



The Voter

League of Women Voters of Columbia/Boone

VOLUME 77, No. 2

FEBRUARY, 2012

Legislative Town Hall



Town Meeting with State Legislators on Thursday, February 2, 2012 at the Boone County Public Library, 100 West Broadway in the Friends Room. The evening will begin with a reception at 6:30p.m., followed by the Town Meeting at 7:00p.m.

The public is invited to hear area legislators give their views on the priorities of this year's legislative session and how they think it will go. Hear directly from them about the committees they serve on, key legislation, and actions they would like to see taken.

Legislators who were invited include, Senator Kurt Schaefer (Dist.19), Rep. Paul Quinn, (Dist.9), Rep. John Cauthorn, (Dist. 21), Rep. Stephen Webber (Dist. 23), Rep. Chris Kelly (Dist.24), and Rep. Mary Still, (Dist 25). (Webber, Kelly and Still were confirmed by the Voter deadline and Quinn had a conflict.)

Share your issues and concerns. A question and answer session will follow the legislators' statements.

This program is free and open to the public and is co-sponsored by Columbia Public Library.

I-70 a Private Toll Road?

The Missouri Department of Transportation recently suggested entering into an arrangement whereby a private company would rebuild I-70 and charge tolls to recover its costs. Voters would have no voice in such a decision as, at present, Missouri has no laws to address such a transfer of governmental functions.

What services or functions do you think the government should provide to its citizens? For a number of years, local, state and federal governments have used private entities to provide certain services and efforts to transfer functions have markedly increased in recent years. (See articles later in this issue.) Currently, both our local city and county governments have at times entered into contracts with private companies to provide specific services (e.g., power supply plans by the city and fairgrounds management by the county).

Other current governmental functions could also be transferred to the private sector such as K-12 schools, trash collection, or social services. What functions do you think should be retained by government? Under what conditions, if any, should current functions be transferred to the private sector?

Two years ago, LWV convention delegates agreed that the League should be able to actively participate in such discussions. We are currently participating in a national League study to determine what principles we believe are important to be included in any privatization efforts. Come and join in the discussion - share your views and help determine League policy!

Wednesday, February 22, 7:00 p.m., 20 Springer Drive (Pinkerton, Lenoir grounds)
Thursday, February 23, 12 noon, 2307 Ridgefield Rd. (McLeod's)

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

February

- **Legislative Town Hall, Thurs., Feb. 2, 7:00 pm, Library**
- **Energy Com. Mtg., Thurs., Feb 9, 9:30 am, Library**
- **Civil Liberties Com. Mtg., Thurs. Feb 9, 1:15 pm, Library**
- **Board Mtg., Mon., Feb 13, 6:30 pm, Boone Electric**
- **Education Com. Mtg., Mon., Feb 20, 6:30 pm, Library**
- **Unit Discussion Mtg., Privatization Study, Wed., Feb. 22, 7 pm, 20 Springer Dr.**
- **Unit Discussion Mtg., Privatization Study, Thurs., Feb. 23, 12 noon, 2307 Ridgefield R. (McLeod's)**
- **Local Program Discussion & Review, Wed., Feb. 29, 7 pm, Boone Electric**

March

- **Energy Matters, Thurs., Mar. 8, 9:30 pm, Library**
- **Civil Liberties Mtg., Thurs., Mar. 8, 1:15 pm, Library**
- **Election Forum (tentative), Thurs., Mar. 8, 7 pm, Library**

Fact Checking

Want to check the accuracy of allegations or emails? Go to ...

www.politifact.com or
www.factcheck.org
www.snopes.com

President's Report



The League and its members have been active over the past few months, as can be seen from the articles and information in this newsletter. Of particular interest is the currently national League study on privatization. Executive summaries of two articles written by members of the national study committee appear later in this Voter, along with a summary of the consensus questions. Missouri currently has no laws governing how and when government services can be transferred to the private sector nor what oversight can be expected after such a transfer. Given the state's current budget situation, can we expect more such efforts? If so, how should voters be represented in those discussions, or should such questions be left solely to the Legislature? Come and share your views, insights and ideas at the discussion meetings later this month.

