



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

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Georgia Green Party Launches **300 for 300 Green Action Network** *As House Leadership Kills Voter Choice Act*

“We’re inviting anyone tired of the Bore / Gush melodrama to join the **300 for 300 Green Action Network** and help us offer Georgia’s Electorate a Green Party candidate for President this November,” said Kerrie Dickson, Development Director of the Georgia Green Party. “The corporate parties have shown once again that they will go to any length to restrict their private club to a member’s only affair. But our **300 for 300 Network** will put the Party on the ballot anyway and help us elect local candidates across Georgia.”

On the morning of the Presidential Preference Primary, the House Rules Committee killed HB-672, the Voter Choice Act. And the Secretary of State’s Press Office predicts that 2.2 million registered voters in Georgia will sit out this election.

The Georgia Green Party is one of six independent political parties who along with some non-partisan groups make up the Voter Choice Coalition, organized in support of HB-672. The Voter Choice Act was endorsed by the League of Women Voters. The bill would encourage voter participation by making it easier to obtain ballot access for an emerging party or an independent candidate.

“We want to thank the 91 Legislators who told us they would vote for our bill and the thousands of people from across the state who invested their own time, money and energy for the passage of the Voter Choice Act,” said Hugh Esco, chair of the Voter Choice Coalition and a past

Green Party candidate for Lieutenant Governor of Georgia. “We want it known that we went to the Leadership and asked for their cooperation. Instead, they set aside bi-partisan bickering and united to prevent their own members from voting to allow Georgia’s voters to have more choices on the ballots.”

With the defeat of HB-672, the Georgia Green Party has to collect 39,113 valid signatures to place its Presidential candidate on the ballot this November. Had the bill passed, they would only have needed 15,000 signatures and would be eligible in future elections to contest local races without another petition. Under existing law, Georgia’s rules for contesting local races are the hardest in the nation. In fact, since the Democrats adopted the 5% rule in 1943, no Congressional candidate has achieved ballot access except by seeking the nomination of the Democratic or Republican Parties.

“Apparently the voters of this state are not to be trusted with voting for the candidates of our choice,” said Esco. “These legislators think a ballot is to control who we vote for. The more honest will even admit they are comfortable with their name being the only one on the ballot. But we intend to restore the ballot to its true purpose -- facilitating the wishes of voters.”

The House Rules Committee defeated on a voice vote a motion to include HB-672, the Voter Choice Act, on the House Rules Calendar. Representative Anne Mueller of Savannah objected, forcing a vote on the bill’s inclusion. The Calendar set this morning is the last this legislative session to include House bills. Under the rules of the House, this committee sets the agenda, called the Calendar, of bills scheduled for debate and a vote on the Floor of the House.

“Speaker Murphy told us if we got it off of the table that he would put it to an immediate vote. When we did, he sent it back to a hostile Rules Committee consisting of the Duopoly’s Leadership, where it was known we had few allies. Larry Walker and Bob Irvin at first agreed to meet with us on a compromise, but refused to negotiate when we got to the table. Their Lieutenants smeared our bill with misinformation,” said Esco. “I had expected more integrity from the Leadership of the House.”

Green Party activists will gather in Americus Georgia on Saturday, March 18th to name their delegates to the Denver Convention which will name the Party’s nominee. Already campaigns for Stephen Gaskin and Ralph Nader have been active in Georgia. Joel Kovel is also seeking the Party’s nomination and appears with these other candidates on Green Primary ballots in both New York and California today.

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The Secretary of State’s prediction of 38% voter turn-out in the 2000 Presidential Preference Primary is based on the following historical numbers: ’96 -- 19% (uncontested Democratic ballot); ’92 -- 33%; ’88 -- 39% .