

Response and Findings of the Green Party of the U.S. Accreditation Committee to Complaint Filed by Members of the Green Party of Colorado

July 14, 2017

The Green Party of the U.S. Accreditation Committee:

Co-chairs: Holly Hart, Tamar Yager

Members: Cyndi Norwitz, Rita Maniotis, Joy Davis, Kristin Combs, Morgen D'Arc, John Porter, Paul Loney, Jeffrey Sutter

Complainants from the Green Party of Colorado: Judy Harrington, Michael Haughey and Kevin Alumbaugh

Respondents from the Green Party of Colorado to the complaint: Dave Bell and Sean Friend

On June 14, 2017, the Accreditation Committee (AC) of the Green Party of the U.S. (GPUS) received a formal complaint from members of the Green Party of Colorado (GPCO) regarding concerns about various practices by some party members, with the request that the AC consider several options in response, including possible steps to disaffiliate the state party and help them start over to build it anew.

On June 26, 2017, the AC received a copy of a response from GPCO leadership to the complain. (Both the complaint and response had also been sent to the GPUS Steering Committee.)

While the national party does not really have any legal jurisdiction over, or get involved in, internal state party issues, except in extreme cases, the formal complaint required response from the AC. Committee members agreed to respect confidentiality for all parties involved, and to commit to a fair and impartial review of the documentation. Members of the committee held a conference call with the complainants and another with the respondents. Both groups provided further documentation of their statements. Committee members felt that, although the complainants apparently took their complaint directly to the national committee rather than working through an internal grievance process, circumstances were such that it would have been very difficult or unfeasible.

Finding of the Green Party Accreditation Committee in the Complaint against the Green Party of Colorado

While the Green Party Accreditation Committee does not ordinarily become involved in the workings of state parties, we find that the complaint raised against the Colorado Green Party contains serious allegations which, if dismissed, may mean the break up of the state party, and may have repercussions for the national party as well.

The complainants have offered hundreds of pages of evidence to support their allegations of violations of state bylaws and the ten key values. After reviewing the written complaint and the response to the complaint by the state party, we heard from both representatives of the complainants and the

responding party officials. We appreciate the willingness of both parties to discuss particular points of contention in detail with such short notice, nearly on the eve of the national meeting.

The Accreditation Committee makes the following findings and recommendations:

We believe that there has been a break-down of the consensus and democratic processes within the Green Party of Colorado.

We believe that a toxic atmosphere with retaliatory behavior has developed between factions of the Green Party of Colorado through the use of inflammatory language which is further dividing the party and disrupting its activities. This toxic atmosphere is contrary to Green Party values and only serves to escalate discord.

We believe that consolidation of power in the party structure is ultimately counter-productive to the growth and longevity of the party, and tends to attract suspicion whether warranted or not.

At this time, the Accreditation Committee agrees that the evidence presented does not warrant disaffiliation of the Colorado Green Party with the National Green Party. We do however, reserve the right to revisit the issue of accreditation if some of the grievances by the complainants are not met.

We recommend that both parties remember that we are all Greens. We are all on the same team. We may not look the same, express ourselves in the same way, forward Green causes and ideas in the same way, or come from similar life experiences, but we are bound together by our acceptance of the ten key values and a refusal to accept corporate funding. We all spend countless hours of volunteer time in an effort to bring about a new system of government. It is an unbelievably huge task and you should all be commended for the work you do. We sincerely hope that the GPCO will be able to heal this wound and become stronger for working through this conflict to the betterment of all the parties involved as well as future members of the GPCO.

To that end, we make the following recommendations:

- We recommend that the GPCO delegate the administration of the Forum to two members in good standing who would be agreeable to both the complainants and the respondents.
- We recommend a call for new elections that preclude the possibility of top party offices being held by the same person. GPCO's upcoming elections in August may fulfill this recommendation.
- Since members of both parties expressed the willingness to enter into conflict resolution, we recommend that the complainants and the respondents or their representatives use the tools of the national party and work with the Dispute Resolutions Committee to develop a mutually respectful working relationship.

We recommend that one or more outside observers attend the upcoming GPCO Membership Meeting in August, and report back to the Accreditation Committee as to how the use of the state bylaws and ten key values were handled, as well as the level of discourse observed at the meeting

- We strongly urge that GPCO does not make any involuntary changes to the status, roles, or access of current GPCO members until the votes of the August elections.

Accreditation Committee of the Green Party of the United States

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