

Appeal for Intervention in the Conduct of the GPCO Steering Committee



By:

The Caucus to Restore Green Values to the Green Party of Colorado

June 13, 2017

List of Complaints

The members of the Caucus to Restore Green Values to the Green Party of Colorado and other co-signers request intervention by the National Committee of the Green Party of the United States (GPUS) to remedy situations that have arisen as a result of actions by Andrea Mérida Cuéllar, a current co-chair of the Green Party of Colorado (GPCO).

Ms. Merida has

- approved of a **conspiracy to rig the election** of officers including Ms. Merida at the upcoming GPCO state meeting, consisting of an elaborate scheme to pack the GPCO annual meeting with temporary Greens combined with a change in bylaws to require 90 day pre-registration with only 2 weeks for others to recruit candidates; in violation of social values *honesty, fair play*
- **advocated violence** as a method of dealing with opposing viewpoints; this is a violation of the Green Party key value of “*Non-Violence*”
- appointed herself to **fill every GPCO position** that has recently fallen vacant while ignoring volunteers for those positions; in violation of KV *decentralization* which calls for restructuring of social, political and economic institutions away from a system controlled by and mostly benefiting the powerful few; in violation of KV *grassroots democracy* which call on us to- improve public participation in every aspect of government and, expand the process of participatory democracy; in violation of Colorado Policies and Guidelines 3.7
- **removed her co-chair** under questionable circumstances using false pretenses; in violation of Green Party of Colorado Bylaw 5.9
- **violated state bylaws**, state council procedures, and guidelines; in violation of social values *ethics, rule of law*
- delayed, edited, and **obstructed proposals** that were contrary to her wishes; in violation of KV *grassroots democracy* which calls on us to- improve public participation in every aspect of government and, expand the process of participatory democracy; in violation of KV *decentralization* which calls for- restructuring of social, political and economic institutions away from a system controlled by and mostly benefiting the powerful few; in violation of Colorado Policies and Guideline 3.5.3; in violation of social values *fair play, no abuse of power*
- **antagonized Green candidates** running for state and federal offices; in violation of the political goal of *building the party*
- **contributed to a deep schism** within the GPCO; in violation of the political goal of *building the party*
- failed to support and actively rejected and **opposed admission of supporters of Senator Bernie Sanders** who were moving or attempting to move to the Green Party; in violation of KV *personal and global responsibility which calls for us to join with people and organizations around the world to foster peace, economic*

justice, and the health of the planet; in violation of KV *grassroots democracy* which calls for us to- improve public participation in every aspect of government, and expand the process of participatory democracy

- made irresponsible, unsupportable **accusations of sexism, racism, and white supremacy** within the GPCO; this is a violation of the Green Party key values of *Social Justice and Equal Opportunity*; and *Feminism and Gender Equity* which calls for –cooperative ways of interacting; in violation of KV *respect for diversity* which calls for development of respectful relationships
- made **unorthodox interpretations of rules** to suppress dissent and to benefit her own agenda; in violation of social values *honesty, fair play, no abuse of power*
- **ghostwritten proposals** that were later presented as grassroots proposals made by local chapters; in violation of KV *decentralization* which says- decision-making should, as much as possible, remain at the individual and local level
- **posted comments** suggesting that people of color and the working class are the **only true believers** in progressive politics; this is a violation of the Green Party key value of *Grassroots Democracy*; in violation of KV *social justice and equal opportunity* which call on us to- consciously confront in ourselves, our organizations, and society at large, any discrimination by race, class, gender, sexual orientation, age
- elevated values of **social justice and feminism** above other party values in the bylaws of two local chapters and **twisted** them into “anti-racism” and “anti-white (male) supremacy”; this is a violation of the Green Party key values of *Grassroots Democracy*, and *Feminism and Gender Equity* which says- “We recognize that the processes for determining our decisions and actions are just as important as achieving the outcomes we want”, and “Social Justice and Equal Opportunity”
- **dismissed the March for Science** on Earth Day 2017 as not worth the trouble of participating; this is a violation of the Green Party key values of *Grassroots Democracy* and *Ecological Wisdom*; *personal and global responsibility*; *future focus and sustainability*; what does the “Green” in Green Party stand for if not for ecology and environmentalism?

Case For Intervention

Andrea Merida was elected co-chair of the Green Party of Colorado (GPCO) at the 2015 state meeting in late August, and she is a national co-chair on the GPUS Steering Committee. Since being elected co-chair of the GPCO she has formed four new local chapters -- Adams County, Platte Valley, Longmont, and Mesa County. Interestingly and disturbingly these chapters have demonstrated that they consistently, and thus far without exception, support any and all of Ms. Merida's agenda and state council proposals. This can also be said of the Denver chapter of which she was co-chair for several years, and she has also chased away opposition and nurtured allies in other locals, namely Poudre Valley (which she reactivated via a process forbidden under the state bylaws, (see Supplemental Evidence pg. 32) and Pikes Peak, which also typically vote with her with few exceptions. On the surface this might seem to be commendable, but in reality she has created a faction of locals that are helping her to achieve an agenda that is contrary to Green values and is operating outside of the guidelines of the bylaws and state council process of the GPCO.

