

The Georgia Green Party Nominating Convention Rules & Regulations

*as adopted by consensus, May 4, 1996, and as amended by Council,
4/23/98, 11/24/98, 12/12/98, 5/1/00 and 4/16/01.*

I. Scope and Jurisdiction of this policy

This policy of the Georgia Green Party shall constitute the rules and regulations required by O.C.G.A. 21-2-172(a) governing the holding of conventions for the nomination of candidates for any state, district, or county office. This policy shall also govern a special nominating convention to permit the Party to nominate or endorse a candidate in a special election. Nothing in this policy is intended to limit the Party from holding additional Nominating Conventions in a given calendar year where either a special convention is called to name candidates for a special election or where a previous nominating convention was held prior to April 15th in an election year which convention resolved to hold an additional convention for the purpose of nominating additional candidates or conducting other business requiring a convention. This policy may be referred to as the Nominating Convention Rules.

II. Executive Committee and Officers

For purposes of the requirements of Georgia Election Law and Campaign Disclosure requirements, the Georgia Green Party Coordinating Council shall serve as the state executive committee of the political body; the clerk of the Party shall serve as the Secretary of the political body; the treasurer of the Party shall serve as the treasurer of the political body; and each Co-Convenor to serve as a Co-Chair of the political body. The Secretary and one of the Co-Chairs shall sign a letter to certify the accuracy of the minutes of the Convention and provide a copy of the certified minutes to each nominee to be filed with their notice of candidacy.

III. Meetings of the Executive Committee

The Georgia Green Party Coordinating Council may meet as the state executive committee of the Georgia Green Party as a political body by passage of a motion at any meeting of the Coordinating Council, or upon the call of the convenor designated as chair. The executive committee may establish nominating thresholds for district sizes not accounted for in the table in VI.B below.

IV. Powers of the Georgia Green Party

At any Coordinating Council meeting of the Green Party, the Council may:

- 1) declare an upcoming electoral race open for Green nominations by naming the district, office and, if known, the election date; and
- 2) instruct the executive committee to set a date for a Nominating Convention and to provide for the publication of a Call to the Nominating Convention.

V. Notice for a Nominating Convention

In publishing a Call for a Nominating Convention except in the case of a special election, the Coordinating Council shall publish a notice in a newspaper having a general circulation which covers all districts which have been declared opened for nominations or which might be opened for nomination by the Convention. The Coordinating Council shall choose a Convention date, 150 or more days before the General Election for which the Convention will nominate candidates; except that in the case of a special election, the Convention may be on any date prior to the close of qualifying for the special election. The Coordinating Council shall publish at least ten days in advance an announcement of the Nominating Convention stating the purpose for which the convention has been called. In the case of a special election, the Coordinating Council shall publish at least seven days in advance an announcement of the Nominating Convention to each affiliated or organizing local, and to each member within the jurisdiction contested by the special election.

VI. Caucuses

A. Powers and Responsibilities of a Caucus.

Every affiliated local, county and campus in Georgia may hold a Green Local, County or Campus Caucus meeting on the date of the Nominating Convention, or prior to the Convention. Every County and Campus Caucus may name a gender balanced delegation to the Nominating Convention. In the case of an affiliated local, its annual meeting shall serve as its caucus unless the local, by its own rules or by resolution of its annual meeting provides for another date and location for its caucus. The delegation shall consist of two members plus two additional members for every ten credentialed caucus members; except that a credentialed caucus member may not be counted toward the count authorizing delegates for more than one local, county or campus caucus.

B. Caucus Convenors

A caucus may be convened by: a) any person elected as a convener at the previous caucus or by a subsequent meeting called under the legitimate authority of that previous caucus, or if no such person exists or will convene the caucus, b) by any person named as a convener in a *Petition to Convene an Affiliated Local* granted by the Party's Affiliation Committee, c) any member of the Georgia Green Party who resides within the jurisdiction of the caucus and whose petition to the member of the Coordinating Council designated to Coordinate the Convention. to serve as convener in an unorganized jurisdiction is granted, or d) by the member of the Coordinating Council designated to coordinate the Convention or a member who shall be designated by the Convention Coordinator.

