization would spur economic growth by opening new markets to entrepreneurs.



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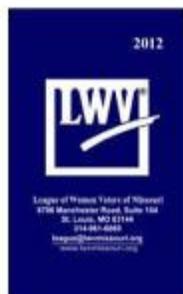
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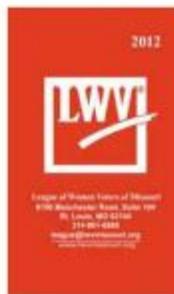
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