The national LWV Convention occurs this June. As a prelude to the discussion of program at the Convention, local Leagues have been asked to submit a recommendation for a new study or a review of a current position or a concurrence with an existing local/state League study. Out members met in late January and overwhelmingly voted to recommend a national study of a possible Department of Peace (a study our local League endorsed two years ago). Members also asked our local delegates (once selected) to voice opposition to doing more than one national study every two years.

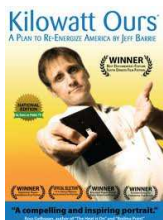
Members are invited to a discussion of February 29 to review our local policy positions and determine of any new policies should studies. A copy of our current program is included in this issue for your information and review.

Check your calendars and come to one of the upcoming League functions. See you there!

Linda Kaiser
President

Energy Matters

Would you like to know more about Columbia's Office of Sustainability? Barbara Buffaloe, Sustainability Manager, will meet with the Energy Matters Committee on Thursday, February 9, at 10 AM in Room B of the Columbia Public Library. She has been invited to talk about her work and answer questions regarding the reduction of energy costs in city-owned buildings, the recent EPA grant to help downtown businesses implement energy-saving measures, and future plans to implement Columbia's Climate Protection Agreement. Everyone interested in these issues is welcome to attend and participate in the discussion.



The Energy Matters Committee will have voting and membership information at the MU campus screening of the documentary, Kilowatt Ours: A Plan to Re-Energize America, on Thursday, February 16, at 7:00 PM. The League is one of several community and campus groups invited to co-sponsor the event by Missourians for Safe Energy. The location is Room 100, Swallow Hall, the building behind Memorial Union. The Columbia-Boone County LWV plans to sponsor a screening of this award-winning documentary at the Columbia Public Library on March 27.

Win Colwill
Co-Chair

Candidate/Ballot Issue Forums

The League of Women Voters of Columbia-Boone County and the Columbia Public Library present Candidate Forums for the April Election

Thursday, March 8th	City Council Races, Fire District Race, Hospital Board Race
Tuesday, March 13th	School Board Candidates, School Bond Issue, Any other ballot issues



Both forums start at 6:30 p.m. with refreshments at 6:00 p.m. Both forums will be in the Friends Room at the Columbia Public Library. Please come and bring your questions

Historic Victory for Clean Air and Public Health

The EPA made history on December 21 when it issued the first national standards to reduce mercury and toxic air pollution from coal and oil-burning power plants. The Mercury and Air Toxics Standards will slash emissions of dangerous pollutants including mercury, arsenic, nickel, chromium, cyanide and acid gases by requiring new and existing power plants to install widely available, proven air pollution controls that are already working in more than half the nation's coal-burning power plants.

Power plants are the largest U.S. source of several harmful pollutants, notably mercury and acid gases. Mercury particularly harms children, affecting IQ, learning and memory. The Mercury and Air Toxics Standards are expected to prevent thousands of premature deaths and tens of thousands heart attacks, acute bronchitis and asthma episodes every year.

In response to 9000 public comments on the rule, and to assure electric reliability, the EPA modified the original rule by, among other things, adding a fourth year to the three years allowed under the Clean Air Act for compliance. Nevertheless there are efforts in the Senate to use the authority provided by the Congressional Review Act to nullify or delay implementation of these life-saving standards.

On January 19 the LWVUS president, Elisabeth MacNamara, sent an urgent message to the Senate citing the health protections afforded by the Mercury and Air Toxics rule and warning that voiding the standards would be a "public health disaster". Letters to Senators McCaskill and Blunt with a similar message would be appropriate and timely.

Win Colwill, Co-Chair
Energy Matters



Membership

Welcome to our newest members!

