

# Bylaws of The Greens/Green Party USA As Amended September 2012

## I. PURPOSE AND VALUES

A. NAME - The name of this organization is The Greens/Green Party USA, referred to herein as The Greens.

B. PURPOSE - The Greens shall pursue creation of a sustainable, just society based on the Ten Key Values.

C. THE TEN KEY VALUES - The Ten Key Values shall remain embodied in the internal structure and process and public activities of The Greens:

Ecological Wisdom  
Grassroots Democracy  
Social justice  
Nonviolence  
Decentralization

Community-based Economics  
Feminism  
Respect for Diversity  
Personal and Global Responsibility  
Future Focus/Sustainability

## II. POLITICAL PRACTICES

A. GRASSROOTS DEMOCRACY - The Greens are a membership organization. Members may participate as individuals and/or through accredited local Green groups, referred to herein as Locals. To be accredited, a Local must organize in a structure consistent with the principles of grassroots democracy, including:

1. Accountability to membership base.

2. Immediate recall.

3. Imperative mandate. Representatives are free to express their personal views but when acting on behalf of their Local or The Greens must follow the instructions of the members they represent.

4. Freedom to speak and caucus around political views

a. Individual Greens or Locals may publicly dissent from a decision reached at a higher level of The Greens and may organize to promote their dissenting views, provided they clearly distinguish their position from an official decision.

b. Minorities may call for a procedure of political division in the allocation of mandated proportional votes.

B. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION. Individual Greens and Locals shall take affirmative action to reach goals of gender, ethnic, and social diversity, and balance in the allocation of responsibilities among members.

C. ROTATION OF DELEGATES - All levels of The Greens are encouraged to rotate their delegates in representative bodies and any coalitions they enter into on a staggered basis in order to ensure both broad participation in responsibilities and continuity from one meeting to the next.

D. DEMOCRATIC DECISION RULES - Locals shall set their own democratic decision-making processes.

### E. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

1. Meetings and records of finances, minutes, and so on at any level shall be open to inspection by any members in good standing on that level. Membership lists will be released only to elected representatives in the Green organization to which the lists correspond. Release of the national mailing list is only as directed by the CC/GNC, whose roles and composition are declared in Article V Section C.

2. Sometimes it is appropriate to limit participation at a particular meeting to those who are members of that particular body or committee; however these meetings are open to any Greens who wish to observe. A meeting may be closed to Green observers on 74% vote in personnel or criminal matters or if required by law.

F. STRATEGIC DIVERSITY - A full range of nonviolent strategies and tactics shall be considered permissible and desirable in pursuing Green social change.

G. MEMBERSHIP AND PROCESS STANDARDS - Policies against the following shall apply at all levels of The Greens. Violation by any individual Green or Local may be cause for sanctions including (as appropriate) reprimand, suspension or loss of accreditation, recall, or expulsion.

1. Committing The Greens or any of its affiliated locals to actions, endorsements, and other policy positions outside that body's decision-making process;

2. Misrepresenting the decisions and policies of any such Green body;

3. Making false statements in an application for membership or affiliation to any such Green body;

4. Financial irregularities with Greens funds;

5. Advocacy or practice of ethnic, sexual, national, or religious oppression;

6. Advocacy or practice of violent political action by The Greens or any of its affiliated locals;

7. Acting as a strike-breaker, agent provocateur, or government or corporate informer;

8. Acting to willfully disrupt the freedom of speech, press, or assembly of any individual or body of The Greens;

9. Violating the principles of grassroots democracy as embodied in Section II.

### H. MEMBERSHIP REVIEW PROCESS

1. No charges can be raised and no sanctions can be imposed for actions not explicitly proscribed in Article II Section G.

2. Locals are responsible for reviewing the standing of members who are charged with violating membership standards.

3. All members or affiliates charged with violations of membership standards shall have the right to appear, to bring witnesses, and to testify.

4. The burden of proof shall be on those making the charges. After hearing statements by those making the charges and by those charged, the membership assembly of the appropriate body shall have the right to vote any sanction, including exclusion, by a 2/3 vote.

5. Decisions at the Local level may be appealed to the Greens National Committee and Green Congress. Appeals shall be heard at the next meeting of the appropriate body.

6. The GNC may with cause suspend or reinstate paid memberships.

7. The GNC may with cause refuse individual memberships or renewals.

### III. INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

Membership in The Greens shall be open to citizens and residents of the United States who agree with and will observe the following:

A. COMMITMENT TO GREEN VALUES AND PRINCIPLES as embodied in the Ten Key Values (Article I) and Political Practices (Article II).

B. ADMISSION AND PARTICIPATION - Admission to membership shall be through an affiliated Local or through the Clearinghouse if there is no affiliated Local in the area.

1. A member in good standing will participate regularly in a Local or work to organize one.

2. Regular participation in activities promoting the purpose of The Greens shall be required for assuming any elective, appointive, staff, or committee positions at a higher level in The Greens.

