POLICY MEMO ASSIGNMENT

**Topic:**
Complete a research based policy memo on privatization or contracting out for a public service. Some major policy areas where this issue has been much debated include:

- Prison privatization
- Public school privatization ("vouchers")
- Municipal garbage service
- Transportation (e.g., toll roads)

You are encouraged to find a topic that is of particular interest to you.

**Content of the Memo:**
The major point of this assignment is to practice writing a policy memo and to apply empirical research to a particular policy setting. The memo needs to be framed as though it were advice to a relevant elected official, agency head, non-profit executive director, etc. and needs to have a specific jurisdictional context. For instance: should the City of Atlanta privatize its garbage collection services? Should the State of Georgia allow public school privatization? Please indicate in the header of the memo the “target audience.”

All memos need to concisely summarize the contents of the memo, including the policy problem and the recommendation (and why) in the first 1-2 sentences of the memo. The memo should include (but not be limited to) a concise description of the policy problem in question, the findings from related literature on privatization, a brief analysis of this research, application to the particular situation, and a recommendation for action (or not). You should consider the implications for efficient service delivery as well as the democratic implications of this choice.

The memo should include references to at least **five sources** that are from scholarly and professional books and journals. Class textbooks, handouts, and on-line course materials cannot be counted as one of the five sources for this assignment.

All sources of information, concepts, and data used in the memorandum must be fully identified and cited appropriately. For information on how to use citations correctly and avoid plagiarism, please see the appropriate section in the course syllabus.

**Specs:**
The memorandum should be concise but also cover the material well. A good length would be around 5-10 pages, double spaced. Please keep the font in Times New Roman, 12 point. Citations must be complete. Additional information on how to write a memo is included with this assignment on Brightspace.

**Grading:**
Grades will be based on the quality of writing and organization as well as whether the content includes all of the required components described above. Top grades will go to papers that
concisely describe the policy problem, are well organized and well written, and use empirical evidence as well as insight from the class more generally to effectively analyze the issues and develop a recommendation. An excellent memo will also demonstrate a level of research appropriate for a professional setting, including a thorough review of key research papers on a topic. *Note that this will usually entail finding more than five sources.*

**Deadlines:**
Students will need to submit a draft memo by **7:00 pm, March 21st on Brightspace** and will need to bring at least one (1) copy to class that day. Students will then pair up with a partner and edit one another’s memos. Failure to submit the draft paper or a poorly developed draft will be counted against the final grade (up to 10 points may be deducted).

The final memo will be due on **March 28th at 7:00pm on Brightspace.**