Many members of Ms. Merida's faction have been hostile and combative to the other longer-established locals and their members. After an extremely divisive state council proposal to remove GPCO co-chair Bill Bartlett, initiated by members of her "faction" and perhaps by Andrea herself, members of Ms. Merida's faction have routinely accused the members of these other locals of being sexist, racist, and white supremacist as a weapon against anyone who disagrees with Ms. Merida's agenda. This has served to create deep division in the GPCO and has created two opposing factions that are at odds on virtually every issue. Ms. Merida has systematically violated state council procedure and state bylaws to neutralize dissent and has effectively prevented the long-established chapters from having any meaningful participation in state council process. As her agenda becomes more apparent, it is concerning that it might eventually include removing local chapters and members that represent a challenge to her take-over and dominance of the GPCO.

Ms. Merida rejected supporters of Bernie Sanders

Ms. Merida has demonstrated repeatedly that part of her agenda is to reject former Bernie Sanders supporters. Though she has claimed (correctly) that the new locals she has fostered contain several former Berners, many have contacted GPCO members to complain that when they approached Ms. Merida about getting involved with the Green Party they were met inexplicably with hostility. [REDACTED], a former Bernie Sanders supporter who was trying to become active locally in the Jill Stein campaign, wrote an open letter to Colorado Greens regarding this (see Evidence pg. 140). She complained of receiving no support or campaign materials from the GPCO and she was shocked by the response she received from Ms. Merida. Here is a quote from her letter.

"I am very concerned because the Co-Chair of the Green Party, Andrea Mérida Cuéllar has been posting extremely insulting and inflammatory rhetoric regarding Bernie supporters who chose to move to the Green Party. When my daughter

asked for clarification, Andrea and her friends flamed her. Every dissenting opinion has been shot down because Andrea deletes them. She and her friends have spent over 30 hours attacking the integrity and dedication of Bernie supporters."

Her letter also included a quote from Ms. Merida.

*"On Sept. 9, 2016 at 5:53, Andrea Mérida Cuéllar wrote:
I am absolutely convinced that for the most part, the former Sanders supporter is not our target for recruitment into the Green Party. I just tabled at a "progressive" event in Albuquerque for the Green Party of New Mexico, and the people who were still waffling over whether to be a Green were NOT the two groups of working-class Latinas who are fighting neoliberal assaults on the community, with whom I had good, honest conversations.*

"I qualify this by saying there is a difference between voting for Jill and becoming a registered Green Party member (where allowed). There are plenty of good people of good conscience who will be voting for Jill but at the end of the day are going to still "change the Democratic Party from within." All power to them, seriously.

"Our party, however, must be built with the working class, for whom the stakes are higher and the damage from capitalism is imminent. It must be from the frontline communities who are the first to suffer environmental racism, police brutality, poverty and homelessness. For others, being a Green is an academic exercise. For the rest of us, it's life or death.

"Let's be clear about the difference between simply voting for Jill and becoming a Green. There is a difference."

There were many other cases of former Berners being ostracized by Ms. Merida including a former DNC Bernie delegate, woman from Colorado who attended a Greater Boulder Green Party meeting to discuss the issue. The August 3, 2016, Adams-Jeffco Greens meeting was swamped with about 35 Bernie supporters who were quite upset that the "GPCO" had been turning them away and making them feel unwelcome. We did not know at that time who was behind the anti-Bernie pushback, and we got quite an earful during and after the meeting. This when many in the GPCO, including Adams-Jeffco Greens Co-Chair Michael Haughey (against vehement opposition from Co-Chair Larry Dunn, a recently installed Merida ally), were desperately looking for avenues to recruit former Bernie Sanders supporters. Some of her Facebook posts on the subject are on Evidence pgs. 142, 143, 144.

An example of people being chased away from the GPCO by Andrea is contained in this Facebook post (Evidence pg. 54):

“Evan R. Herzoff: That co-chair you mentioned, and a couple of that co-chair's cohorts, are the only reason I've been so reluctant to support the Green Party in recent years.”

Ms. Merida antagonized Green candidates and colleagues on the state council

But Ms. Merida's hostility was not only directed towards former Bernie Sanders supporters. She has also demonstrated a propensity to attack GPCO council members who disagree with her positions. Many members of the GPCO have left the party due to negative interactions with her. One person wrote an open letter to the GPCO stating (see Evidence pg. 145),

“I am not a sexist, I don't appreciate being labelled as a sexist by anyone because I am loud and assertive to anyone that implies that I am lazy or mislabels me. My co-chair doesn't have a job that's why she can spend more time than me, but to say I do nothing, while working two jobs and still spending what free time I can to the party's agenda that is never even discussed at our local meetings is not worth my time. I am done with this party until it grows up and uses science and knowledge for the future forward. So good luck but whoever has control, delete all my information and my posts because for now I am not going to be involved until drastic changes are made at every level and the focus turns back to the PLANET first.”

Arn Menconi, GPCO candidate for U.S. Senate in 2016, posted on Facebook that after the election he would be making a “#GreenExit” (see Evidence pg. 50) due to lack of support from the party and hostility from Ms. Merida. Mr. Menconi posted to his Facebook page on October 2, 2016, (typos in the original)

“The Green Party in Colorado has devolved into a power struggle for nothing while the issues for Coloradans to increase minimum wage, universal healthcare, antifracking measures and candidates like Robert Lee Worthey, Jenice JJ Dove and myself go undressed. I've seen this happen before in politics and we've seen it with Debbie Wasserman Schultz and Hillary. The Colorado Green Party's Co-chair will come after me next through other people who have no clue what is happening.”