#### C. DUES

1. Members in good standing shall have their dues paid up to date.

2. The GNC shall determine regular and low income dues which shall be uniform for Greens. The clearinghouse shall collect dues except in states where GNC members request that dues be collected at the local level. In those states, the Local organization which collects dues may include local dues in their collections, but shall send national dues to the Clearinghouse.

3. Representation to the national organization for individuals and Locals shall be based on paying national dues.

4. Members are entitled to receive electronic and printed publications of The Greens.

5. Members are entitled to receive a copy of the Bylaws for The Greens upon request.

### IV. LOCALS

#### A. GENERAL ON LOCALS

1. Commitment to Green Values and Principles - Affiliated Locals shall be in agreement with the Ten Key Values (Article I) and the Political Practices (Article II) of The Greens as a framework for organizing and political action.

2. Local and Regional Membership Standards - The individual membership standards listed in Article II apply to Locals.

3. For the representational and decision-making purposes of The Greens, a Local's members in good standing shall be those who pay national dues and participate actively in the Local.

#### B. LOCAL LEVEL OF ORGANIZATION

Affiliation Process - The GNC shall approve or deny applications for affiliation of Locals. Applications shall be sent to the Clearinghouse for transmission to the GNC.

### V. NATIONAL STRUCTURE

#### A. CONGRESS

1. Authority and Schedule

The Congress is the highest decision-making body for The Greens. It shall convene at least every four years.

2. Composition

The Congress shall be composed of delegates from Locals in good standing and individual members in good standing. Votes can be carried only by a delegate of the same Local.

3. Charge

a. The Green Congress shall review, amend, and ratify platform, principles, and policy statements for The Greens;

b. Review and amend the Green Bylaws;

c. Review, initiate and set strategic and policy parameters for national Green actions and campaigns; Review and (if needed) amend the actions and decisions of the Greens National Committee.

d. The Green Congress shall hear reports from and review the work of the various functional and geographic bodies.

e. The Green Congress may by a 2/3 majority reinstate a suspended membership.

f. The Green Congress may by a 2/3 majority approve applications or renewals denied by the GNC.

g. The Green Congress may hear statements of up to 500 words from each side relating to reinstatement requests.

4. Decision-making Guidelines

The Congress shall seek unanimous agreement on proposals, endeavoring to hear all views. If unanimous agreement cannot be reached, the Green Congress shall move to a vote. Votes shall be passed as specified in the current Working Guidelines.

#### B. GREEN CONGRESS WORKING GUIDELINES

1. Composition: Delegates to the Green Congress must be members in good standing and will be elected by GPUSA members in good standing by any voting method which ensures proportional representation of minority viewpoints. In order to be represented at the Congress, Locals must collect dues from their members and send them to the Clearinghouse; and their members must indicate their affiliation if they send dues individually. Locals with 3 or more members will have 2 delegate votes for each member. Members-at-large who are not in a Local which elects delegates shall receive 1 vote.

2. Voting - Green Congress votes shall be passed according to these criteria:

a. 75%: Recalling members of national bodies.

b. 66 2/3%: Changes or additions to the Bylaws; changes or additions to the Green Program and Platform; chartering permanent committees or working groups of The Greens; approving endorsements or substantive proposals; changes to the Working Guidelines; motions to close or extend debate, table or send to committee and internal administrative decisions not already specified.

- c. 50% + 1: Meeting-specific process motions not already specified.
- d. Minority reports are accepted as official Green documents on 33% vote of the Congress.

Abstentions are not counted in the relative percentages of those voting for and against.

### 3. Agenda

- a. A call for agenda proposals shall be publicized at The Greens website at least 4 weeks before the Congress meets.
- b. The proposed agenda shall be developed by the Coordinating Committee or the Greens National Committee.
- c. All agenda proposals shall be circulated to Green locals no less than 4 weeks prior to the Congress.
- d. Prior to the Congress, the Greens National Committee or appropriate committee thereof shall have final approval over the proposed agenda, and shall meet, if necessary, immediately before the Congress to do so.
- e. The first order of business for the Congress shall be to discuss, amend, and approve the proposed agenda.
- f. Agenda amendments, including new substantive proposals (i.e., from the floor) shall require at least a 50%+1 vote in favor to be placed on the agenda.
- g. The agenda as a whole shall require at least a 50%+1 vote in favor to pass.

### 4. Decision Review

At least 4 weeks before the Congress, all functional bodies of The Greens shall circulate detailed reports of all substantive decisions, endorsements, representations, and so forth undertaken in the preceding year.

