



Is the Private Sector More Efficient? Evidence to the Contrary.

The Privatization of Everything, by Cohen & Mikaelian (2021), brings together dramatic case studies and arguments **against** the idea that the private sector knows best. The authors tackle the harms of privatization from water, trash, and parking systems to justice and the military, with generous attention to public health, health care, and pharma. The picture is distressing, but the book offers some hope with inspiring examples of communities that have resisted well-financed corporate campaigns and taken back public infrastructure to serve the public good.

C&M's extensive research confirms that Vermont's new position and its concern for the integrity of its health infrastructure are relevant to complex issues throughout the economy. The book, and the Vermont study, help us see health care in the context of other industries poorly served by privatization where a public solution would be more comprehensive--and simpler and more affordable.

However, as C&M point out, rampant privatization over the last 40 years is sabotaging government's power for effective action--unless we push back. Privatization has reduced the government workforce and has [added 2.6 times](#) its number in federal contractors. Public servants are accountable to the people, whereas the contractors

have no transparency, hence no accountability--as in the egregious [examples of mercenary military personnel](#) in foreign countries acting outside the law of both U.S. and the host country.



C&M detail the inefficiencies of private corporations, making clear that their **reputation for efficiency is a myth**. In addition, privatized service-providers, like broadband companies, are not committed to attaining League ideals of equity and universal access. They are free to choose **not** to bring their fiber to remote areas, where there are too few customers to serve the company's financial interests.

The Vermont Report for their new position ([now on the HCR Toolkit](#)) articulates that the updated Health Care Position is already well-aligned for "**making democracy work in health care.**" Instead, it was **gaps found in the current LWVUS Privatization Position** which hampered Vermont's efforts to advocate for greater democracy in health care and more effective cost-containment while still living up to League ideals of quality, transparency, and equity.

Cohen & Mikaelian may not refer to the rapacious octopus metaphor the HCR Interest Group has adopted, but their research shows us how apt it is. *Submitted by Barbara Pearson*

Incentives for Privatized Health Care Increase Medical Debt for Families

Privatization inserts the profit motive into every decision. Healthcare as public good focuses on care and efficiency, not profit.

- **Claims denials** help insurance companies keep profits high. The insured takes on the burden through premiums, co-pays, and deductibles. Healthcare as a public good has no incentive to deny a valid claim.
- **Private equity sacrifices patient care**—cuts staff, sells real estate, increases patient loads, and uses fewer, less expensive supplies to build investor

value. Healthcare as a public good has no incentive to cut corners on care.

- **Medical debt** rises when corporations keep prices as high as they can. Healthcare as a public good has every incentive to lower prices as much as possible, while insisting on maintaining quality.

These and other examples illustrate the improbability of achieving universal access to quality healthcare for everyone in the US when so much of healthcare operates by the rules of privatization. Moving to a single payer system would eliminate the perverse incentives built into our current approach. *Submitted by Ceil Tilney*

NEXT HCR4US MEETING
Sunday, July 28
8:00 p.m. ET

Register at
<https://tinyurl.com/HCR4US-Jul28>



TENTATIVE AGENDA:

Intros for New Attendees — Announcements
Legislative Actions — State Reports
Newsletter — Convention debrief

In Case You Missed It

June 3 PNHP webinar “[Taking Advantage: How Corporate Health Insurers Harm American Seniors](#)”

Guest Sen. Elizabeth Warren plus patients, physicians, and Medicare advocates discuss how private Medicare plans cause real harm to seniors and people with disabilities.

June 2024, various dates: LWV VT present information on the proposed concurrence with [Vermont’s Position on Privatization](#). Please share the recordings with convention delegates.

Upcoming

LWV US National Convention events:

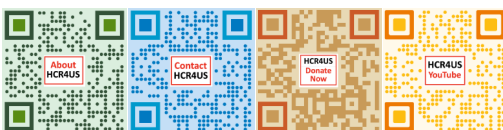
June 27, 7:00 p.m. ET LWV US presents “Turn Up for One Person One Vote” in person at national convention and livestreamed on Facebook.