Sue Breyfogle, 608 Woodridge Dr. Columbia 65201, 573-474-7977

Betsy Dawkins, 6930 Hwy. 151, Centralia, 65240, 573-682-9898 betsynjohn@gmail.com



It is time to report to the National LWV on the number of members we have in our Columbia-Boone County league. So for those of you who have not yet paid this fall or early winter, please get those \$55 dues in. And donations over and above that amount are welcome.



Thanks to all LWV members who have donated to the tax-deductible LWVMO Education Fund in our name! These donations are used for our forums, which are educational and open to the public. In addition to the donations receive (and reported) last month as a result of the program, Planning for Columbia's Energy Needs, we have received a contribution for the Education Fund recently from Carolyn and David Leuthold.

Health Care Update

The US Supreme Court will be hearing challenges to the federal health reform law, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, in March.

There's excellent coverage of the information, benefits etc. in this law outlined on the web site of the Missouri Foundation for Health. Check out their web site under title of CoverMissouri.org.

You'll find excellent information just on the site itself, as well as option to go on their e-mail list or request copy of publications. E-mail: CoverMissouri@mffh.org. They mail out quickly, and there's no charge.

Two publications of note include: A Quick Guide to Health Care Reform and An Overview of Federal Health Care Reform and Major Components.



Lael Von Holt

Privatization: The Public Policy Debate (Executive Summary)

The purpose of this article is to provide a description of the evolution of the public policy known as "Privatization." Privatization is a movement to deregulate private industry and transfer many government services, assets and functions to the private sector.

Claims and Concerns: Those promoting privatization claim that:

- the private sector can provide increased efficiency, better quality and more innovation in services than the government;
- a smaller government will reduce costs to the taxpayer; and
- less regulation will provide a better environment for business, thus creating more jobs.

Those concerned about privatization suggest the following.

- Profits: The mandate to make a profit will endanger public safety and reduce services available to the general public.
- Costs: There will be increased costs to consumers.
- Transparency and Accountability: Private companies will lack transparency, adequate oversight and accountability.
- Corruption: There will be increased corruption between government and for-profit, private companies.
- National Defense: Privatizing sectors such as ports, utilities and defense can result in foreign control and will put the country at risk in the event of war.
- Inequality: The scale of privatized programs will result in chronic high unemployment, low wages and abusive labor practices, leading to growing inequality between the wealthy and poor.

Larger than the United States: The privatization movement is an international movement. Outside the United States, prominent divestitures of government assets have included Russia's natural gas (Gazprom), Bolivia's municipal water system in Cochabamba and the United Kingdom's British Rail. Inside the United States, privatization has taken the form of deregulation, e.g., the deregulation of the financial services industry; redistribution of the taxes "burden," e.g., efforts to reduce individual Privatization: The Public Policy taxes on capital gains and inheritances, and reductions of corporate taxes; and privatization, the shifting of government programs to the private sector, e.g., the prisons and highways.

History: In the 1970s, disillusioned with the Progressive Era vision, leadership in the increasingly global private sector became more active, asserting that burgeoning tax rates and government regulations of industry were inhibiting free trade. Efforts were launched to dismantle many Progressive programs such as restrictions on financial lending, elimination of worker's compensation, elimination of control over food and environmental safety, and a revamping of the tax system by eliminating progressive taxes and replacing it with a flat tax.

Competing Theories: Milton Friedman: The intellectual inspiration behind the public policies to privatize in the United States has come from the Public Choice and Property Rights schools of thought. Prominent leaders advocating these theories include Milton Friedman, the Chicago School of Economics, and Fredrick Von Hayek whose book, *Road to Serfdom*, warned of the growing welfare state. The basic assumptions include:

- Democratic political systems have inherent tendencies toward government growth and excessive budgets.
- Expenditure growth is due to self-interested coalitions of voters, politicians, and bureaucrats.
- Public enterprises necessarily perform less efficiently than private enterprises.
- The more individuals stand to gain from tending to their property, the better it will be tended.

