

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF KLAMATH COUNTY PRIVATIZATION STUDY

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THREE PRIVATIZATION STUDY MEETINGS:

1st Meeting: held Monday, January 9, 2012 at 6:30 PM at Klamath County Library in conjunction with LWV Board Meeting. The differences between Government and Privatization were explained in terms--that Governmental Entities are Public and are expected to have “Transparency and Accountability” whereas Private Entities do not have the same standards as Governmental Entities and the citizenry is not necessarily protected. The justification for Privatization is that it is more cost effective. Several examples of gross malfeasance by some of the largest not-for-profit providers were discussed, as elaborated in the U.S. League of Women Voters' background studies.

A quiz entitled *Statistics Beyond Prison* was given and discussed. It highlighted the dire prison situation in the United States, in particular.

Then the difference between “consensus” and “concurrence” was discussed. Consensus is generally agreement whereas concurrence is complete agreement to take action. This was in preparation for a LWVDC “**Sentencing Policy**” proposal for concurrence at Convention 2012 in June:

- 1) The LWVUS believes alternatives to imprisonment should be explored and utilized, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime.
- 2) The LWVUS opposes mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses.

After much discussion, the LWV of Klamath County concurred. The concurrence was passed on to the LWVUS.

2nd Meeting: held Monday, February 13, 2012 at 6:30 PM at Klamath County Library in conjunction again with the LWV Board Meeting, after the Board meeting. The meeting was widely attended as public interest was high in the Privatization Study. Consensus and concurrence were again explained in preparation for the consensus questions from the LWVUS Privatization Study. Appointments of leader, timer, a recorder, and facilitator were made. General time frames for background, preliminary discussion of the first 2 of 6 questions, 5 minutes each for the next 4 questions, and about 10 minutes for a review of the first 2 questions. We were only able to get through #s 1 & 2 necessitating another meeting.

3rd Meeting: held Monday, March 5, 2012 at 6:45 PM at 409 Pine Street solely for the final Privatization Study Consensus questions, starting with a review of the first two questions answered at the February 13, 2012 meeting:

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

5 Much too much 5 Too much 3 About right 0 Too little 0 Much too little 2 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.

9 Strongly agree 9 Agree 0 Strongly disagree 0 Consensus

Then the next four questions were discussed and voted upon:

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.

4 out of 4 High priority

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

4 out of 4 High priority

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

4 out of 4 High Priority

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

4 out of 4 High priority

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.

0 out of 4 High priority 4 out of 4 Lower priority

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

4 out of 4 High priority

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.

4 out of 4 High priority:

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.

4 out of 4 Agree (with question about the term “will”)

b. When there is no private entity able or willing to provide the service for the short and long term.

4 out of 4 Agree

c. When it poses a potential threat to national security.

4 out of 4 Agree

d. When it poses a risk to personal or security data.

0 out of 5 Agree 3 Disagree 2 No consensus

e. When there has been evidence of potential corruption. (Question on the word “potential”.)

5 out of 5 Agree

f. When the private entity's goals and purposes are not compatible with public well-being.

5 out of 5 Agree

g. When the private entity has not complied with existing government requirements for public records, open meetings or publication of reports and audits.

5 out of 5 Agree

h. When a loss of revenue decreases government support for mandated or critical services.

5 out of 5 Agree

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?

5 out of 5 **a.** Yes, all privatization efforts should be regulated.

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.

5 out of 5 with caveat: (if with drawbacks provided)

b. Public and stakeholder (investors, shareholders, experts) input into the decision and terms of the contract.

5 out of 5 Agree

c. Feasibility study regarding performance, costs and benefits.

5 out of 5 Agree

d. Adherence to all laws regarding public contracts.

5 out of 5 Agree

e. Transition plans for displaced employees.

5 out of 5 Strongly agree

f. Accountability and transparency provisions in all contracts.

5 out of 5 Strongly agree

g. Regular performance evaluations including meaningful opportunity for public comment.

5 out of 5 Strongly agree with caveat: (if written in contract)

h. Provisions for transferring services and assets back to the government or another contractor

in the event of inadequate performance.

5 out of 5 Strongly agree

i. Adequate resources for enforcement.

5 out of 5 with caveat (of enforcement of the contract)

RETURN TO THE FIRST TWO QUESTIONS:

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

5 out of 5 Much too much

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.

5 out of 5 Strongly agree