June 28, 9:30 a.m. ET Betty Keller presents “Vote for Vermont Update to the US Privatization Position” Georgetown West or online

June 28, 2:00 p.m. ET Friday Plenary Please [vote](#) to put the Vermont Concurrence on the agenda for discussion.

June 29, 9:30 a.m. ET Saturday Plenary Please [vote](#) (or convince your delegates to) adopt the Vt Concurrence.

June 29, 4:30 p.m. ET Judy Esterquest presents “Moving Hearts, Changing Minds: Using Storytelling for Advocacy” Lincoln East or online.



Websites

HCR4US Youtube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/LWVHealthCareReform>

HCR4US Web-Contact Form:

tinyurl.com/Contact-LWV-HCR-4US

HCR4US Google Drive:

<https://tinyurl.com/HCR4US-Minutes-etc>

HCR4US Toolkit:

<https://lwwhealthcarereform.org>

HCR4US : Dedicated to educating and mobilizing League members to work toward legislation that enacts the goals of our LWVUS health care position

Newsletter Committee: Barbara Pearson, Jon Li, Candy Birch, Ceil Tilney

“The Corporation” and sequel decry privatization

Remember [Merrill Lynch](#), [Enron](#), [Xerox](#), [World Com](#), [Kmart](#), [Nike](#), [Monsanto](#), [Volkswagen](#), [Martha Stewart](#), [Kathie Lee Gifford](#), [Bernie Madoff](#)? All are big corporations or CEOs with scandalous [histories of harm](#) to society.

Would you be surprised to know that “all publicly-traded corporations ...through a series of legal decisions ...are required by law to place the financial interests of their owners above competing interests.

In fact, the corporation is legally bound to put its bottom line ahead of everything else, even the public good” (or our health)?

The [2003 documentary](#) “**The Corporation**” presents a very bleak, specific, and timely picture of the dangers of corporate domination in the world. It identifies big corporations as **psychopaths** according to a [Personality Diagnostic Checklist](#). Recognize these?

Callous unconcern for the feelings of others; incapacity to maintain enduring relationships; reckless disregard for the safety of others; deceitfulness: repeated lying and conning others for profit; incapacity to experience guilt; failure to conform to social norms with respect to lawful behaviors.

The film offers evidence of corporations’ **Harm to Workers** ([layoffs](#), [union busting](#), [factory fires](#)); **Harm to Human Health** ([dangerous products](#), [toxic waste](#), [pollution](#), [synthetic chemicals](#)); **Harm to Animals** ([habitat destruction](#), [factory farming](#), [experimentation](#)); and **Harm to the Biosphere** ([clearcuts](#), [CO2 emissions](#), [nuclear waste](#), [paper mill pollution](#)).

The prospect is even more demoralizing in the [2023 sequel](#) “**The New Corporation**” where corporations take on a new psychopathic characteristic:

***Use of seduction, charm, glibness or ingratiation to achieve one’s ends.**

Pretending to exercise social responsibility or “capitalism that cares,” corporations execute familiar plays: **Present yourself as a friend and ally. Turn people against your adversaries. Don’t pay your fair share. Take whatever you can. Use information to control people. Manipulate people’s worldview. Exploit unequal advantage. Control those who might control you. Break laws that get in your way. Win at all cost.**

The magazine [Variety reviewed](#) “The New Corporation” and concluded that it “stands as an ominously profound warning about the kind of society we may be turning into because we’ve allowed ourselves to be convinced that corporations are looking out for us.”

Thankfully, the sequel does give the viewer hope, noting **people power** in civil rights, women’s rights, & water rights movements.

The Vermont Concurrence at Convention seeks to strengthen **member power** by allowing members to **ADVOCATE** against privatization of health care, a public good that needs preserving, to keep health care out of the private sector where **PROFITS** always override **PATIENTS**. Submitted by Candy Birch