Ms. Merida accused her co-chair of threatening assault, triggering a recall

On September 22, 2016, Secretary Sean Friend started agreement seeking on Proposal 005-16: Declaration of Co-chair Vacancy at the height of the 2016 election season. It is not clear how Mr. Friend obtained access on the GPCO Forum to post the proposal – an action that should be done only by the Council Facilitator. On September 27, 2016, Proposal 005-16: Declaration of Co-chair Vacancy (see Evidence pg. 3) was reposted on the GPCO forum by Facilitator Brittany Hoover. The title of the proposal suggested that the position had already been vacated, but the proposal called for the GPCO state council to remove Bill Bartlett from his position as co-chair of the GPCO due to claims of racism and sexism based on discussions on social media. Ms. Merida has pointed out

that neither she nor the Denver Greens sponsored the proposal, but evidence suggesting her collusion in this effort would later emerge. There were also claims that Mr. Bartlett was not fulfilling his obligations to his position of co-chair; however many council members disagreed with this assessment. This recall was conducted without due process, without opportunity for Mr. Bartlett to defend himself against these serious accusations prior to initiation of the recall proposal, and without first making a finding of being "in contempt of the goals of the Green Party of Colorado" as required by the GPCO bylaws (*see Evidence pg. 214*). The charges of sexism and racism were based on Facebook discussions about reverse racism and the issue of whether bigotry towards white people on the part of minority groups could be called racism, and another discussion concerning similar issues regarding whether derogatory remarks towards men could be regarded as sexist on the part of women. While these subjects are complicated and controversial, these philosophical discussions were conducted completely outside of the realm of Green Party business or policy. Some of the evidence presented against Mr. Bartlett was from private Facebook conversations.

The most serious charge presented against Mr. Bartlett was an alleged threat of physical violence against Ms. Merida at the People's Fair in Denver which the Denver Greens tabled. The incident allegedly took place after the event was over while packing up. The only alleged witnesses were Ms. Merida and her domestic partner and Denver Green Jason Justice. Mr. Bartlett has adamantly and repeatedly denied the accusation of physically threatening Ms. Merida and such an action is polar opposite to his character as most of his colleagues would attest to.

The real reason for attempting to recall Mr. Bartlett was his introduction of Proposal 003-16: Endorsement of Amendment 69 ColoradoCare on August 31, 2016, but this was mentioned only briefly in the recall proposal. Ms. Merida, herself, commented on this during voting on Proposal 007-16: Call for election of both state Co Chair positions on October 21, 2016, writing, "I want to call out the elephant in the room, and that's the distress over my personal opinion, which I have shared with many of you, about Amendment 69." (*See Evidence pg. 41*) Ms. Merida's personal opinions, expressed at the June 2015 Denver chapter meeting and published in the Denver chapter's July 2015 newsletter, were clearly ill-informed and factually wrong. For two years Ms. Merida has covered up her misstatements at the June 2015 meeting and refused to publish a correction in the Denver newsletter. (*See Evidence pg. 60, Elephant in the Room #1: ColoradoCare*)

What followed was an extremely divisive exchange on the forum (*see Evidence pg. 3*) and complete distraction from the campaigns of the Green Party candidates running for office at that time (just weeks before the 2016 national election). Several state council members expressed their view in proposal discussion that a special meeting or review of the charges against Mr. Bartlett be convened or that other less severe remedies be employed - all of which were ignored. Even though the votes were at that time insufficient to achieve the 75% needed to remove him from office, Mr. Bartlett stepped down on October 2 in an attempt to stop the infighting, saying, "Let my walking away be

a rallying cry to this council and our Colorado Greens that want to remain focused on issues and candidates rather than murmurs and accusations.”

Allegations of racism and sexism became rampant

After Mr. Bartlett stepped down as co-chair, the Greater Boulder chapter and the Jefferson County Green Party chapter of the GPCO submitted Proposal 007-16 calling for the replacement of both co-chairs with neutral, interim leadership due to the deep division Proposal 005-16 had created in the party. Up to this point, charges of racism and sexism had been leveled against Mr. Bartlett, but during proposal discussion on Proposal 007-16 charges of racism, sexism, and white supremacy were expressed against all of the sponsors of the proposal and anyone who supported it, further deepening the schism between the now obvious factions of the GPCO. It also created a precedent in which the race and sexism cards would be used against anyone who disagreed with Ms. Merida as a tool to stifle dissent. The following are excerpts of posts on Proposal 007-16 (*see Evidence pg. 26*):

Joseph Scardetta - Platte Valley chapter

“As a Xicano, I feel that race is the primary motivation for this proposal.”

Jason Justice - Denver chapter

“This proposal has no merit, no integrity, no truth, not compliant the bylaws or procedure, and is fulfilling a racist and sexist agenda that these so-called white liberals are upholding by failing to hold accountable those who show these behaviors. Whether or not you hold these ideals in your hearts, the outcome is the same.”

Annie Martinez - Arapahoe County chapter

“As a Latinx I find this very disheartening... seeing Andrea as a beacon of what a strong brown woman in leadership could be has been inspiring...till having to witness the utter BS that she is handed over and over again by quite frankly a bunch of whiney white people...”

Joseph Scardetta - Platte Valley chapter

“Andrea's public statements are in line with the 10 Key Values, and are intended to feed the debate among members of our own party. There is nothing contained within them that degrades the wealthy, white-collar, white-skinned, cisgender, heterosexual men and women who are airing concerns about having their privilege checked by this courageous and wise Latina.”

