

Selling American Data, Even Through State Systems – Many Layers of Corruption

State Contracting, Public Data, and Accountability

Public Accountability and Contract Integrity

When the state distributes personal data or outsources essential public functions through layers of subcontractors rather than working directly within accountable state systems, it can create conditions for contract manipulation, reduced transparency, and exploitation. Such arrangements may weaken oversight, obscure responsibility, and erode public trust.

Government institutions are entrusted with the responsibility of safeguarding the public's information, resources, and welfare. That responsibility does not disappear when services are transferred to outside vendors, consultants, or subcontractors. In many cases, the expansion of intermediary contracting structures can make it increasingly difficult for citizens to understand who is handling their data, who is making decisions, and who is ultimately accountable when misconduct, negligence, or abuse occurs.

The outsourcing of sensitive public functions and citizen data to subcontractors can become a mechanism for exploitation when accountability is diluted across multiple private entities. Citizens are often expected to comply with systems they did not consent to, while having little visibility into how their information is stored, shared, analyzed, or monetized.

Transparency and direct accountability are foundational principles of ethical governance. Public institutions should maintain clear oversight over any contracted services and ensure that all agreements involving public data, administrative functions, or citizen services are subject to meaningful scrutiny, enforceable standards, and public review.

Ethical Concerns in Outsourced Public Systems

Large subcontracting chains may create environments where responsibility becomes distributed to private companies, rather than the state itself. This issue can lead to:

- Reduced transparency regarding how public data is used;
- Limited accountability when errors or abuses occur;
- Increased opportunities for conflicts of interest;
- Difficulty identifying responsible parties;
- Financial inefficiencies through unnecessary intermediary layers;

- Erosion of public trust in institutions.

Citizens should not be placed into systems where private interests are permitted to operate without meaningful oversight while benefiting from public contracts and public information.

The Need for Oversight and Boundaries

Public institutions have a duty to establish strong boundaries regarding the handling of citizen information and outsourced services. Ethical governance requires:

1. Transparent contracting practices;
2. Clear disclosure of subcontracting relationships;
3. Direct accountability mechanisms;
4. Strict limitations on data sharing and secondary use;
5. Independent oversight and auditing;
6. Accessible public reporting and review procedures.

The protection of citizens, public servants, veterans, families, and communities should remain the priority of any government system. Public trust depends upon transparency, responsibility, and enforceable standards that prevent exploitation and ensure that state authority is exercised with integrity.

Conclusion

A government's legitimacy depends in part upon its ability to protect the people it serves while remaining accountable to them. When public systems become obscured by excessive subcontracting, fragmented authority, or opaque data-sharing practices, the risk of exploitation increases and public confidence deteriorates.

Responsible governance requires transparency, ethical safeguards, meaningful oversight, and direct accountability at every level of public administration. Citizens deserve systems that protect their rights, respect their information, and operate in service to the public rather than private manipulation or institutional ambiguity.

In other words, our public communities are not here to be exploited for the enrichment of a select group of private companies. There is no excuse for predatory private contracting systems that profit from weakened oversight, public dependency, or the misuse of public resources. Citizens have the right to demand accountability, transparency, and ethical governance from those entrusted with public authority. Officials and institutions that enable exploitative systems should be voted out and replaced with leadership committed to serving the public interest first. **We propose new laws that end predatory privatization and public exploitation.**

— D. Cowdrey