B4: ADVOCACY ON THE SCALES: WEIGHING RISK VERSUS REWARD – APRIL 30, 2014
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In 1993, Missouri passed a law allowing counties to levy a tax and establish local Community Children’s Service Funds to provide mental health services to children living within the county.

- Sales or Property Tax
Services That Can Be Offered

- To children through age 19 and their families:
  - Respite care
  - Temporary emergency shelter
  - Transitional living programs
  - Outpatient psychiatric treatment
  - Individual, group and family counseling/therapy
  - Crisis intervention
  - Outpatient substance abuse treatment
  - Home and school based family intervention
  - School based prevention programs
  - Services to teen parents
LFCS Involvement

- Finding the resources
- Educating the board, staff and donors
- LFCS’s role in the campaigns
Since the passage of the taxes in St. Charles and St. Louis Counties, LFCS has greatly increased it’s capacity through:

- **Revenue:** additional $3.5 million per year with 25% of allocation used for internal support, monitoring, etc.
- **Staff:** 39 school based counselors, 2 child psychiatrists
- **Clients served:**
  - 3750 counseling sessions
  - 1000 days of emergency foster care
  - Outreach to 4000 children with prevention
  - 70 pregnant teens
BUILDING PUBLIC WILL DECISION-MAKING GUIDE
Minnesotans support solutions that achieve our service outcomes, such as community-based solutions enabling people with disabilities and older adults to live the lives they choose, and those to help homeless youth become productive adults.

We will know this is happening when:

- Messages and stories indicate Minnesota neighbors are becoming part of the solution.
- Community and government partnerships increase and align organizational efforts.
- Policy solutions support LSS mission and outcomes.
- Growing financial investments are made in community-based solutions.

LSS takes occasional public positions for select issues related to our service outcomes based on testing by our Public Will Decision-Making Guide.
Public will is a reflection of how the public feels about an issue, and based on those feelings - the willingness of the public to take action.

What is building public will? Generating awareness, discussion, and providing opportunity for action that builds on community values to achieve change over the long term.

LSS participates in public will building by:
- Leading by doing – demonstrating through leadership in public policy, innovation in service, and pursuing a new course of action that a solution to a community challenge is possible.
- Sharing stories and issue information through existing communications vehicles – Annual Report, newsletter, electronic communications, and public commentary from LSS leaders.
- Publicly engaging Minnesotans to be part of the solution.

Public will decision criteria – when does LSS build public will around an issue?
1. Is it literally our Mission or Vision?
2. Is it a Board Outcome?
3. Is this an area where LSS has unique experience or expertise?
4. Does it affect the people we support and serve?
5. Is LSS called to leadership?
   a. Will an LSS stand change or reframe the debate?
   b. Are there partner organizations with whom to collaborate?
   c. Does LSS’s role in local community life further define a need to respond?
6. Do we align with or bring value to our church body by taking a position?
7. Can the LSS stand speak to the value of non-partisanship?
8. In taking the position, is LSS continuing to be strategically selective?

What level of visibility should our public will building take?

**Lead** (high) – The issue is LSS’s Mission or Vision or represents a Board Outcome. LSS provides high visibility and high public leadership.

**Engage** (medium) – clearly a priority based on criteria, and based on limited resources, LSS will take leadership, often with other partners.

**Position** (low) – LSS holds a position and selectively shares the position as needed with key constituencies, often privately.

**No Position** – LSS defers to the social teachings of the ELCA or the issue doesn’t meet our criteria.
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- That Minnesotans love the neighbor, that all people have the opportunity to participate in community (not just be safe), My Life My Choices, Abundant Aging, Home By Another Way

**Engage** (medium) – Clearly a priority based on criteria, and based on limited resources, LSS will take leadership, often with other partners.

- Housing infrastructure bonds, Voter ID, anti-racism, community support for refugees, safety of children in international adoption, integration of social services with healthcare, disaster relief

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- Raising taxes, healthcare coverage
2014 Public Policy Priorities

LSS Vision
All people have the opportunity to live and work in community with dignity, safety and hope.

LSS Mission
Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota expresses the love of Christ for all people through service that inspires hope, changes lives, and builds community.

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- **Invest in Housing Infrastructure Bonds**
  $100M in bonding for housing will support the development of affordable housing statewide, a critical need in Minnesota.

  After the session, LSS will seek $2.5M in Housing Infrastructure Bonds to construct The Center for Changing Lives Duluth. The Center will serve over 600 youth per year from Northeastern Minnesota as they transition to adulthood.

- **Increase Rates for Home and Community-Based Services**
  The 5% Campaign, a coalition of home and community-based services, is committed to making life in the community the first and best option for people with disabilities and older Minnesotans. A 5% rate increase will support people with disabilities and older adults to remain in community by helping to maintain high quality staff.

  In the spirit of ‘My Life, My Choices’ and ‘Abundant Aging,’ and in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Human Services, ensure that the critical values of self-direction continue in the implementation of Community First Services and Supports, so that individuals are able to live in community as long as they are able.

- **Advance the Homeless Youth Act**
  Investment of an additional $4M in the Homeless Youth Act will make significant progress in addressing homelessness for youth in Minnesota as they transition to adulthood.

- **Regulate Payday Lending**
  LSS supports the regulation of financial products that create cycles of indebtedness and contain unfair features, and supports the creation of products that allow all people to access the economy in healthy ways. In 2014, LSS supported passage of the Payday Lending Reform Act.

- **Secure Sustainable Solutions to Senior Nutrition Challenges**
  Senior Nutrition services have great difficulty in securing speed-down payments causing extensive issues in revenue and impacting the ability to serve meals to older adults.
Comments/Questions

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WINS in Public Policy

Perspectives from an Advocate turned Public Official
PERSPECTIVE
PERSPECTIVE

- Who is “right”?
- Politics are local.
- Make an offer.
POLITICS
POLITICS

- Legislative history makes a difference.
- First, second, third: order matters
- Proactive vs. reactive
POLICY

- Policy packages
- Creative approaches
- Political capital