



# The Georgia Green Party

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Ecological Wisdom • Grassroots Democracy • Social Justice • Peace & Non-Violence  
Decentralization • Community-Based Economics • Feminism • Respect for Diversity  
Personal & Global Responsibility • Future Focus on Sustainability

April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Mr. Dario Hunter:

We write on behalf of the state coordinating committee of the Georgia Green Party, in response to your March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020 letter, “propos(ing an) in-person dialogue between (the Lavender Caucus) and the Georgia Green Party”. You had asked that our state committee consider and take a vote on whether we are willing to engage in such a dialogue. It is rather our practice to seek consensus on business before us, and this letter seeks to reflect the agreement of our state committee in its meeting this past Sunday evening, with respect to the response you have requested.

Apparently the recent action by the Georgia Party’s Bonaire convention to amend our state Platform to endorse the Declaration on Women’s Sex-Based Rights has attracted significant interest among the leadership of the caucus for whom you serve as a Delegate to the Green National Committee.

You yourself, in a video published February 28<sup>th</sup>, only six days after you sat quietly in our Convention as we adopted that platform amendment, “condemn(ed) that resolution”, holding out the option that you and the Lavender Caucus you represent would “pursue dis-accreditation as a party” of our state affiliate. We find that a rather ironic way to begin a conversation purportedly intent on reconciliation. And an interesting position to take for someone who tells us they seek the Presidential nomination of this party. Are there other positions on which you would tolerate no dissent within the ranks of this party?

Our simple statement recently adopted and the basis for this concerted attack on our state party, seeks to support the rights of women and children. It builds on our national party platform’s existing support for the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is adopted in the context of a 45 page state platform which since our 2001 Athens Convention, has recognized the human rights of Georgians regardless of gender-identity. Other business taken up by our 2020 Bonaire convention advocates for the amendment of existing federal and state civil rights statutes to protect people from discrimination based on 'sexual orientation' and 'sex stereotyping' in employment, housing, credit and jury service. Our state Party’s

commitment to human rights for human beings has not changed, and it is a theme we will surely continue to develop in our Platform revision process for years to come.

The hostility expressed to our platform revision by the leadership of the Lavender Caucus and its supporters in the party have included incessant name-calling, the use of sexist slurs (too often associated with violence directed at women); actual threats of violence, all targeting the women who have risen up to defend the actions of the Georgia Party and to deconstruct the misinformation used to slander the position taken by our Bonaire Convention and defame the leaders of our state party. The leadership of the national Party's Lavender Caucus has supported and encouraged those making these threats. Any of these hostile tactics alone would be completely inappropriate coming from folks who we understood had embraced feminism as a key value around which we as a Party organize.

Taken together they belie the assertion of the leadership of the Lavender Caucus that they want dialogue or as you framed it in your phone conversation with one of our officers, *reconciliation* on the issues we have raised with our Platform Amendment. They resemble more closely hooliganism, than a desire to participate in a democratic process. They project an intention to exert power over the internal deliberations of our autonomous state party, accredited since 1999 as a member of the confederation with other autonomous state green parties, which we call the Green Party of the United States.

The private nature of the conversation you have framed, and its stated design to limit participation to a handful of participants seem better designed to brow-beat and re-educate the single spokesperson of the Georgia Green Party your proposal invited to this reconciliation retreat; or at best to engage him in an ad hoc group therapy session to assuage the hurt feelings of Lavender Caucus leadership over our refusal to comply with an ideology we understand as destructive to the rights of women and children.

While we acknowledge the apparently bruised feelings of your caucus' leadership, we fail to understand how we are responsible for that. We do understand that framing this conflict as interpersonal is counter-productive to the work we have to do as a political party. The resolution of this conflict must engage a party-wide conversation on the underlying issues. No invitation-only reconciliation retreat will do the trick.

We view the misogynist attacks being waged against the rights of women and the bodily integrity of children as a political struggle. And we emphatically abhor and condemn the misogyny directed at our party allies who have stepped forward to defend the position Georgia Greens took on these issues.

Many folks, including those far beyond Georgia, have noted that the often heated exchanges in party channels on this subject seem to be driven by the hostility of

people who demonstrate no familiarity with the document we endorsed, and which they dismiss as hateful, bigoted and transphobic. At only 24 pages, the Declaration on Women's Sex-Based Rights is not long and can easily be read in an hour. It was developed by some very brilliant women who have been engaged for decades in the successful struggle to codify in international law, protection for the rights of women.