Angela Humphrey - Denver chapter

“This proposal seems to be a case of the white privileged members of this party to take their frustration out on Andrea for the recall and resignation of Bill Bartlett, whose recall I fully supported.”

Art Goodtimes – San Miguel chapter (*see Evidence pg. 46*)

“this brouhaha seems very confusing for chapters far from the front range.”

instead of a forum for voting, this thread appears to be a forum for presenting opposing sides of a rift in the party. and the accusations of racism against those who are in favor of the proposal seems to make it a losing proposition however one votes. so, san miguel greens abstain on this proposal for now."

Ms. Merida appointed herself to fill positions that fell open, ignored volunteers

After Mr. Bartlett's resignation, Ms. Merida would act as sole co-chair for a month and a half. She immediately began a process of power grabbing. Brittany Hoover posted on the GPCO forum on November 18, 2016, that she was resigning from her position as state council facilitator, saying,

"the responsibility of mediating the recent divide within the party has become too much."

On November 19, Harry Hempy from the Greater Boulder Green Party volunteered to fill this position. Ms. Merida subsequently posted that she would assume the duties of interim council facilitator. She did not consult the council or consider Mr. Hempy as a volunteer, a clear violation of the GPCO bylaws 5.8 (*Evidence Group J*) and Procedures and Guidelines 3.7 (*Evidence Group K*). Her first action as facilitator was to remove the post in which she assumed these duties from the forum. There is currently no record of this maneuver other than the lack of a person holding the position of facilitator and all subsequent state council activity being moderated and inappropriately edited and controlled by Ms. Merida. By this time she had also taken over from Mr. Bartlett the unofficial job of GPCO forum moderator and consequently she totally controlled all state council activity and all communication related to council activity. On November 15, 2016, Proposal 008-16 Election of Interim Co-chair was posted on the forum. Three candidates had previously been nominated: Dave Bell, former chair of the Poudre Valley chapter, Arn Menconi, who had run as a GPCO U.S. Senate candidate in the recent general election, and Robert Lee Worthey, who had also run for office for U.S. Congress, Colorado District 6. Mr. Bell has been a staunch ally of Ms. Merida in the past and was the strongest proponent for the removal of Mr. Bartlett as state co-chair. Mr. Bell was elected with full support from the new faction of the GPCO and assumed state co-chair duties on November 24.

On October 4th, 2016, GPCO secretary, Sean Friend posted a topic on the GPCO forum private discussion board "Call for Treasurer Nominations" (*see Evidence pg. 125*) after the resignation of the previous state treasurer, Tom Hall. On the same day Mr. Worthey posted on the board, "Should we place nominations here?" There was a conspicuous lack of response to his post and subsequent lack of discussion also interrupted by the elections and Thanksgiving holiday. On December 1, Judy Harrington posted a request to revive the nomination process publicly on the forum in an effort to identify possible candidates for the office. Also on December 1, Ms. Merida posted, "Once Dave Bell gets back from vacation, he and I will discuss this further. It could very well be that we both assume the duties until officer elections happen in August or so." There was no challenge or further discussion of this blatant and authoritarian violation of GPCO bylaws. The GPCO coup d'état was now complete.

Ms. Merida, already a co-chair of the GPCO, now had assumed or appointed herself to the following additional positions in the Green Party of Colorado:

GPCO Treasurer
GPCO Forum Administrator
GPCO Council Facilitator
GPCO Forum Moderator
GPCO Website owner/editor/webmaster
GPCO Facebook administrator
GPCO Twitter administrator

Ms. Merida blocked an opponent's access to the state forum

Ms. Merida then began a process of neutralizing her opposition in the GPCO through a process of stifling council proposals, editing and removing posts on the forum, and in an authoritarian manner randomly reinterpreting GPCO bylaws in order to declare challenges to her oversight of council process as being "out of order." One example of Ms. Merida's abuse of her newly acquired power of the GPCO was directed at Mr. Hempy, who has been at odds with Ms. Merida on several issues and on state council process. Mr. Hempy is currently co-chair of the Greater Boulder Green Party and was the GPCO candidate for governor of Colorado in 2014. On October 30, 2016, he was unable to access the ColoradoGreenParty.org website. On November 1 he phoned the registered tech support number for ColoradoGreenParty.org and was told the Green Party of Colorado had revoked his right to participate on ColoradoGreenParty.org because he habitually trolled the website. He contested this characterization and on November 3 (*see Evidence pg. 65*) he submitted a state council proposal to initiate due process in regards to his access to the GPCO website. Ms. Merida subsequently reinstated his access to Coloradogreenparty.org and there was neither further discussion nor explanation of why he had been blocked from access to the website until November 23 when Mr. Hempy posted again (*see Evidence pg. 67*). As noted by Mr. Hempy, "My access was revoked by the Administrator of the GPCO Website ColoradoGreenParty.org. According to the GPCO Forum member list and Whois.com the administrator of record is Andrea Merida. If it was not Andrea, that site has been hacked."

Ms. Merida obstructed proposals and issued inconsistent requirements for posting them

Ms. Merida posted that the state annual meeting would be held in the late summer of 2017 because her term as co-chair, described as being a two-year term, entitled her to 24 months in office before new elections could be held. (Her term of office would thus end on 29 August 2017.) Her unilateral indication of an approximate date was a violation of the bylaw (4.1) that the council sets the date of the annual meeting. In December, 2016, Mr. Hempy posted a poll asking about dates and locations for holding the state annual meeting in the spring of 2017 to get an earlier start on recruiting and nominating candidates for the 2018 election cycle. The original proposal (*see Evidence pg. 67*) was for a state meeting between Feb 1 and March 26, 2017 with two towns in the mountains as the options for location.

