



The Georgia Green Party

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Ecological Wisdom • Grassroots Democracy • Social Justice • Peace & Non-Violence
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nader Finds Place on Texas Ballot

Greens Overcomes Restrictive Access Laws

Georgia Greens Mount Growing Campaign in Face of Similar Barriers

On Tuesday, May 30, Green Party members in Texas turned in 74,000 petition signatures -- well beyond the required 37,380 -- to ensure that their slate of candidates including Presidential candidate Ralph Nader have a place on their state ballot. Greens working in 34 states where Nader still has not achieved ballot access see this as a positive indication for their own efforts. With six weeks left before the Georgia petitioning deadline, party leaders expressed hope they too would succeed in their ballot access efforts.

Texas, the state with the earliest deadline in the country for turning in ballot access petitions, also has some of the most notoriously prohibitive ballot access laws. Written by the two major parties, Texas law requires that third parties collect a minimum of 37,380 signatures between March 15 and May 30, none of which can come from anyone who voted in the Texas Primary, nor from anyone who participated in another party's convention (including other third parties), nor from anyone who signed another third party's petition for ballot access.

David Cobb, Secretary of the Green Party of Texas, believes that the success of the Texas petition drive under such adverse conditions is a clear demonstration of the Green Party's strength at the grassroots level: with the exception of around 2,000 signatures, all signatures were gathered by unpaid volunteers working on their own free time. Cobb believes that the two major parties have

lost this level of grassroots support.

"Both the Democrats and Republicans have demonstrated that they're hollow shells that have been stuffed with money," said Cobb. "If you told them that they had to gather this number of signatures, and you forbade them from just writing a big check to hire people to do the work, they would not be able to get on the ballot in Texas." The two major parties, however, are exempt from the ballot access laws that they impose on start-up political parties.

The Reform Party did not get on the ballot in Texas. Republican-turned-Reform candidate Pat Buchanan hired paid staff to get him on the ballot as an independent, a move which he saw as "insurance" against the potential failure of Texas Reform Party organizers to get their party on the ballot, according to the Houston Chronicle. In Georgia too, the Buchanan campaign has hired professional circulators and ignored the local Reform Party.

"We're very pleased with what we've accomplished here," said Cobb, "It is our hope that our performance provides a real impetus to Green Party petition drives across the country. Greens did this -- it was our efforts at the grassroots level that brought about all these signatures, and I am confident that Greens in the rest of the country can do it too."

Here in Georgia, the Greens face a Tuesday, July 11th, 2000, 12:00 noon petition filing deadline. If the early success of the Greens in Texas is any indication, Georgia Greens should have little trouble getting Ralph Nader and their candidates for local office on the ballot. Ralph Nader has been third in the polls for over 2 months now, despite the fact that most Americans are still unaware that he is a candidate.

"We have new people contacting us every day by phone, mail, email and through both the state party website and the votenader.com web site," said Hugh Esco, who is coordinating the Georgia effort. "Already we've got petitions out to about 120 people around the state in 31 different counties. And we're starting to hire some full time circulators to supplement our volunteer crews. We've got a lot of work ahead of us. But I'm confident that the passion people express when they call us will put us over the top."

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