The Declaration is circulated by the Women's Human Rights Campaign, an international feminist organization which has been doing important work; work we hope Green Parties across the country and around the world will embrace and celebrate and make their own. Domestically the work of Feminist in Struggle as well as the Women's Liberation Front have also done important work in this area and are each worthy of Green support.

Greens throughout the country have signed a petition urging 'Dialogue Not Expulsion'. And Georgia Greens and our allies throughout the national party have sought to engage in such dialogue in official and unofficial party channels. We are willing to educate our sisters and brothers in the Party about the important issues raised by the Declaration and the compelling research which led us to endorse its tenets. Dozens of allies throughout the party have stepped up to help us do so. Georgians are not the only Greens who have been thinking about and researching these issues.

And yet, our efforts have been met only with the hostility enumerated earlier in this letter, with efforts to silence our voices and with actual censorship in the social media channels of this party, including the one operated by the national party's Media Committee, who only last week banned a long time Green, married to a state party chairman.

These efforts to silence, in our presumably feminist political party, the concerns and voices of women are being watched by feminists across the nation and around the world. They have blemished the reputation of this party, and demonstrated its paper thin commitment to feminism, democracy and non-violence.

We sincerely doubt that amending the platform of the Green Party of the United States to "(affirm) the right of all persons to self-determination with regard to gender identity", was understood by most people who voted to support that proposal as supporting compelled speech, or intended to endorse the creation of thought crimes with which to prosecute Greens and others who cling to material reality and biological science. Many of us believe it is completely possible to respect a person's right to self-determination without sacrificing our own commitment to intellectual honesty.

And yet an overly broad interpretation of this phrase in our national party platform (while ignoring many other provisions of our platform which contradict this bizarre interpretation), is now being used by members of our Media Committee to support the silencing of women and others who question gender ideology. Just this past

week it was used to justify the deletion of multiple comments by a state party cochair, because she observed the scientific reality that neither one's feelings, nor hormones nor surgery can change one's chromosomes.

Georgia Greens and the many allies who have surfaced to defend our recent platform amendment insist that in a democratic culture it is everyone's right to be heard without being disparaged, threatened or assaulted with name calling and threats of violence. Our conception of grassroots democracy means that state parties and our individual members must be free to disagree with provisions of the platform. In no other way can it be said that our platform is a living document, subject to development. We reject the idea that the party's position taken in previous election cycles should bind this party, its constituent state parties or its individual members for all future election cycles. And we embrace the challenge of working in successive election cycles to continue to develop our party's platform and to work to make it ever more internally consistent, and an ever more compelling tool to attract members, candidates and inform Greens elected or appointed for public service.

We welcome an opportunity to participate in dialogue on the issues raised by the Platform amendment which has been the subject of this recent controversy. But we would prefer to do so with people who have actually read the language we have adopted, and the document we have endorsed, not just the hyperbole and derogatory misinformation being spread about it. We insist on a fair and across the board application of the rules. We insist that we not be compelled to speak in a vocabulary which fails to convey our understanding of how the world works. When our position is mis-characterized, we will continue to insist on an opportunity to correct the record, and to use the language we feel is necessary to do so accurately. We seek an equitable enforcement of the rules around name calling, that we not be referred to as bigots, hateful, nazis, terfs, cis, transphobic, etc. And we insist that the threats of physical violence and doxing cease immediately; that those responsible for such breaches of decorum be prohibited from engaging in our party's forums.

We are eager to address concerns with the document we have adopted. But such concerns must be explicitly stated. In fact, we invite you to prepare a written critique of the Declaration to which we might respond. Being called hateful bigots or transphobes provides us not a single clue about the substance of the name-caller's concerns.

Obviously, trans-identified individuals must be a part of this conversation. But so too should women and parents and desisters and de-transitioners. To the extent that we address the treatment protocols for gender-dysphoric minors, it will be no less important that we honestly examine the peer-reviewed science on the subject than it is when we discuss the science of climate change. And we must be allowed to follow-the-money, to ask qui bono?, to be suspicious of potentially captured

organizations and the materials they publish. We must hear from those most directly affected, not just those who feel most passionately or those who have the highest ideological investment. We must be free to examine the destructive influence of post-modern queer theory on intellectual rigor and the scientific method. And we must put aside the logical fallacies and engage in an honest debate of the underlying issues.

