

# Governing for the Public Good: *Visions, Values, Choices, and Decisions*



**Western Legislative Academy**  
THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS WEST

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# 2-Minute Conversations with Introductions



# *What is this session all about?*



**It's about why we have you**



**And why we have WLA**

*It's also about questions!?!*



Elected to represent the public,  
what is the “public thing” you represent?

# Where do you stand?



# Allow sale of drilling rights to oil, natural gas and minerals in state parks?



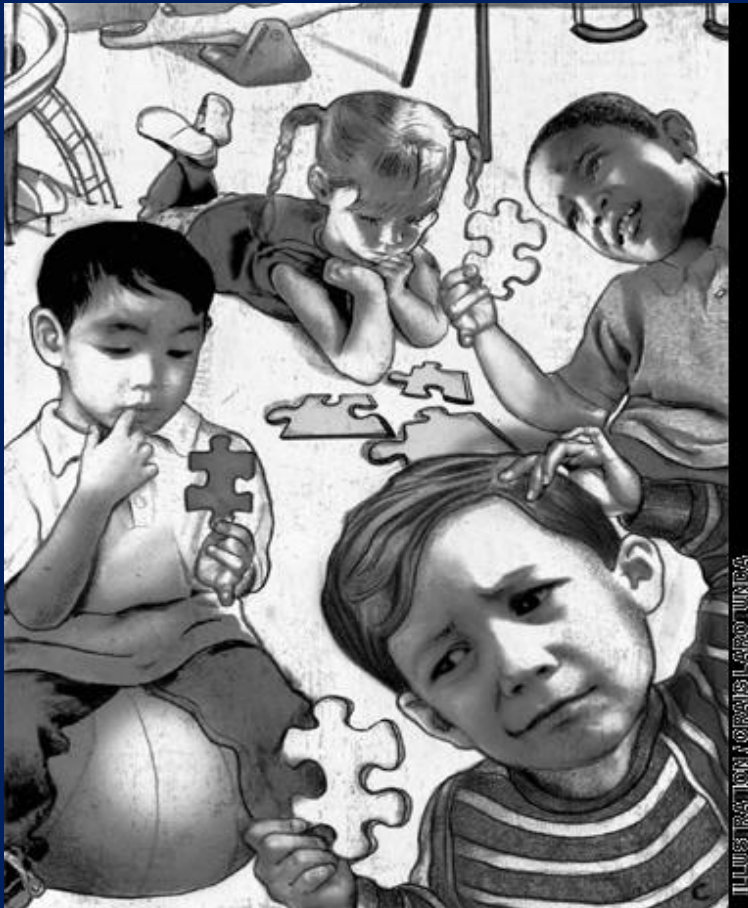
**Require parents to have their children vaccinated against certain diseases before they can attend public school?**



