

Response to GPUS National Committee Proposal 1064

(8/27/2021)

The Green National Committee is considering a proposal from the Nevada Green Party which seeks to "hold accountable" and exclude from the national Party (regardless of the wishes of their respective state parties), five Green Party activists for their activities opposing the national Green Party's dis-accreditation of the Georgia Green Party. Georgia was originally targeted for its support of the Declaration on Women's Sex-Based Rights and the Feminist Amendments to the Equality Act. The five are Hugh Esco (GA), Thistle Pettersen (WI), Ann Menasche (CA) (misspelled in the complaint), David Keil (MA), and Jeffrey Sutter (IN).

We are the five Green Party activists. The proposal accuses us of "publishing offensive and defamatory content in contravention to GPUS's core values." It also accuses us of disrupting GPUS business, damaging the Party's reputation and spreading "false, defamatory and transphobic propaganda for the purpose of influencing National Committee delegates and other Greens" regarding the dis-accreditation proposal. None of us have been provided notice or an opportunity to defend ourselves. (If this note is posted it is the only reply we have been afforded.) The fact that one of us had her name misspelled is emblematic of the factual and organizational incompetence of this proposal.

As usual, no evidence is provided supporting these accusations. Indeed, none of the accusations have any merit.

For reasonable Greens, the proposal is outrageous on its face. It positions the Green Party as centralized authoritarian party demanding total and unquestioned adherence to a gender identity ideology that denies the existence or significance of biological sex. It deems participating in the defense of a state Party threatened with dis-accreditation and engaging in a discussion and debate on the substance of the disagreement as crimes in themselves worthy of expulsion.

1. We five do support the Declaration on Women's Sex-Based Rights, though many other opponents of Georgia's dis-accreditation in the DnE Caucus do not. The Declaration is about protecting the rights of women as a sex. It is not transphobic, despite the overblown claims of sex denying trans-rights extremists who hold that any assertion of separate rights for persons born female is inherently bigoted.
2. We five have (in fact) not published offensive, defamatory or transphobic content in contravention to GPUS's core values. If the Nevada Green Party had read and understood the extensive record presented during the dis-accreditation process it would understand this fact. The five accused support all basic human rights of trans-identified people.
3. The Green Party has never held or permitted a serious discussion regarding the rights of trans-identified people and the rights of females as a sex. No discussion is now possible. In large part this is due to the fact that the National Committee listserv "moderation" is now (recently!) dominated by a faction which has censored discussion of gender issues. This faction prevented those supporting the Georgia Green Party from defending their position during consideration of the dis-accreditation proposal. A number of NC members aggressively attacked any post expressing support for Georgia by complaining

and attempting to have the members posting them banned from posting. The Party leadership has decided it prefers to expel people who disagree rather than hold such a discussion. The rigid ideological extremism that currently dominates the national Party (which is embraced by most of corporate America and the Democratic Party) prevents honest, robust discussion from occurring within the party—a process that would strengthen us rather than weaken us. We appear too afraid and lacking confidence in our own ideas to handle an honest dialogue.

4. Georgia Greens and other opponents of dis-accreditation have the right to advocate for their position, despite biased Green Party actions by the list monitors, the Steering Committee, the Accreditation Committee, and others. Grassroots democracy within a Party is not only for people you agree with.
5. In the case of Jeff Sutter, his “crime” appears to be presenting a minority report in the Accreditation Committee opposing the dis-accreditation of Georgia. In this Orwellian mockery of the Green Party we used to know, opposing expulsion of others is enough to get one expelled. Presentation of a minority report is a right by committee rules. Yet the report was actively suppressed, not discussed and now its author is to be subjected to punishment.
6. Utilization of National Committee members' email addresses is a normal communications practice. The addresses are available to all NC list members in party webpages including delegate status, postal address, numbers of votes cast, etc. The purpose of these lists is to facilitate communications between NC members. Three of the five accused were NC members or observers and thus legitimate users of the information on this basis alone. This alternate mode of contact was used due to National Committee list point-of-view censorship and due to the exclusion of Sutter from the NC list (by Indiana and the SC) when the AC minority report should have been available to the NC. Moreover, the NC should always welcome input from its members, and the idea that contacting them via email is illegitimate is absurd.
7. The proposal claims we have been "using Greens' contact information in collaboration with and to make financial solicitations for a federal PAC organizing against GPUS (namely, GCG-PAC)". This is untrue. The claim that we have "shar[ed] National Committee communications, including delegates' names and contact information, with other transphobic individuals and transphobic organizations via email and by publishing on websites and social media" is also untrue.
8. We find extremely chilling that the National Committee would be encouraged to overstep its authority and dictate the priorities and determine the political positions of its constituent state parties based on narrow and arbitrary interpretations of the Ten Key Values. The NC has no right to determine who represents state parties on national committees, nor should it be able to shut down free speech within the Party, denying accused party activists any right of response. This idea that there should be no internal freedom of speech has been spreading through several state parties, including that Greens should be expelled for holding minority views, and it creates a real and growing emergency within the Green Party. We can't build a healthy Green Party on this hyper-centralized authoritarian basis.

Following in the footsteps of the autocratic expulsion of Georgia, the Steering Committee continues to undercut grassroots democracy and decentralization principles of the Party by

naming an enemies list of apostates and then autocratically excluding them by fiat from any participation in the national Party.

There is no organizational precedent, bylaw, or practice by which individuals can be attacked and purged in the manner of this proposal. The party is a federation of states which have the right to choose their own representatives.

These charges are an attack on every Green Party activist's right to organize as she/he/they see fit in light of grassroots democracy and decentralization, considering local and state priorities, communications with other activists and with voters, and assessing issues in light of the party's key values.

Will we allow the Green Party to be undermined in this fashion, or will we call an end to the witch-hunt before it is too late?

/s/

Hugh Esco
David Keil
Ann Menasche
Thistle Pettersen
Jeffrey Sutter