

LWVPWM Proposed Update to LWVUS Privatization Position

The League believes that healthcare, like other programs that provide and protect basic human needs, should be considered a public good.

The League favors a system where fiduciary responsibility (for such programs) is to patients and the public. Because private for-profit corporations have a fiduciary responsibility to their shareholders rather than to patients or public health, the League believes the for-profit business model for healthcare is inappropriate for the common good or to meet the basic needs of the most vulnerable members of society. In sum, the League opposes further privatization of needed healthcare.

Where private entities fail to deliver on programs that provide and protect basic human needs, the League supports de-privatizing them.

The LWV of Port Washington-Manhasset (NY), along with the New York¹ and Vermont State Leagues, asks other state and local Leagues to support consideration of a Concurrence at LWV Convention 2026 to update the current LWVUS Position on Privatization (2012)² which, it should be noted, focuses solely on the privatization of public goods.³

The PWM Privatization Update (2024) is a shortened version of the Vermont Privatization position (2023); it uses language from the Vermont text to clarify and make explicit four elements of the national position that Vermont considers essential to its position — and which the LWVUS has publicly supported — but which are not in the language of the LWVUS position.⁴

Clarifying these four elements will allow state and local Leagues to advocate more effectively, confident that they are aligned with national League policy in addressing an accelerating trend, that is, the increased siphoning of public funding (taxes) into corporate profits and consequent reduction of public access and quality of services — violating the League requirement "to preserve the common good, to protect national or local security or to meet the needs of the most vulnerable members of society."⁵

Learn more at lwvofpwm.org/concurrence-privatization-update/

¹ NYS adopted this position update at NYS Convention 2025, concurring with PWM (position adopted 2024).

² US Privatization Position, p.76 of www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/ImpactOnIssues_2024-FINAL-DIGITAL.pdf

³ Ibid., "Public goods" as defined within the position.

⁴ See LWV of PWM Concurrence Materials: <http://lwvofpwm.org/concurrence-privatization-update/>

⁵ Ibid. US Position.

LWVUS Privatization Position — with illustration of how to add LWVPWM Update⁶

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that when governmental entities consider the transfer of governmental services, assets, and/or functions to the private sector, the community impact and goals of such transfers must be identified and considered. Further, the League believes that transparency, accountability, and preservation of the common good must be ensured.

The League believes that some government-provided services could be delivered more efficiently by private entities; however, privatization is not appropriate in all circumstances. Privatization is not appropriate when the provision of services by the government is necessary to preserve the common good, to protect national or local security or to meet the needs of the most vulnerable members of society. While the League recognizes that the definition of core government services will vary by level of government and community values, services fundamental to the governance of a democratic society should not be privatized in their entirety. These services include the electoral process, justice system, military, public safety, **health care**, public health, education, transportation, environmental protection, and programs that protect and provide basic human needs.

The decision to privatize a public service should be made only after an informed, transparent planning process and thorough analysis of the implications of privatizing service delivery. While specific criteria will vary by service and local conditions, the League believes the following considerations apply to most decisions to transfer public services, assets, and functions to the private sector:

- Ongoing and timely communication with stakeholders and the public.
- Statement of the circumstances as they exist and what is to be gained.
- Definition of the quality, level, and cost of service expected.
- Assessment of the private market — whether there are providers to assure competitive pricing and delivery (in some cases there may not be multiple providers if a service is so specialized (e.g., high-tech, airports)).
- Cost-benefit analyses evaluating short- and long-term costs of privatization, including the ongoing costs of contract administration and oversight.
- An understanding of the impact on customers, the broader community, the environment, and public employees.
- An open, competitive bidding process with clearly defined criteria to be used in selecting a contractor.
- A provision and process to ensure the services or assets will be returned to the government if a contractor fails to perform.
- A data-driven selection of private entities whose goals, purposes, and means are not incompatible with the public well-being.
- The careful negotiation and drafting of the controlling privatization contract.
- Adequate oversight and periodic performance monitoring of the privatized services by the government entity to ensure that the private entity is complying with all relevant laws and regulations, contract terms and conditions, and ethical standards, including public disclosure and comment.

The League believes that the enactment of state laws and issuance of regulations to control the process and delivery of privatization within a state's jurisdiction is often appropriate and desirable. Best practices for government regulation of the privatization process should include the following requirements:

- An open process that allows for citizen input and oversight in a timely manner.
- A reasonable feasibility study and project evaluation appropriate to the size and scope of the project.
- The establishment of carefully crafted criteria for selection of the private entity (beyond the lowest-cost bid).
- Additional consideration for local bidders in order to support the local economy.
- The retention of liability and responsibility with the government entity.
- Allowance for and promotion of opportunities for innovation and collaboration.
- Provision for employment, benefits, and training plans on behalf of employees displaced as a result of privatization.
- **The League opposes further privatization of needed healthcare.**
- **The League favors a system where fiduciary responsibility (for managing public goods) is to patients and the public.**

Where private entities fail to deliver programs that provide and protect basic human needs, the League supports de-privatizing them.

⁶ This is ONE possible way to incorporate the PWM Update into the US position. If the concurrence is adopted, LWVUS will determine the version published in *Impact on Issues*. It is offered as a means of clarifying context for the proposed changes.

Your Script for Our "ASK" of Local & State Leagues

Please request time at your League's next board meeting.

Please let LWV.Update4Convention@gmail.com know how your board responds (or if you have Qs).

1. I'd like to ask for a [motion to support the NY/PWM Update on LWVUS Program Planning Survey](#).

2. I would like to speak to what this motion involves and why our board should support it.

LWV PWM (Port Washington-Manhasset on Long Island, NY), which has been joined by the state Leagues of New York and Vermont, requests our League add the following "program item" to the [LWV Program Planning Survey](#) we submit before March 10 — Ours matters: LWVUS counts every League separately when it compiles the survey results for the convention program agenda.