C. Credentialling Caucus Members

The Caucus Convener shall designate a Credentials Committee of two or more people, at least one of whom is a dues paying or in-kind member of the Georgia Green Party or an affiliated local which is organizing in the jurisdiction of the caucus. The Credentials Committee shall issue visible voting cards to all persons who fulfill the credentialling requirements listed below:

1. they sign the roll of credentialled caucus members certifying their commitment to the ten key values and the political principles of the Greens; and
2. they show evidence that they reside in the jurisdiction of the caucus by showing a valid voter registration card, or some other identification indicating a physical address.

D. Caucus Agenda

Each caucus shall take up the following business and such other business as may be included on an agenda adopted or amended by majority vote of credentialed caucus members.

1. Call to order by convener
2. Credentials committee report
3. Caucus select and approve a facilitator and clerk
4. discuss, amend and approve caucus agenda
5. hear reading of titles of proposed platform planks
6. consider whether to call for the opening of a district
7. open nominations for all open seats (including: open publicly elected seats, Caucus delegates to Nominating Convention, Caucus Convener for subsequent year, Coordinating Council nominees, Green nominees for the Delegation on National Green Party Affairs, and other seats declared open in the Call for the Caucus or by amendment of the Call)
8. election by secret ballot tabulated by preference voting
9. consideration of platform proposals
10. consideration of non-platform proposals
11. announcement of vote results
12. announcements
13. adjourn or recess for further work on platform or other named business

VII. Nominating Convention

A. Powers and Responsibilities of Convention

A Nominating Convention organized under these rules shall have all powers provided by O.C.G.A. 21-2-170 relative to nominating candidates for publicly elected office; and the power to open or close any race to Green candidates; and the power to adopt, amend and suspend its rules. Except for a Convention called to nominate candidates for a special election, a Nominating Convention organized under these rules shall have the power to adopt, amend, or repeal a Platform; and the power to elect Coordinating Council members and delegates to represent the views and concerns of its membership in national matters as provided for in the By-laws of the Georgia Green Party, VI. Affiliations, B. Association of State Green Parties.

B. Convention Convenors

A Nominating Convention may be convened by: a) any person elected as a convener at the previous Nominating Convention, or if no such person exists or will convene the caucus, b) the member of the Coordinating Council designated to coordinate the Nominating Convention.

C. Credentialling Convention Delegates

The Convention Convenor shall designate a Credentials Committee of two or more people, at least one of whom is a member of the Georgia Green Party. The Credentials Committee shall issue visible voting cards to all persons who fulfill the credentialling requirements listed below:

1. they sign the roll of credentialled delegates certifying their commitment to the ten key values and the political principles of the Greens; and
2. they show evidence that they reside in the jurisdiction of the Convention by showing a valid voter registration card, or some other identification indicating a physical address in Georgia or show evidence that they are delegates of a Nation removed from Georgia; and
3. they either:
 - (a) present a letter signed by the facilitator and clerk of their Local or Caucus certifying that they have been elected as a member of their Local or Caucus delegation; or
 - (b) in the case of Native Nation delegates, present a letter or resolution from their Tribal Council or Chief; or
 - (c) for any Convention held prior to the Party obtaining statewide ballot access, they present:
 - (1) a nominating petition to qualify the Georgia Green Party to nominate by convention candidates for state-wide public office to be filled at the next General Election, which petition contains a minimum of 30 signatures from their county of residence and which conforms to the requirements of O.C.G.A. 21-2-170(d); and
 - (2) letters signed by each person who signed the circulator's affidavit on the nominating petition, which letter certifies that they circulated the petitions presented to the credentials committee and have designated the bearer of those petitions as a Convention delegate from the county in which the bearer resides and from which the signatures were collected.