After receiving admittedly limited feedback, Mr. Hempy then wrote a proposal for a May date in Grand Junction, the Mesa County chapter's location, and on February 9 he attempted to get it posted in the agreement seeking folder by the facilitator, Ms. Merida. There were five co-sponsors, two from the Greater Boulder chapter, one from the Jefferson County chapter, one from the Pikes Peak chapter, and Ms. Harrington, then co-chair of the Poudre Valley chapter. Ms. Merida did not post the proposal, but did post an announcement that same day that the annual meeting would be held in July or August. Mr. Bell, formerly the sole chair of the Poudre Valley chapter and now a state co-chair, e-mailed Ms. Harrington that day to ask if the proposal text was accurate in listing her as a co-sponsor. Although the head of the Mesa County chapter had earlier agreed by e-mail to Mr. Hempy's suggestion that Mesa County host the meeting, Ms. Merida claimed that Mesa County did not support Mr. Hempy's proposal, and the head of the Mesa County chapter later sent another e-mail message saying that he would not support the May date unless Ms. Merida was in agreement with it.

Also on February 9, 2017 Ms. Merida then claimed that the proposal needed to be sponsored by three council members from the same chapter including one officers, as described in Guideline 3.5.3. Andrea's post declared the proposal out of order ([see Evidence pg. 112](#)):

"The proposal is out of order, and as I have instructed the presenters of the proposal, you can resubmit once you meet that threshold."

She objected several days later when the number of co-sponsors increased to twelve, and complained that the proposal did not address satisfactorily the issue of her two-year term. On February 25, Mr. Hempy offered a proposal to address the term length ([see Evidence pg. 113](#)). His proposal would add language to the state bylaws specifying that terms end on the date of the state meeting. Mr. Hempy presented extensive evidence that co-chair terms had always expired on the date of the state meeting in the year their term expired rather than lasting a full two years. On March 2, Ms. Merida finally replied, again complaining that the proposal should be sponsored only by members of a single local chapter (despite many examples to the contrary in the GPCO forum) and adding the restriction (found nowhere in the bylaws or guidelines) that the proposal had to be approved at a chapter meeting of the three chapter members who were sponsoring it. On March 12, 2017, Ms. Merida, interim state council facilitator, finally posted Proposal 002-17-Amend GPCO Bylaws to Clarify Two-Year Term of Office authored by Mr. Hempy ([see Evidence pg. 73](#)), after the sponsor list had been adjusted and the Greater Boulder chapter had passed a resolution to sponsor it. Ms. Merida deleted some crucial content from the proposal before posting it. This is the deleted paragraph:

"4. Background:

Since the co-chair wars in October 2016 Co-chair Andrea Merida has claimed she is entitled to 24 months in office. Andrea is using her position as council facilitator to block all proposals to have the 2017 annual meeting before she gets

her full 24 months in. So now, four months after the 2016 election, GPCO Council is unable to set a date for the meeting because we have not agreed on when our officers' terms expire. All other political parties will have held their annual state meeting by the end of March."

When Mr. Hempy protested the deletion, Ms. Merida said it was deleted on the grounds that it was hyperbole (*see Evidence pg. 53*). There was also a dispute concerning the wording of the bylaw 5.7 which had not been properly updated after a bylaws change in 2015 (*see Evidence pg. 132*). Ms. Merida updated the bylaws while voting was in progress, but refused to allow changes to the proposal that would bring it into conformance with the updated version of the bylaws, thus adding an additional error to the wording of the proposal. Within minutes of being posted, the proposal was blocked and sent to voting by an ally of Ms. Merida's in the Adams County Greens, Larry Dunn, thus cutting off useful discussion. In the voting process there was more confusion concerning the wording of the bylaws. Because of the deleted background of the proposal and the bylaws confusion, the voting process was stifled and a quorum was not achieved effectively killing the proposal. (*See the full proposal at Evidence pg. 78*).

As a minor bit of fallout from the controversy over people agreeing to co-sponsor Mr. Hempy's proposals, at a Poudre Valley chapter meeting Mr. Bell accused then-Poudre Valley co-chair Ms. Harrington of violating the chapter's bylaws by co-sponsoring the proposal, although no bylaw prohibiting her action existed at that time. Mr. Bell soon wrote one and pushed the chapter to pass it (*see Supplemental Evidence pg. 2*).

Ms. Merida dismissed the March for Science on Earth Day 2017 as not worth the trouble

The GPCO was invited to participate in the April 22 March for Science (*see Evidence pg. 166*). On February 23, 2017, GPCO Co-Chair Andrea Merida asked for one or more Council members to volunteer to coordinate GPCO's activities in support of the March for Science (MFS) on Earth Day, April 22, 2017, in Denver. Harry Hempy, Scott Lupo, and Veronique Bellamy volunteered the next day, later joined by Shelia Canfield-Jones and Linda Templin. On March 1, 2017, Ms. Merida confirmed the work of this team and GPCO's commitment to the MFS, writing, "Well, get after it, folks, and let us know the details." The team worked with MFS Denver Outreach Coordinator Kevin Hennegan to make GPCO an official supporter of MFS and to create a Science and Policy table where each political party could station a representative. After consulting with all chapter co-chairs in Colorado, Mr. Hempy and Mr. Haughey were selected to represent the Green Party of Colorado. People from the Green Party, Democratic Party and the Republican Party participated. (Note: The Science and Policy table is referred to as the Meet Your Representative table in the attached documentation.)