LWV PWM is proposing an Update to the National Privatization Position that will clarify four elements of the national position — elements the LWVUS has publicly supported — but are not stated explicitly in the US position: that is, adding healthcare to the position's list of "public goods"; opposing further privatization of healthcare, which is, by far, our most privatized public good; and, finally, adding two items to the position's "best practices requirements" specifically "fiduciary duty to the public" and accountability, up to and including de-privatization for violating fiduciary duty to the public. Note: PWM believes the US could simply insert these into the position⁷

Of the 40+plus national positions adopted before 2024, only the U.S. privatization position offers no League history. This Update will make the national position more useful,

allowing state and local Leagues to advocate more effectively, confident that they are aligned with national League policy in addressing an accelerating trend: i.e., the siphoning of public funding (taxes) into corporate profits and away from critical services aimed "to preserve the common good, to protect national or local security or to meet the needs of the most vulnerable members of society."⁸

I will now take one minute to read the LWV PWM Update. (Read the BLUE of attached page.)

PWM requests that we:

ADD it to our US Program Planning Survey⁹ because we believe it is worthy of debate and discussion on the floor of Convention 2026. (Instructions also attached.)

By doing this, our League will be requesting that the PWM Update be debated and voted at Convention by about 900 delegates. Our adding it to the survey does not commit our delegates to vote for it at Convention — indeed, the US League recommends that delegates be instructed to learn/discuss at Convention and then to vote their conscience.

To learn more about the proposed PWM Update: email LWV.Update4Convention@gmail.com

- **PWM's Concurrence Webpage** lwvofpwm.org/concurrence-privatization-update/
- **HCR4US's Concurrence Webpage** lwvhealthcarereform.org/ny-concurrence-page-2026/
(HCR4US is the National LWV Health Care Reform Interest Group, ≈ 500 members, 40 states)

Watch 4-minute video summary and/or next 8 minutes of detailed explainer:

bit.ly/Why-PWM-Update or Google: **LWVofPWM YouTube Recent** (and click on the top video)

⁷ See attached sample for one way of doing this if the PWM Update Concurrence is successful at Convention.

⁸ US Privatization Position, p.76 of https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/ImpactOnIssues_2024-FINAL-DIGITAL.pdf

⁹ PWM's suggested wording is on a separate page, p.4 of this packet: "Survey Instructions"

Survey Instructions¹⁰ for LWV US Program Planning

How to Support Concurrence for PWM Privatization Update¹¹

If your League decides to support **more than one "study, concurrence, or other program item"** being discussed and voted on at Convention 2026, these instructions provide 2 options to allow that.

Option A — if PWM Update is your highest priority, answer survey questions as follows:

Would you like to recommend another issue, in addition to or instead of Women Defend Democracy:

☒ Yes

☐ No

Which are you proposing?

☐ Study

☒ Concurrence

☐ Other program item

Please check which of the four LWVUS issue headings your recommendation would fall under.

☒ Representative Government

☐ International Relations

☐ Natural Resources

☐ Social Policy

Describe the proposal in 10 words or less.

Update LWVUS Privatization position by concurrence, to clarify four areas

You may want to describe the issue in more detail. If so, please provide a statement (500 words or less) describing the scope of your recommendation including a description of the issue area, its importance in advancing the League's mission as well as resources needed to carry out the recommendation. This information will be read, but will not be included, in the official response written above.

We support the PWM Update to the LWVUS Privatization Position being a recommended program item for concurrence. Adopting the PWM Update would allow state and local Leagues to advocate more effectively, confident that they are aligned with national League policy in 1) advocating for healthcare as a "public good"; 2) opposing further privatization of healthcare which is, by far, our most privatized public good; and advocating as "best practices requirements" both 3) "fiduciary duty" to the public for public goods and 4) accountability, up to and including de-privatization for violating such fiduciary duty. The Update will make the current position more useful to state and local Leagues in advocating for legislation which protects vulnerable and marginalized residents who are disproportionately harmed by privatization of public goods — because privatization makes public goods less accessible, affordable or available, or of lower quality and less safe. These benefits will accrue without any League expending additional resources.

Option B — if the PWM Update is not your highest priority, complete the final question as follows (154 words allows 3 submissions at the end plus your highest priority submission earlier):

Please provide anything else you would like to share on Program Planning (in 500 words or less)

We support "Updating the LWVUS Privatization position by concurrence to clarify four areas" as a recommended program item (under REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT).

Adopting the PWM Update would allow state and local Leagues to advocate more effectively, confident that they are aligned with national League policy in 1) advocating for healthcare as a "public good"; 2) opposing further privatization of healthcare which is, by far, our most privatized public good; and advocating as "best practices requirements" both 3) "fiduciary duty" to the public for public goods and 4) accountability, up to and including de-privatization for violating such fiduciary duty. The Update will make the current position more useful to state and local Leagues in advocating for legislation which protects vulnerable and marginalized residents who are disproportionately harmed by privatization — because it makes public goods less accessible, affordable or available, or of lower quality and less safe. These benefits will accrue without any League expending additional resources.

¹⁰ The online survey— available after January 15 — due March 10, 2026

¹¹ The survey can be submitted only once, so LWV-US has offered a [PDF version](#) and advised Leagues to draft all answers in a word file to allow rapid copy/pasting into the online form. See the [2026 LWV US Program Planning Page](#) (www.lwv.org/league-management/council-convention/program-planning-2026-2028).

Questions about the PWM Update or these instructions? email LWV.Update4Convention@gmail.com