**Adopt end-of life legislation that allows patients to choose when to end their lives?**



# Pre-K Education

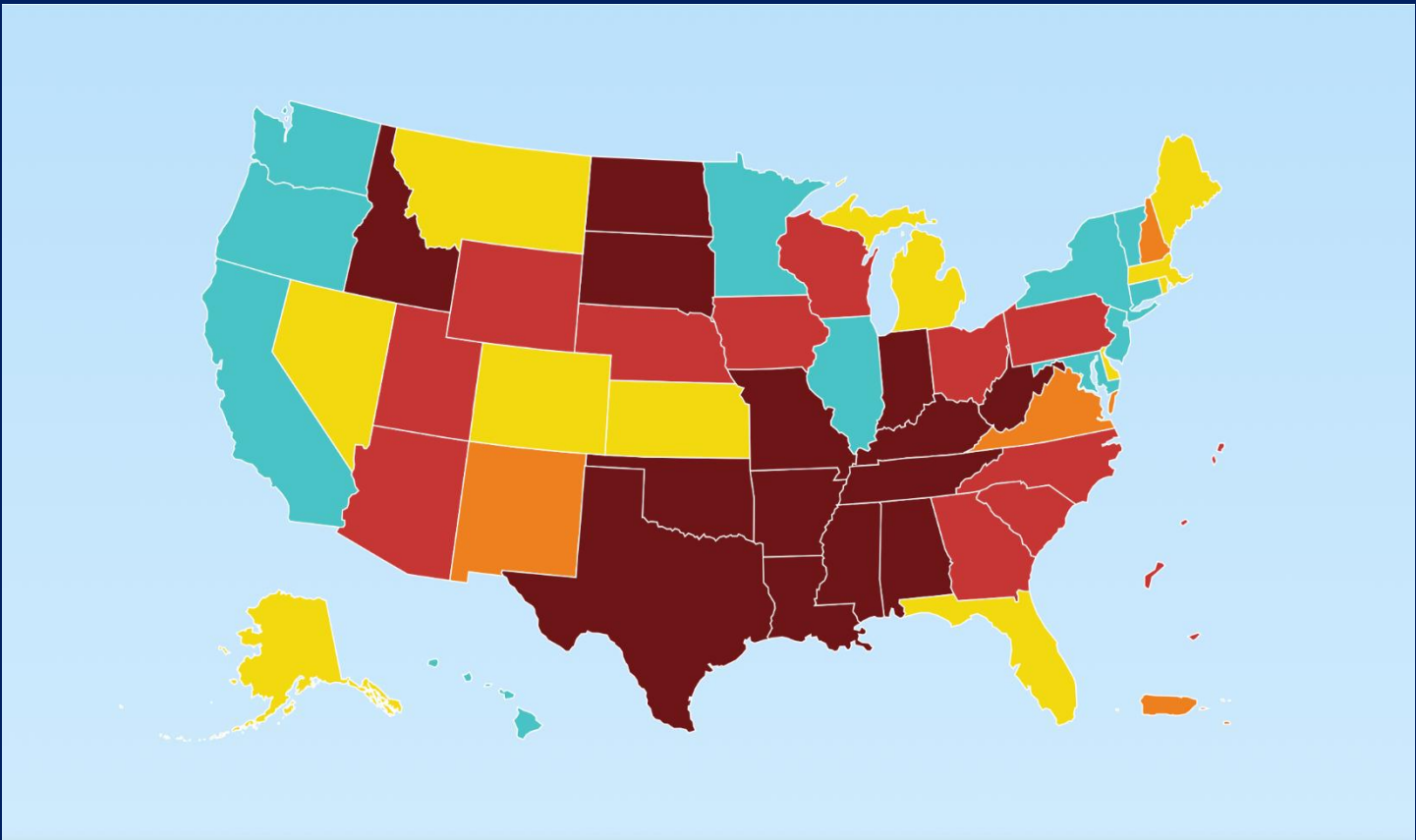


- Public, universal, and voluntary
- Public, universal, and mandatory
- Public, universal, and mandatory only for children at-risk
- A private responsibility left up to parents