John Maynard Keynes: The dominant economic theory after WWII was that of John Maynard Keynes. Keynes believed that to break a depression, the government needed to stimulate demand. It was necessary to get money into the hands of consumers to jumpstart growth. Businesses would not borrow and build if no demand was in sight, no matter how low the interest rates might go. Keynesian theories were later refuted by economist Milton Friedman and this dispute is at the core of the ongoing debate regarding how to break the current recession/depression.



League Snow Policy: If school is cancelled by the Columbia Public School district, all League activities for that day are also cancelled.

The Public Policy Debate continued:

Privatization in Practice: The key strategies as to how to downsize government and transfer programs to the private sector are described as:

- Privatization by attrition: Cessation of public programs and disengagement of government from specific kinds of responsibilities. Example might be the U.S. postal system.
- Transfer of assets: Direct sale or lease of public land, infrastructure, and enterprises. Examples might be federal and state parks, state-owned liquor stores and the proposed privatization of public libraries.
- Contracting out (public/private partnerships) or vouchers: Instead of directly producing some service, the government may finance private services, for example through contracting out or vouchers. Examples might be charter schools, prisons.
- Deregulation: Deregulation of entry into activities previously treated as public monopolies. Examples might be utilities, water, waste management, air traffic control and ports.

Role of Government: The public agenda of privatization requires a close examination of the proper relationship between government, business and civil society. What should the role of government be in protecting the environment, helping the poor, defending the nation, providing justice, ensuring democracy, protecting public health, ensuring public safety, providing education, promoting a thriving economy, and ensuring safe work environments and a living wage? Our country must seek a pragmatic balance between social and economic returns.

Nora Leech

Privatization: Strategies for Best Practice (Executive Summary)

A decision to privatize a government service requires thorough analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of privatization to determine whether the public is better served by government or the private sector. The process of privatizing a service has three phases:

- Determining if it is appropriate to privatize a service,
- Determining the level of service desired from a contractor and conducting an open, competitive contractor selection process, and
- Negotiating the contract with the selected contractor and monitoring performance over the term of the service agreement.

In all phases, best practices call for transparency, open communication with stakeholders, impartial and unbiased analyses, and the development quantifiable expectations and measures for service delivery.

The decision-making process should ask: What are the problems with the existing service? What will be gained by turning to the private sector? Are there alternatives to privatization?

Privatization can be successful for services with competitive markets, with clear service delivery goals and performance criteria, and where the services involve transactions that are not irrevocable. It requires decision-makers open to the idea of privatization, a government with established privatization policies, a transparent public review process, comprehensive service transition plans, active contract management and a "recovery" plan to take over service if the contractor fails to perform.

When services such as utilities, transportation systems or parks are privatized it should be clear who owns and maintains the public facilities, infrastructure and assets. If "human services" such as child protective services or welfare services are privatized, sensitive client information must be protected and cost savings should not be achieved in ways that are detrimental to vulnerable clients. There must be contractual procedures to assure that the financial statements of the contractor are audited and reviewed on a regular basis and become part of the public record. In all cases, the public must have a way to lodge complaints about the service to the government agency overseeing the private contractor.

The Best Practices paper identifies these and other broad questions and strategies to ensure principles of good governance are followed and to enable stakeholders to participate in a meaningful way.

Cathy Lazarus and Ted Volskay

To read the complete articles, go to www.lvv.org and click on the Members tab.

Privatization Study: Summary of Consensus Questions

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.