D. Apportionment of Vote among Delegates

Delegates to the Convention shall be apportioned to reflect the number of registered voters residing within the jurisdiction they represent.

E. Nominating Convention Agenda

The Nominating Convention shall take up the following business and such other business as may be included on an agenda adopted or amended by majority vote of credentialled Nominating Convention members.

1. Call to order by convenor
2. Credentials committee report
3. Nominating Convention selects and approves a facilitator and clerk
4. discuss, amend and approve Nominating Convention agenda
5. hear reading of proposed platform planks
6. consider petitions or motions to open or close districts for nominations
7. open nominations for all open seats (including: open publicly elected seats, Nominating Convention Convenor for subsequent year, Coordinating Council members, members of the Delegation on National Green Party Affairs, and other seats declared open in the Call for the Nominating Convention) except that a candidate shall not be eligible for nomination who has not complied with the requirements of Article X. of these Rules.
8. election by secret ballot tabulated by preference voting
9. (except for Conventions called to name candidates for special elections) consideration of platform proposals
10. consideration of non-platform proposals
11. announcement of vote results
12. announcements
13. adjourn or recess for further work on platform or other named business.

VIII. Election Rules - - Preference Voting for the Election of the Coordinating Council and Delegates on National Green Affairs

A. Definition and Principles:

1. DEFINITION

"Preference Voting" shall be defined as a voting system which achieves proportional representation by allowing voters to rank candidates for the coordinating council or other bodies in the order of their choice, according to the method describes and by tabulating votes according to the rules provided in this Article.

2. PRINCIPLE

Preference Voting tabulates votes based on the principle that any vote cast which would not otherwise help elect a voter's most preferred candidate(s), shall be used to help elect that voter's next most preferred candidate(s). Thus, if a voter's first choice among the candidates receives more than enough votes to win, the surplus proportion of that vote will be transferred to that voter's second or succeeding (next-highest ranking) choice. Alternatively, if a voter's first choice candidate is eliminated, that vote instead will be cast for the voter's second or succeeding (next-highest ranking) choice.

B. Ballot Specifications and Directions to Voters

Ballots shall be simple and easy to understand. A sample ballot illustrating voting procedures shall be available at the Convention. The Convention ballots shall provide for the secret election of the Coordinating Council, other officers of the Party whose election is provided for by rule and for a Party nominee for each public office for which the Convention chooses to nominate a candidate. On each ballot, in addition to the nominated candidates, "None of the Above" and a blank line to allow for a write-in candidate shall also appear as an option for each office. Directions provided to voters shall conform substantially to the following specifications:

"DIRECTIONS TO VOTERS

"For each body standing for election, vote for a number of candidates up to the number of positions to be filled in your order of choice. Indicate your first choice by marking a "1" next to that candidates name, your second choice by marking a "2", and so on. Do not assign any two candidates the same choice. If you wish, choose only one candidate. Note that ranking additional candidates cannot affect a higher-choice candidate's chance to win."

C. Tabulation of Votes

The Convention shall name an Election Committee of two or more members, who are not standing for election. In accordance with the principles expressed above, ballots shall be counted by the Election Committee according to the following rules:

1. Determination of Victory Threshold

For any given election, the number of votes necessary for a candidate to guarantee an elected position shall be termed the "threshold." The threshold is used to determine transferable surpluses as defined below. The threshold shall be the fewest number of votes that can be obtained only by the winning number of candidates. This threshold is determined by dividing (the number of valid votes cast + 1) by (the number of seats + 1).

2. Rules regarding the transfer of votes:

The following rules regarding vote transfer shall apply to all stages of the tabulation:

(a) Votes acquired by a candidate in excess of the threshold for that election shall be termed their "surplus". A candidate's surplus votes shall be transferred according to the following rule: transfer a portion of each vote determined by dividing the surplus of the candidate by the total number of votes for that candidate to each voter's next choices. Votes cast for candidates who are eliminated (as described below) shall be transferred at their full current value to those voter's next choice(s).