# Allow parents to home-school their children even if they lack teaching credentials?



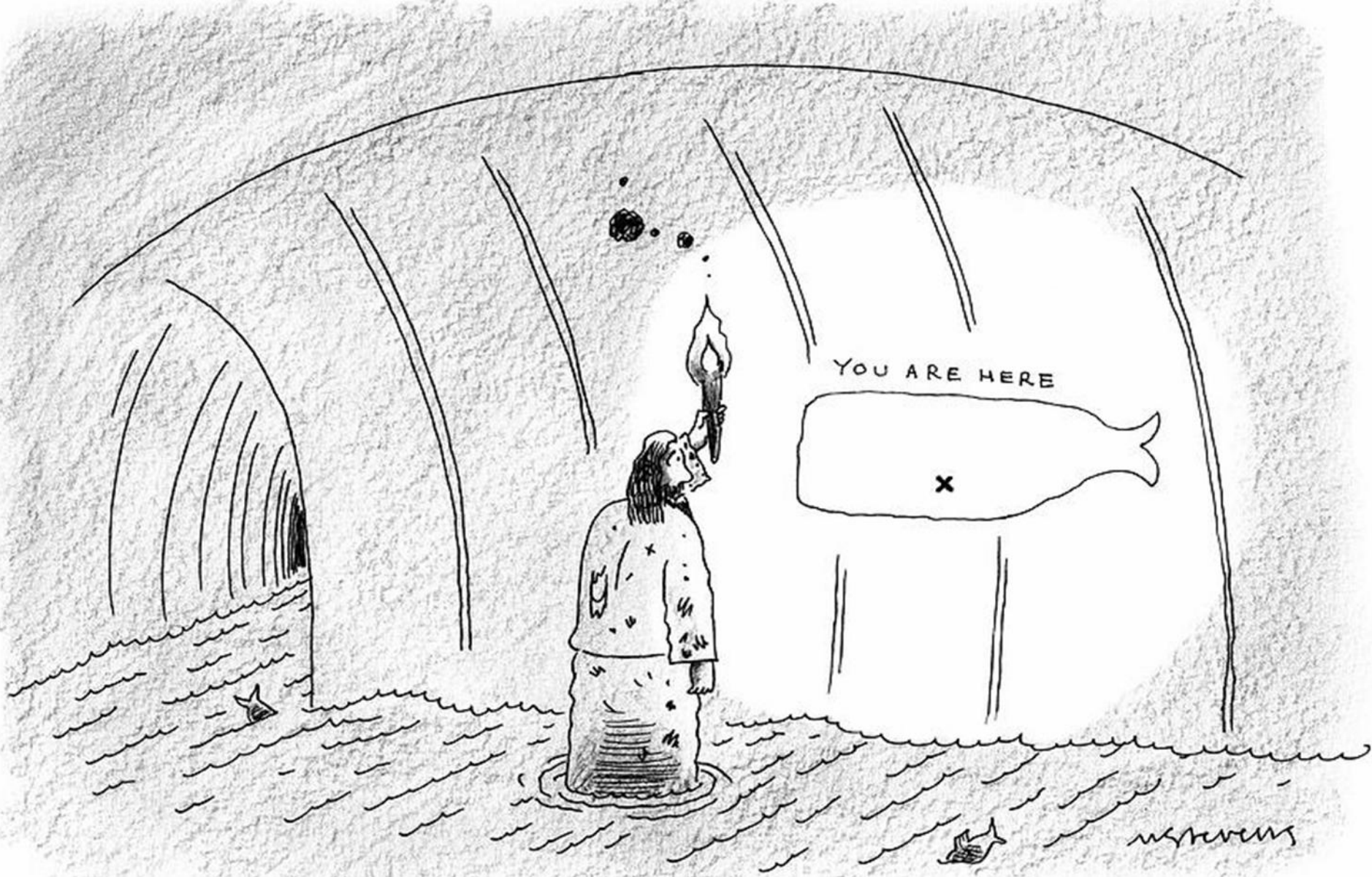
**Allow a pregnant person to decide if, and when to access abortion-care.**