1. As a general matter, the extent to which government functions, services and assets have been privatized in the past decade is.... (Choices are much too much to much to little and 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. (Choices are strongly agree to strongly disagree and non 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? (Choices are high, lower, not a priority and non consensus.) Criteria are: 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.); 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.); Cost and Quality (Privatized services should not appreciably increase the costs or decrease the quality of services to the public.); Environmental and Natural Resources (Defined parameters should be in place to assure that environmental and natural resources are not compromised.); 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.); Economic Impact (Privatization should not result in a negative economic impact on the communities in which the services are provided.); and 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. Privatization is not appropriate when.... (Choices are agree, disagree and non consensus)

There are 8 options: a. the government lacks the will, ability or resources to adequately oversee contracts with the private entity and any successor thereto; b. there is no private entity able or willing to provide the service for the short and long term; c. it poses a potential threat to national security; d. it poses a risk to personal or security data; e. there has been evidence of potential corruption; f. the private entity's goals and purposes are not compatible with public well-being; g. the private entity has not complied with existing government requirements for public records, open meetings or publication of reports and audits. h. When a loss of revenue decreases government support for mandated or critical services.

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? Choices are (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; and (d) No consensus.

6. Which of the following should be included in the regulatory process when privatizing public assets, services and functions? (Choices for each are strongly agree to strongly disagree and non consensus.)

There are 9 options: (a) Timely public announcements regarding intentions to privatize and the clear and measurable expected benefits to the public; (b) Public and stakeholder (investors, shareholders, experts) input into the decision and terms of the contract; (c) Feasibility study regarding performance, costs and benefits; (d) Adherence to all laws regarding public contracts; (e) Transition plans for displaced employees; (f) Accountability and transparency provisions in all contracts; (g) Regular performance evaluations including meaningful opportunity for public comment (h) Provisions for transferring services and assets back to the government or another contractor in the event of inadequate performance; (i) Adequate resources for enforcement.

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(875-4295)**Meetings****Board:** 2nd Monday, 6:30 pm,
Boone Electric Coop**Civil Liberties:** 2nd Thurs., 1:15 pm***Education:** Varies**Energy Matters:** 2nd Thurs., 10 am***Fundraising:** Varies**Peace:** Varies**Voter Service:** Varies*

*Meetings at Library

Membership

We are now collecting dues through December for 2012. (If you have an "11" after your name, you are presently paid. When you pay for 2012, a "12" will appear after your name. Our membership year runs January 1-December 31.)

To join the League or renew your membership, fill in the information below and mail it, with your check, to Membership Chair, League of Women Voters, PO Box 239, Columbia, MO 65205.

Dues are \$55 for individuals, \$80 for a household and \$15 for local students.

If you are a member and wish to receive a membership list, please contact Liz Schmidt at 445-0655 or email at lizschmidt@centurytel.net.

Name _____

Email Address _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone _____

I am particularly interested in _____

(Note: Tax deductible donations to the Education Fund should be a separate check, payable to LWVMO Education Fund.)

For more information, contact Liz Schmidt at 445-0655 or Linda Brown at 447-3939.

Websites**lwvcbc.wordpress.com** (local)**lwvmissouri.org** (state)**lww.org** (national)**www.covermissouri.org** (Missouri Foundation for Health)

Would you like to see the Voter in color? Save the League printing and mailing costs? You can now get the Voter direct to your computer early by contacting co-editor Linda Kaiser at lindaskaiser@gmail.com. Let her know you would like to receive your Voter via email and the email address you would like used.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Columbia – Boone County MO

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*LWV: Where hands-on work to safeguard
democracy leads to civic improvement.*



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

February 2012						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 Legislative Town Hall, 7 pm, Library	3	4
5	6	7	8	9 Energy Matters Com, 9:30 am, Library rm. B Civil Lib. Com. , 1:15 pm, Library B	10	11
12	13 Board mtg. 6:30, Boone Electric	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 Education Com., 6:30 pm, Library	21	22 Unit Mtg., Privatiza- tion Study, 7 pm, 20 Springer Dr.	23 Unit Mtg., Privatization Study, 12-1:30 pm, 2307 Ridgefield Rd.	24	25
26	27	28	29 Local Program Disc., 7:00 pm, Boone Electric Coop.	March 1	March 2	March 3
March 4	March 5	March 6	March 7	March 8 Energy Matters & Civil Liberties mtgs.	March 9	March 10