(b) Votes may not be transferred to candidates who have already met the threshold, nor may votes be transferred to candidates who have been eliminated. When a voter's next choice is not eligible for receipt of transferred votes, that vote (or portion of a vote) shall be transferred to the voters's next indicated choice until all choices on that ballot have been exhausted.

(c) If a voter omits or mistakenly designates any choice on his or her ballot, the vote shall be transferred to that voter's next clearly indicated choice.

(d) Any votes cast for eligible write-in candidates or for "none-of-the-above" shall be tabulated in the same manner as those for candidates whose names are printed on the ballots; provided that the voter assigns any such candidate a choice in relation to other candidates appearing on that ballot for that office.

3. Stages in the Tabulation:

(a) Vote counting shall start with a tabulation of first choice votes and with the transfer of a proportion of all surplus votes according to the rules specified above. Transfer of surpluses shall commence with the candidate having the largest surplus and proceed successively to the candidates with the next largest surplus.

(b) If the transfer of surplus votes to voters' next choice candidates creates a new surplus, then a proportion of these votes shall be transferred to those voter's succeeding choices, until all surpluses have been transferred or all declared choices on a ballot have been exhausted.

(c) When all surplus votes have been distributed in this manner, a tally shall be taken. All candidates with less than 0.5% of votes shall be eliminated simultaneously. Votes for these candidates shall be transferred at their current value to the next-choice candidate named on these ballots. If a next-choice candidate already has been elected or defeated, then the ballot goes to the succeeding choice.

(d) Any surpluses created by this transfer shall once again be transferred, and a new tally taken, until all surpluses have been transferred. Then the remaining candidate with the least number of votes shall be eliminated.

(e) This process of transferring surpluses followed by eliminating candidates with the least number of votes shall continue until the number of candidates remaining matches the number of positions to be filled. Votes of the candidate last eliminated shall be transferred, and the election shall be at an end.

4. Determinations in the case of a Tie:

For ties between candidates occurring at any stage in the tabulation, determinations shall be made based on whomever was credited with the most votes at the previous stage of tabulation.

5. Filling a Vacancy:

Any vacancy of an elected Council member shall be filled by recounting the ballots from the Convention which elected that member, by an Election Committee designated by the Coordinating Council, in the manner specified herein, except that the vacating member's name shall be deleted from all ballots. The candidate accruing the most votes in the recount that was not elected to office in the original count shall fill the vacancy. For the purpose of filling Council vacancies, all ballots shall be retained by the clerk for at least two years.

IX. Election Rules - - Instant Runoff Voting in Single Winner Races Including Races to Name Nominees for Public Office

A. Ballot Specifications

Ballots shall be simple and easy to understand. A sample ballot illustrating voting procedures shall be available at the Convention. The Convention ballots shall provide for the secret election of a Party nominee for each public office for which the Convention chooses to nominate a candidate. On each ballot, in addition to the nominated candidates, "None-of-the-Above" and a blank line to allow for a write-in candidate shall also appear as an option for each office.

B. Directions to Voters

Directions provided to voters shall conform substantially to the following specifications:

"Vote for candidates in order of preference. Indicate your first choice by marking the number "1" beside a candidate's name, your second choice by marking the number "2," and so on, for as many choices as you wish. You may choose only one candidate, but ranking additional candidates will not affect your first-choice candidate. Do not mark the same number beside more than one candidate. Do not skip numbers."

C. Ballot Counting

1. Ballots shall be counted by a method known as the instant runoff. The instant runoff tabulates votes based on the principle that any vote cast for a last-place candidate shall be transferred to the next-choice candidate on the ballot until one candidate has a majority of votes. The ballot-count duplicates what would occur if all voters participated in a graduated series of runoff elections.