# What did you see and hear?



# How did you know where to stand?



# Public Values



**Why we stand where we stand**

# Choices such as these, *public choices*, ask us two key questions

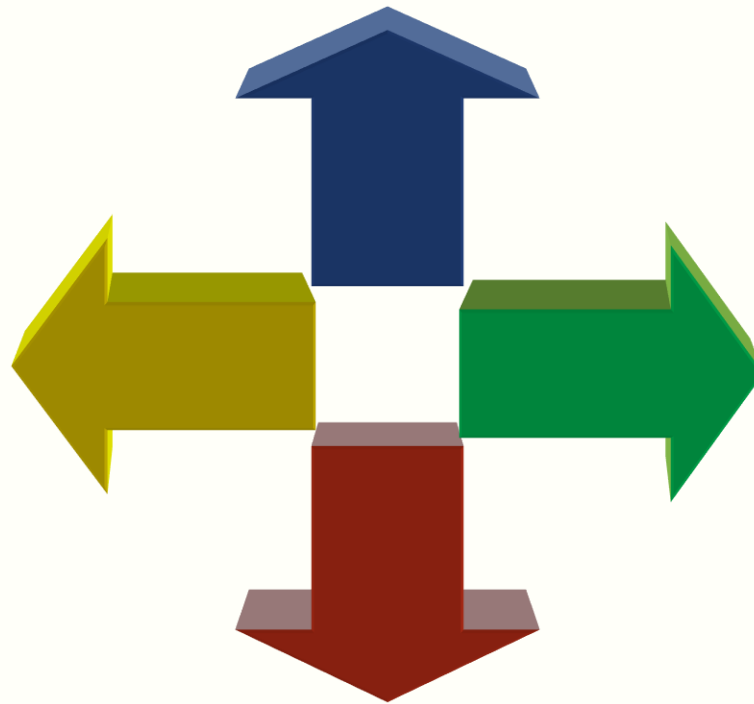


- First, what is the “good” we seek?
- Second, how should we seek that “good?”

# We make public choices using four core public values

Liberty = I

Community  
=  
We



Prosperity  
=  
Market

Equality = Groups

**These public values frame our visions for the future.**



# LIBERTY

Freedom, choice, independence, access, autonomy, mobility, openness, transparency, discretion, individual rights, exceptions, exemptions, waivers, voluntary, opportunity, individuality, privacy, due process, accountability, participation, personal responsibility, self-determination, self-sufficiency, self-help, self-governing, self-rule

# COMMUNITY

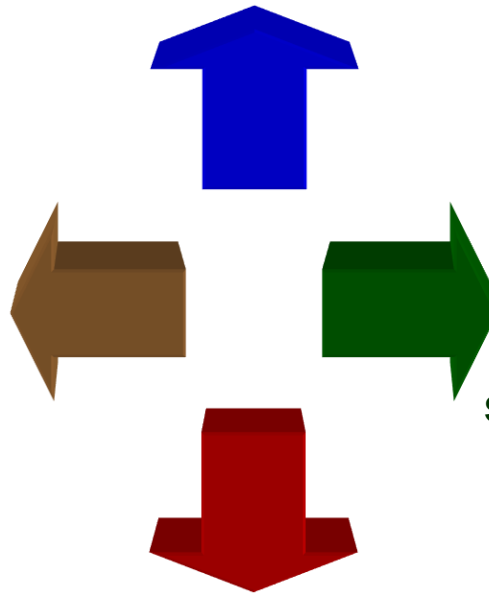
Safety, security, sense of place, belonging, identity, connection, attractive, appealing, welcoming, tradition, customs, culture, history, law, religion, the sacred, social responsibility, collective action, healthy, preservation, conservation, restoration, social and moral order, quality of life

# PROSPERITY

Economy, efficiency, growth, profit, productivity, return on investment, development, incentives, competition, consolidation, centralization, privatization, commercialization, standardization, specialization, performance measurement, benchmarking, market rules, maximization, quantity of life, standard of living

# EQUALITY

Fairness, justice, tolerance, acceptance, diversity, difference, equity, comparable, equivalent, inclusion, representation, grandfathering, compensation, redistribution, equal rights, equal opportunity, equal access, equal treatment, equal results, level playing field



# Five Steps: Public Decision Making



## Visions, Values, Conflicts, and Choices: Decision Making in a Democratic Society

Just as we can use a compass or a map or the Global Positioning System to show us where we are and where we want to go, the public values of liberty, equality, community and prosperity can likewise illuminate our policy positions and guide our public decision making. These values represent the republican and democratic aspirations of American Democracy, helping us see more clearly where we are, where we would like to go, and how we might get there.

We make public decisions to resolve public conflicts. Public conflicts arise when we attach priority to different public values (We want to go different places). Public choices arise when we must decide which value or values should have priority, and how all of the values represented should be balanced (We choose where to go). Policy solutions are the tools or means we use to navigate public conflicts and achieve our aspirations (We decide how to get there).

## Five Steps to Help You Think Through Public Decision Making:

**IDENTIFY THE CONFLICT:** Which values are represented? Which are not? What tensions and trade-offs do you see among these values?