Ms. Merida seemed supportive at first, but posted "Even though they invited us, I don't think we should bend over backward to participate in this" on April 4, 2017. Ms. Merida took a very negative position toward GPCO participation with some unintelligible comments about not being a "...*candidate recruitment situation*" and not being "*the*

'droids we're looking for.' (see *Evidence pg. 172*). Without consulting the GPCO MFS Coordination team, Ms. Merida wrote an antagonistic note to Mr. Hennegan calling the MFS a "Demfest" when she learned Greens would be sharing space with the other political parties. Ms. Merida tried to disassociate GPCO from the march by denying use of the GPCO banner in the march, refusing to advance funds for a fundraising project to sell GPCO-MFS tee-shirts, and refusing to post MFS announcements on the GPCO website or GPCO social media. The marchers had to use an old Boulder chapter banner instead. Ms. Merida's actions to kill GPCO's participation in the March for Science seem contrary to the party's green values and to the scientific bent of many of its members. Despite Ms. Merida's attempt to discourage members from participating, Mr. Hempy and other GPCO members represented the GPCO at the Science and Policy table. Two people who stopped by the table expressed an interest in running for office as Greens. This opportunity to promote the Green Party to activists in the scientific community would have been lost if Ms. Merida's attempt to withdraw from the MFS had succeeded. This is especially disturbing because the one cause that is foremost for the Green Party is environmentalism.

Ms. Merida ghost-wrote proposals that were presented as chapter proposals

On April 7, 2017, Proposal 003-17-Registration Requirements For Voting at State Meetings-was posted on the GPCO forum (see *Evidence pg. 86*). The proposal would change the GPCO bylaws to require that to vote at a state meeting an attendee would have to have been registered Green for 90 days prior to the upcoming meeting and 180 days prior for future meetings. Here are the misleading justification and goals contained in the proposal:

"4. Background: Though never specified in the bylaws or Procedures and Guidelines, tradition has held that a person could register Green on site at the state meeting and be eligible to vote at the meeting that day. This proposal brings order to the situation and provides locals with windows of organizing opportunity to reach out to new registered Greens and conduct orientation as they are able.

"Additionally, given the passage of Proposition 108, even with the opt-out clause that parties can choose state assemblies as opposed to primaries for nominations, a lack of clarity around that new law could possibly draw unaffiliated voters to our state nomination conventions. We must ensure the integrity of our Green Party processes, and a minimum of 90 day registration (at first) and later 180 days registration after the 2017 GPCO state meeting, gives local parties a window to reach out to new voters and to provide orientation. The end result would be that our nominations and state party processes would more likely continue to be carried out according to Green values.

"5. Justification/Goals: To maintain the integrity of Green values in our party processes."

This proposal, although presented in the forum as emanating from six local chapters, was written by Ms. Merida and Mr. Bell, and was sent to local chapters for them to pass resolutions sponsoring it, thus making it appear to be a grassroots idea and disguising the true authorship. It was first brought to the attention of the Poudre Valley chapter after 10 p.m. on March 14, with the suggestion that it should be passed at the chapter meeting on March 15. The purpose was described as “to safeguard our party from external takeover attempts and outside pressure by non-Greens.” In the e-mailed version of the proposal, under the Basic Info heading, the “date proposed” in the forum was given as March 17, which tacitly assumed that the Poudre Valley chapter would immediately pass a sponsoring resolution at the chapter meeting on March 15 so the proposal could be posted on the state forum on March 17 (see Supplemental Evidence pg. 54). At the chapter meeting, in response to a comment from Ms. Harrington, Mr. Bell conceded that he and Ms. Merida had written the proposal. Two chapter members, one of whom was Ms. Harrington, objected to the extremely long prior registration restrictions. A vote on sponsoring the proposal was delayed until the next meeting, which delayed the appearance of the proposal on the state forum until early April.

Ms. Merida decided the date and location of the annual meeting, contrary to state bylaw

Following the day that Proposal 003-17 was posted, Proposal 004-17 (see Evidence pg. 98) was posted on the forum (see Evidence pg. 93) which declared the date of the meeting would be August 12th and the location would be in the Denver metro area. Traditionally the state council has extensive discussions on possible meeting dates and there has historically been an effort to hold the meeting in different areas of the state. In fact there had been council discussion favoring the location on the Western Slope possibly hosted by the new chapter in Mesa County. However this proposal conspicuously failed to mention these discussions or offer any alternative dates and came as a shock/surprise to those of us expecting a Grand Junction state meeting.

Ms. Merida was aware of and approved of an effort to rig the election at the state meeting and accusations of white supremacy

The actual motivation behind Proposals 003-17 and 004-17 became apparent when Andrea Merida’s domestic partner and Denver Green Jason Justice made the following Facebook post on April 17th, 2017 (see Evidence pg. 192):

“I’m not a tagger, but this is a call for revolutionary action. And my partner is much to good a person to put me up to this. So...

