

RESPONDING TO THE STATEMENT BY THE DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

Official comment by the Dialogue not Expulsion Caucus

October 7, 2020—[The statement from the Diversity Committee dated September 23](#), dealing with the controversy between the Lavender Caucus and the Georgia Green Party starts with an assertion of fact:

“We find [the ‘Declaration on Women’s Sex-Based Rights’] adds to the oppression of transgendered individuals and, as such, is inconsistent with Green values.”

The Lavender Caucus itself made the same assertion in its initial complaint against the Georgia Green Party, citing this as the reason to decertify the Georgia party if it refused to reconsider. And yet both the Diversity Committee and the LC have failed to offer a single quote or proposal from the document to justify their claim.

The Georgia Greens, along with many other members of our national party, reject this assertion.

We are dealing with a political dispute which needs to be engaged the way all political disputes should be. In organizations that value democracy we encourage those with diverse viewpoints to explain what they think. Such a political debate ought to take place before Green Party members attempt to draw definitive conclusions about which position they support. We assert that the cancel-culture tactics which have met efforts to engage in such a discussion regarding the present dispute have created an environment hostile to the mostly women who wish to engage on these issues—so hostile that it has served to silence them. We find it extremely ironic and highly problematic that a political party which claims to value feminism has shut down women who wish to discuss matters of public policy from a woman's perspective.

In addition, we need this kind of discussion to determine how we can live with our disagreement while still maintaining party unity, something Greens manage on many issues.

And yet the Diversity Committee has chosen to take one side in this political dispute (while citing no evidence whatsoever) before the national party has done anything to organize the conversation we need. This is inappropriate. We also believe it to be beyond the scope of the Committee's mission which charges the DC with responsibility "to create a political community where all are welcomed, respected and encouraged to participate at all levels." The DC statement, however, creates a hostile environment for feminists, a core constituency of this party. The DC and other leadership bodies of the national party, and of state parties too, should instead be working to develop the discussion needed to help party members draw informed conclusions for themselves.

In its statement the DC suggests that Greens may not disagree with particular positions that are included in our national platform, nor even propose an interpretation that is different from that of the Lavender Caucus. Here is the specific language: “The Green Party of the United States has affirmed in our platform that trans women are women, trans men are men, and all children deserve the opportunity to live and grow in the world into their own self-determined place and presence regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.”

a) The platform, however, does not define who is a man and who is a woman. There is no such affirmation.

b) The national platform is full of statements that individual Greens disagree with, or that different Greens interpret in different ways—from animal rights to the Nordic model for the regulation of prostitution to ecosocialism. And our collective viewpoints continue to evolve, which is why we refer to our Platform as a living document, subjecting it to periodic review and revision. We cannot insist that one specific interpretation of some particular platform plank imposes political conclusions that all members must affirm as universal and binding for all time. Doing this would represent a graver violation of the Green Party's democratic values than it could possibly be for some members to dispute specific assertions of the Lavender Caucus.

c) The national platform also affirms the sex-based rights of women—for example the right to control over their reproductive lives—and calls explicitly for US ratification of the “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women,” which was adopted in 1979 by the U.N. General Assembly and ratified by 173 countries, but not by the USA. This U.N. convention likewise affirms the rights of women on the basis of sex and is one of the key reference points for the Declaration on Women's Sex-Based Rights. If anything, then, the platform expresses support for both sides in this controversy.

Approximately half of the human population are born with female sexual characteristics, chromosomes and hormones, observed to be female at birth—and therefore oppressed by patriarchal cultures because they are part of the female sex. Others are born with male genitalia, observed to be male at birth, but at some later point choose to identify as women. The Diversity Committee treats these two groups as if no meaningful political or social distinction can be made between them. It is reasonable, however, for other Greens to advocate an alternative approach, while still recognizing the rights of everyone, still embracing Green values and sharing our collective commitment to building independent political power.

Finally, “the Diversity Committee affirms the rights of all individuals to self-identify and live out their identities without restrictions: neither social, legislative, nor cultural.” And yet such a statement runs up against a limitation: No group may affirm or claim rights for itself which contribute to the oppression of others. The Lavender Caucus asserts (so far without evidence) that the affirmation of sex-based rights in the Declaration impinges on the rights of those who identify themselves as transgender. But there is a parallel claim by a significant layer of feminists: that the rights asserted by the most vocal and influential wing of the trans movement impinge unacceptably on the rights of those who were born with a particular reproductive anatomy, resulting in their being oppressed as part of the female sex.

It is this disagreement about rights and oppression that generates our current conflict. The Green Party needs to investigate and consider these mutual claims in a reasoned way, a process which has not yet even begun. It is not only beyond the scope of the Diversity Committee's mission to choose sides in a way that will alienate a key constituency of this feminist political party, it is also premature for any formal leadership body of the Green Party to issue declarations asserting which point of view it agrees with.

We believe that a feminist political party which respects diversity has at least as much room in its ranks for gender critical feminists as it does for trans rights activists. We also believe that meeting the multiple crises our nation and species face requires all of us to find ways of working together, in spite of our differences on this and many other issues.

The Dialogue Not Expulsion Caucus welcomes an opportunity to work with other Greens to facilitate such a party-wide discussion on the vital issues at stake in this controversy.