**REPRESENT THE PUBLIC:** Whose values are represented more, whose values less? Are any values missing?

**MAP A DIRECTION:** Where do you want to go? Which value or values should have priority?

**SEEK INTEGRATIVE SOLUTIONS:** Look beyond domination (winner takes all) and compromise (no one is fully satisfied). Seek solutions that satisfy all of the values involved to the greatest degree possible.

**CHART A COURSE:** Chart a course to implement your solution that best navigates all of the values involved. Remember that when dealing with the pull of multiple values the shortest distance between where you are and where you decide to go may not be a straight line.

For more information, conference workshops and training tailored to your needs, or consultation on ideas for how to more effectively engage your community, contact Leading and Governing Associates at 919.918.7067 or [www.LeadingandGoverning.com](http://www.LeadingandGoverning.com).  
Online @LeadingandGoverning and @PreservingthePublic.

For additional reading, see Boyle, P., "Public Problems, Values, and Choices," *Popular Government*, 2001, 67, 1, 18-23; and Boyle, P. and Burns, D., *Preserving the Public in Public Schools*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2012.

# Small Groups

## “Water, Water” Bills

### Design



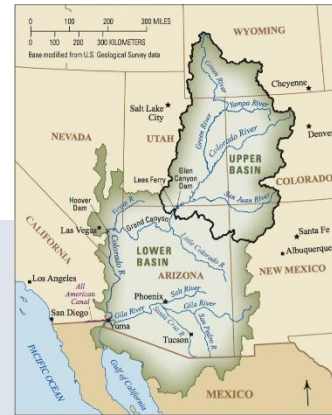
Using a single public value:

- Name of proposed water bill
- Introductory summary to the bill
- Name of groups(s) which “helped” draft the bill
- Group’s logo - extra credit  
(if you have time and talent in your group)

# Small Groups

## “Water, Water” Bills

### Report Out



- Your group’s public value
- Name of the proposed water bill
- Introductory summary of the bill
- Name of groups(s) which “helped” draft the bill
- Group’s logo – extra credit

**What might a liberty-centered water bill sound like?**

**What might an equality-centered water bill sound like?**

**What might a community-centered water bill sound  
like?**

**What might a prosperity-centered water bill sound like?**

# What does it mean to govern?



And how do we create the good we seek, without harming the good we have?

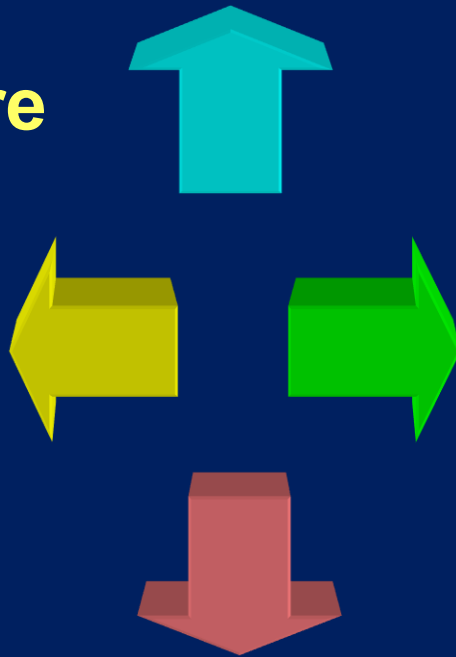
# **If you govern well, your seat belongs to posterity!**

- 1. Make room for everyone by creating shared understanding of policy problems and choices**
- 2. Work together to refine and expand public views and make normative or value-based choices in the best interests of all people**
- 3. Help each generation realize the American Dream**
- 4. Do so in accordance with the principles and norms of the Constitution and American Creed**
- 5. Use democratic means and model the democratic process**

**Creating a nation ~ free individuals capable of being self-governing and exercising rights, freedoms and choice responsibly**

**Creating a community ~ prepare adults to assume public and private responsibilities as citizens, parents, neighbors and Americans**

**Creating an economy ~ prepare each individual to be economically self-sufficient and to contribute to the general welfare**



**Creating a society ~ level the playing field, distribute opportunity fairly and justly, teach tolerance and acceptance, mitigate socioeconomic inequality**

**Thank you  
for your  
engaged  
participation!**