Comrades. Are you a registered Green? We need your help and solidarity here. There is a faction within the Colorado Green Party, this REVOLUTIONARY party, of white men who spend their time acting as a barrier to our commitment to communities under the boot of capitalism. And just as heinous and counter-revolutionary as these contrarian and privileged white men are, they for sure don’t like an uppity brown woman in the form of my partner Andrea Merida organizing to help POC, veterans, the homeless, the disabled, and the working class. I need to ask a huge favor. Our state meeting is Saturday, August 12th from 9am to 4:30. I am asking you to come support your Comrade, Andrea

Merida, who is the State Co-Chair and up for re-election. Her detractors are men who, on top of lacking any honor and solidarity with the working class, are trying hard to solidify their "right" to not fight for the people, not work to organize, and be contrarian to the ideals of revolution and intersectionality. My ask is this-

1. If you are registered Green, come to the State meeting. This is the right fight, this is the right time. We in Denver are working to get our Comrade Julie Banelos elected to the Denver School Board in an at large position which would strike a blow against the establishment. We are hoping to start working to get the camping ban lifted in Denver. And we are working to establish a weekly anti-war protest in downtown Denver.

2. If you aren't a registered Green-

*Register as a Green today and stay registered until after the State Meeting. Some of my friends are Dems, Independents, and Anarchists. The forces of racism and white supremacy are reluctant to let go of their hold on any movement that may upset their privilege. You don't have to stay a Green (although that would be hip) but it's a tangible place to win against the forces of **white supremacy** and mediocrity. Locally and nationally, the Green Party has embraced the ideas of eco socialism, anti fascism, and anti capitalism. In the words of Che Guevara-*

Above all, always be capable of feeling deeply any injustice committed against anyone, anywhere in the world. This is the most beautiful quality in a revolutionary.

Come for the revolution, stay for the Party!

Here is the kicker, you have to be registered as a Green 90 days before the meeting. That means by at least Friday May 12th. We have made it impossible to do same day registration at the meeting for voting purposes because there have been many attempts to take over Green locals around the country by white folks who aren't down for the struggle. I can't let that happen here in Colorado. So go to the link at the bottom here and register as a Green. The Green Party of Denver, Colorado, and the USA want to be the revolutionary electoral option you want and need us to be. The reason that we are poised to do so on every level is your Comrade and my partner Andrea Merida. Is always there for you. Be there for her. (plus it will be a great opportunity to make some sorry-ass white dudes suck their thumbs)."

Ironically, Mr. Justice's post is an effort to bring about the very thing that Proposal 003-17 was supposed to prevent, that is, non-Green folks turning up to the Green Party convention to vote for something that the longer-term members might not support. Astoundingly, Mr. Justice specifically says it's okay if people don't stay registered Green after achieving the single goal of re-electing Ms. Merida.

The above Facebook post is a testament to the hidden agenda of Ms. Merida and her faction. Proposal 003-17 was sponsored by the Denver chapter and other chapters in this faction and Proposal 004-17 was sponsored by co-chairs Ms. Merida and Mr. Bell

(see Supplemental Evidence pg. 2). Mr. Justice's Facebook post (to his personal Facebook followers, likely many of whom are followers of his and Ms. Merida's band (Gumbo le Funque)) is an obvious attempt to stack the vote at the upcoming state meeting but it also reveals that these proposals were deceptive in nature. The reason for the later meeting date was not solely to allow Ms. Merida to fulfill a full two-year term as she had contended, but also to facilitate the recruitment of voters for her re-election as co-chair and to implement her hidden agenda and take-over of the GPCO. The 90-day registration requirement was not proposed for the fictitious reasons stated in Proposal 003-14 but rather to create an impediment to the grassroots locals to recruiting voters for an alternative candidate for office of co-chair. Choosing the location for the meeting in the Denver metro area was to enable newly-recruited pro-Merida voters to easily attend the meeting. The Facebook post also alludes to collusion between Ms. Merida and her allies in her faction. She ghost-wrote proposal 003-17 and sponsored proposal 004-17 and her domestic partner took on the dirty work behind the scenes. This raises suspicions that this is a tactic -- hiding her involvement in proposals; -- that Ms. Merida has employed before. She has claimed that the proposal to remove Mr. Bartlett was not hers (*see Evidence pg. 59*), however this recent evidence of collusion would suggest that she had been pulling the strings behind this and other proposals all along. Her process of taking over virtually every facet of the GPCO suggests what has become obvious to many Colorado Green Party (GPOC) members - nothing takes place in the party without Ms. Merida's involvement and approval.

The deception inherent in these proposals also raises questions concerning many of her other actions. If she and her allies are capable of this type of deception did they lie about Mr. Bartlett's alleged threat of physical violence at the People's Fair to which she and Jason Justice were the only witnesses? Why wouldn't all of Ms. Merida's actions in her term as co-chair be called into question? And what about questions of future actions? Is there any reason not to believe she would stop at nothing to eliminate any threat to her dominance over the GPCO including removing dissenting individuals or even local chapters that are not in her faction?

Ms. Merida elevated values of social justice and feminism above other Green values During her term as co-chair of the Denver Green Party she initiated a change in the chapter's bylaws as follows:

*"2.2 The Denver Green Party's expression of the 7th and 8th Key Values, as well as of the Third Pillar of the Green Party (Social Justice) causes it to declare that **we are an anti-oppression party, actively dedicated to the work of ending capitalism and dismantling white supremacy and heteropatriarchy**. As such, expressions of sexism, racism, classism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, and other oppressive behaviors are not in keeping with the values of this party.*

*"2.2.1 Further, **the Denver Green Party explicitly rejects the false ideas of reverse racism, misandry, etc., because we understand the role of white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, etc. in the oppression of our comrades of all colors, genders, and sexual orientations. While prejudice may exist against white people, against men, against cisgender people, against straight people (or any other privileged group), this prejudice is not oppression***

because there are no institutional power structures designed to disenfranchise these privileged groups.