We would welcome an opportunity to contribute and solicit articles for *Green Horizon* on the subject, if the editors were interested in such. We welcome an opportunity to organize panel discussions for upcoming national meetings to help educate the members of our party on the compelling research being conducted in the area of gender medicine (particularly for dysphoric youth) by the folks who have made important contributions to this field, many of them for decades, including Dr. Heather Brunskell-Evans, Dr. Kenneth Zucker, Dr. James Cantor, Dr. Lisa Littman, Dr. Gail Dines, Dr. Raymond Blanchard. We recommend a workshop with journalist Jennifer Bilek to hear what she has to share about what we know of the money and the agenda driving the sky-rocketing referrals to gender clinics. Another journalist, Jamie Hamilton, might be invited to share with us their research on the IGLYO/Denton document outlining the strategy they pursued in Europe to legalize ‘gender recognition for youth’, while bypassing democratic engagement among Europeans. We would urge that we hear from feminists who have critically examined the Yogyakarta Principles, particularly Sheila Jeffries. And this conversation would not be complete without hearing from a panel of detransitioners who can speak to the horrors of the conversion therapy they were subjected to, too often while still minors.

While we would not question that your offer to mediate a conversation came from a sincere place, your failure to publicly speak up to dissuade the leadership of your caucus from participating in anti-democratic behaviors which have undermined the very dialogue they say they want and your letter proposes we have, has raised for us questions about your suitability to serve effectively in such a role. And your own public statement related to your willingness to “pursue dis-accreditation as a party” certainly disqualifies you as an honest broker in such a discussion, no matter how much you might commit to ‘biting your tongue’, as you mentioned would be necessary in a recent phone conversation.

The focus of the Georgia Green Party must remain on our work for ballot access and in support of building the Congressional campaigns which will serve as a framework for this cycle’s Presidential bid, on which we depend to retain a ballot line for our 2022 statewide slate.

Neither our state party, nor its officers hold any animosity for members of the Lavender Caucus. We do strenuously object to the anti-democratic behavior encouraged by and engaged in by members of your caucus leadership. But we do

not see the need for a ‘reconciliation retreat’, as you framed it in your phone conversation with our state party secretary, or outlined it in your letter.

We may or may not be in the minority among Greens on the issues which give rise to this controversy. If indeed we are, it would not be the first time we have had to stand on principle and against a seeming majority. But we will never know until we have engaged in party-wide education on the issues which gave rise to the Declaration and our Party’s support for it; until we have engaged in a democratic process free of the hostile tactics which your caucus has waged against the mostly women who have stood with us in defense of the Declaration on Women’s Sex-Based Rights. Yet, as the commitment which binds us together as a party is to our values, including to feminism, grassroots democracy, respect for diversity and social justice; and not to some momentary snapshot captured in our platform as our understanding of what those values demand of us in any given election cycle, even if we find ourselves in the minority on this issue after a fully engaged democratic process free of violent intimidation and censorship, our commitment to grassroots democracy tells us that being outvoted on an issue does not require that we abandon our right to struggle around our understanding of feminism within the national party going forward.

A member of our state committee recently wrote: “I do think that there are core philosophical / political questions at the heart of this debate around how we understand sexism, trans identity and gender abolition that can't be gotten away from.” Georgia Greens feel many in our party might benefit from a Feminism 101 refresher course, a reminder that feminism, as bell hooks taught us, is “a movement to end the sexist oppression of women”. We believe it is important to remind ourselves that as feminists, we understand gender as a social construct and a tool for the patriarchal oppression of women; that we see gender not so much as a spectrum but more of a hierarchy which limits the lives of both women and men; that as feminists it is our job to abolish not celebrate gender, which only a few years ago we understood as ‘sex-role stereotypes’. Such an understanding of feminism will liberate both women and men, as a popular author of children’s books recently put it, to “Dress however you please. Call yourself whatever you like. Sleep with any consenting adult who’ll have you. Live your best life in peace and security.”

As Greens, as feminists, here in Georgia we welcome respectful dialogue about how to achieve a vision for our liberation and for a discussion of the concerns which led us to consider and adopt our recent Platform changes at the Bonaire Convention.

For a just and sustainable future,

s/ Denice Traina, CoChair

s/ Kweku Lumumba, CoChair

s/ LeRoy Bartel, Treasurer

s/ Hugh Esco, Secretary