## C. GREENS NATIONAL COMMITTEE

### 1. Authority and Schedule

- a. The Greens National Committee (GNC) shall serve as a leadership body for the Greens. Each GNC meeting will set the subsequent GNC meeting. The GNC may have an emergency meeting with 5 days notice following a motion by 2/3 of its members as polled by the Coordinating Committee. Green Congress will determine the number of members of the Green National Committee (GNC) and alternates. The Green Congress will elect them by a democratic method, taking into account the geographical locations of Greens in the US and abroad. The GNC shall meet face-to-face after the Congress that elected it, and face-to-face or by phone conference call at least every six months. The GNC may call an emergency Green Congress with 30 days notice. The GNC will meet to make decisions and develop action strategies within the framework of overall policy set by the Congress.
- b. The Greens National Committee shall name from within its own members a three-person Coordinating Committee to carry out decisions between GNC Meetings. In a rotation determined by the GNC, each GNC member will serve on the Coordinating Committee during his or her tenure on the GNC.

### 2. Composition

Only active members in good standing of The Greens may serve on the Greens National Committee, as long as they are not serving as staff for the Greens during the elected term.

### 3. Duties

- a. The Greens National Committee as a whole shall bear ultimate financial and legal responsibility for The Greens;
- b. Make policy between Congresses provided that it is consistent with the Green Program and the decisions of the Green Congress;
- c. Amend the Working Guidelines as needed;
- d. Coordinate Green activities at the national and international level;
- e. Strategize and initiate national Green action programs (including electoral action, direct action, issue campaigns, public education, internal education, alternative institutions, and so forth) in order to advance the program and policies adopted by the Green Congress;
- f. Accredite Locals;
- g. Bear ultimate responsibility for hiring and firing staff,
- h. Oversee budget and finance and all record keeping;
- i. Select The Greens' national press/media spokespeople;
- j. Oversee the creation, functioning and disbanding of bodies such as committees, action networks and working groups;
- k. Aid in the development of Green electoral endeavors, apply state Green party and caucus accreditation guidelines, and facilitate communication and cooperation among Green electoral activists and kindred groups;

### 4. Decision-making Guidelines

- a. The Greens National Committee shall seek agreement on proposals.
- b. When agreement cannot be reached by the end of the allotted time, the Greens National Committee moves to a vote as specified in the Working Guidelines.
- c. There shall be appropriate categories of voting majorities to decide issues of varying importance specified in the current Working Guidelines.

### 5. Accountability and Recall

- a. The Greens National Committee shall report in detail to the Congress, which may amend or reverse any Greens National Committee decisions.
- b. Members of the Greens National Committee may be removed upon 75% vote of the GNC.

## D. GREEN NATIONAL COMMITTEE WORKING GUIDELINES

### 1. Composition

The term of office is until the next Green Congress.

### 2. Observers

- a. Nonvoting observers can attend face-to-face Greens National Committee meetings and may speak at the discretion of the facilitator.
  - b. The Greens National Committee may vote to eject a disruptive observer from the meeting.
3. Voting - Greens National Committee votes shall be passed according to these criteria:
- a. 66 2/3%: Chartering permanent committees of the GNC; approving endorsements or substantive proposals; changes to the Working Guidelines; motions to close or extend debate, table or send to committee.
  - b. 50% + 1: Meeting-specific process motions not already specified.
  - c. Minority reports are accepted as official Green documents on 33% vote of the Greens National Committee.
- Abstentions shall not be counted in the relative percentages of those voting for and against.

#### 4. Agenda

- a. A call for agenda proposals shall be published on the Greens website at least two weeks before the Greens National Committee meets.
- b. The proposed agenda shall be developed by the Coordinating Committee or appropriate body designated by the Greens National Committee.
- c. All agenda proposals shall be circulated to Green Locals and published on the Greens website no less than one week prior to the GNC meeting.
- d. Prior to the Greens National Committee meeting, the appropriate body designated by the Greens National Committee shall have final approval over the proposed agenda, and shall meet, if necessary, immediately before the opening of the Greens National Committee to do so.
- e. The first order of business for the Greens National Committee shall be the proposed agenda. Agenda amendments, including the addition of timely submissions not approved for the proposed agenda, shall require 50%+1 to pass.
- f. New proposals (from the floor) can be added to the agenda upon 66 2/3% agreement.
- g. The agenda as a whole requires 66 2/3% approval.
- h. Uncorrected Greens National Committee minutes shall be distributed to GNC members for review and correction as soon as possible after the GNC meeting. The next GNC meeting will ratify and distribute the minutes.

#### E. GREEN JUSTICE CAUCUSES

- 1. The Greens shall encourage and give organizational support to a People of Color Caucus, Women's Caucus, Lesbian/Bisexual/Gay/Transgender Caucus, Youth Caucus, Victims of the Criminal Justice System Caucus, and People with Disabilities Caucus.
- 2. Greens shall be invited to participate in appropriate caucuses and may enroll by notifying the Greens' Clearinghouse.
- 3. Each Caucus is entitled to representation on the Greens National Committee on the same basis as the other constituencies.

#### VI. AMENDMENTS

These Green Bylaws may be amended only by the approval of written draft amendment by 66 2/3% support of the delegates to the Green Congress.