2. Votes counting shall start with a tabulation of first-choice votes. If a candidate receives a majority of the first-choice votes, then that candidate shall be declared elected. If no candidate receives such a majority, then the candidate with the fewest first choices shall be declared defeated. Ballots cast for this defeated candidate shall be transferred at full value to the next-choice candidate marked on each ballot. Last-place candidates are eliminated and their supporters' ballots transferred to next-choice candidates who are still in the race in a similar manner until a candidate receives a majority of votes that have not been exhausted.

3. If a ballot has no more available choices ranked on it, that ballot shall be declared "exhausted." Ballots skipping a number shall be transferred to that voter's next clearly indicated choice. Ballots with two of the same number shall be declared exhausted when such double numbers are reached.

D. Determinations in the case of a Tie

For ties between candidates occurring at any stage in the tabulation, determinations shall be made based on whomever was credited with the most votes at the previous stage of tabulation.

E. None-of-the-Above

If at any point in the count, "none-of-the-above" has received a majority of the votes cast, the election is considered complete and no Party officer shall certify any candidate as a Party nominee for that public office which was the subject of the election won by "none-of-the-above."

X. Qualifications for Party Nomination

A. No candidate shall be considered for nomination by a Convention of the Georgia Green Party nor shall any candidate be considered for an endorsement by the Coordinating Council or the Nominating Convention of the Georgia Green Party unless they have, twenty or more days before such Nominating Convention, or seven days prior to Council consideration, filed with the Clerk of the Georgia Green Party a letter giving notice of their intention to seek the Nomination or Endorsement of the Georgia Green Party along with a completed Notice and Affidavit of Candidacy (on such forms as may be prescribed from time to time by the Secretary of State), their

responses to the questions provided here and their permission to publish these responses on the web site of the Georgia Green Party. The Convention or the Council may, by majority vote, choose to consider a candidate whose Notice was filed with the Clerk, but not filed in a timely manner. Every such candidate seeking the nomination or endorsement of the Party shall respond in writing to the following questions:

- 1) What five issues do you think are most important and what will you do about them once elected to the post you seek?
- 2) Is there anything in the Platform of the Georgia Green Party with which you disagree? If so, what?
- 3) Most Green Parties use a modified form of consensus decision making process to promote wide participation and encourage consideration of divergent viewpoints. What experience do you have with consensus?
- 4) Over the past few years, have you become more or less inclined to believe that a third party can work here in the USA?
- 5) How can we work together to make the Green Party more effective?

B. The Clerk shall provide for the publication on the Party's web site of each such notice filed consistent with Article X., Section A. of these Rules in the Members-Only section of the Site, or prior to the launch of the Member's-Only section, in the public areas of the web site. The Clerk shall provide for notice by e-mail to each member and to each Affiliated and Organizing Local of the Party that such notices have been filed and published not later than two days after the deadline for the filing of such notices.

C. No motion to nominate or endorse a candidate shall be in order unless that candidate has complied with the requirements of Article X., Section A. of these Rules.

For the purposes of credentialling a delegate at the Convention, the letter required by VII.C.3.(c)(2) shall be in substantially the following form:

" To: The Credentials Committee of the
(year of convention) Nominating Convention of the Georgia Green Party

Date:

By my signature below, I certify that:

- 1) I circulated the attached sheets of the nominating petition (to qualify the Georgia Green Party to nominate by convention candidates for state-wide public office to be filled at the next General Election);
- 2) these petition sheets which bear my notarized signature were circulated in conformity with the requirements of O.C.G.A. 21-2-170(d) and other provisions of the law;
- 3) that I appoint as my delegate to the Georgia Green Party Nominating Convention of (year of convention) the individual named below;
- 4) that I share a commitment to the ten key values and political principles of the Georgia Green Party.

With my signature below, I petition the Credentials Committee and the Nominating Convention to seat _____ a resident of _____ County, Georgia as as a delegate to the Nominating Convention.

Signature of Circulator

Print Name of Circulator"

Address"