*“2.3 The Denver Green Party may use various methods to affect social change, including but not restricted to: campaigning for electoral offices, petitioning for or supporting ballot initiatives, generating public input, community organizing, demonstrations, cross-coalition collaborations, and educational campaigns and outreach. We recognize that in legitimate, legal instances of direct action, violence is typically initiated by the state, **and in keeping with the 5th Key Value (Non-violence), self-defense may be necessary to avert grave injuries or fatalities.**”*

Similar language, copied from the Denver chapter’s bylaws, appeared in the bylaws of the newly-formed Longmont chapter. The last sentence seems to contradict itself. In this context “self-defense” actually seems to imply the legitimacy of violence in some instances.

Ms. Merida and Mr. Bell advocated violence in social media posts

Ms. Merida has also been involved in discussions of employing violence in Facebook posts. On January 23, 2017, Ms. Merida made the following post on Facebook in a conversation about an actual incident that was widely reported of a person being punched while being interviewed on camera (*see Evidence pg. 177*):

“Listen if you can show me a way to put neo-nazis on notice that doesn’t involve cold cocking them one I’m all for it. But as it is, bastards like this guy have non-profit status and parade permits. They are protected by the state.

“And save your liberal preaching about free speech. If you aren’t from a community that has to face the ramifications of free speech, then STFU and let me cold cock bastards like this. Or step up. Put your safety pin to work so I don’t have to.”

This was followed by this post from interim co-chair Mr. Bell:

*“Punching nazis is not only acceptable. It’s required! **Punch them in the face. With a brick!**”*

In conclusion the undersigned members of the GPCO and GPCO state council have serious concerns regarding the future of our party in the hands of these militant radicals. Their rhetoric includes terms like revolutionary party, dismantling white supremacy, the work of ending capitalism, in addition to condoning violence. What is their end game? Is it to transform the Green Party into the political wing of a violent revolution? (*See Sean Friend’s comment, Evidence pg. 136*) Is it to create a more exclusive than inclusive party?

Ms. Merida’s comments that (*see Evidence pg. 15*)

“Our party, however, must be built with the working class, for whom the stakes are higher and the damage from capitalism is imminent. It must be from the frontline communities who are the first to suffer environmental racism, police brutality, poverty and homelessness.

For others, being a Green is an academic exercise. For the rest of us, it's life or death."

And (see Supplemental Evidence pg. 48)

"One of the most frustrating things about dealing with white privilege is this penchant some of you have, of circling the wagons around each other. Unfortunately, you don't get to decide what's racist and what isn't. I do. Other people of color do."

And (see Supplemental Evidence pg. 72)

"I'm trying to grow the Party in a different direction than some of these folks want. It's time for an intersectional, revolutionary party of the working class. I'm not worried about what white liberals want."

And (see Supplemental Evidence pg. 83)

"People who are not intetsectional (sic) are counterrevolutionary."

and Mr. Justice's comment (see Supplemental Evidence pg. 79)

"New white cracker Greens- if you can't be intersectional, GET THE FUCK OUT OF OUR PARTY. We don't have time for your cowardice."

certainly belittles the hard work of many dedicated Greens

The co-signers of this letter represent decades of dedicated party building and activism, and Green candidates who have taken on the enormous challenge of running for public office. We have built a state party and worked to support the ten key values.

Under Ms. Merida's control, the Green Party of Colorado has fallen away from several of the party's key values:

- Grassroots Democracy: GPCO Council, charged with ongoing decision making between annual meetings, is not able to act – except on proposals with which Ms. Merida approves. Her (self-appointed) position as Council Facilitator, together with her practice of censoring Council members' posts, diminishes Council to a rubber stamp.
- Nonviolence: Ms. Merida advocates violence, as in *"STFU and let me cold cock bastards like this"*.
- Decentralization: Ms. Merida has consolidated all state party roles unto herself, with the exception of a state co-chair and secretary whom she seems to control.
- Feminism and Gender Equality: Ms. Merida interprets feminism as being a subject to be discussed by women only (see Evidence pg. 64).

Request for action by the GPUS

We are reaching out to the GPUS national committee because we feel we have no other option. Ms. Merida has demonstrated that she can and will circumvent the

participation of the grassroots locals of the GPCO through the various tactics and maneuvers outlined in this statement. We are asking for intervention in our state party and suspension of the current leadership which has violated our party's bylaws and state council procedure as well as the key value of nonviolence. We also feel that the evidence of Ms. Merida condoning violence makes her unfit for service as a co-chair of the GPUS.

One of the basic principles, and a key value, of the Green Party is Grassroots Democracy. Having nearly all positions filled and controlled by one person is completely antithetic to that principle. Even more egregious is the manner in which those positions have been filled and by which such extreme control has been achieved

We call for:

The expulsion from the Green Party of the current leadership due to the deceptive tactics they have employed in order to take over the GPCO, and also for the invalidation of the prior registration requirement, and the delay of the annual meeting.

Appoint a National Committee sub-committee to oversee restoration of the Green Party of Colorado (GPCO).