

Platform – 2000

of the

Georgia Green Party

As adopted by the
Wrightsville Nominating Convention - June 6th, 1998

and amended by three subsequent Conventions in
Americus - April 17th, 1999
Americus - March 18th, 2000
Brunswick - June 3rd, 2000

Pending Ratification by a phone conference
of the 2000 Coordinating Council
August 1st, 2000

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GGP:CC Proposal #00-2: ____
Offered by Hugh Esco

To provide for the adoption and publication of the Platform - 1999 of the Georgia Green Party.

A Resolution
of the Coordinating Council
of the Georgia Green Party

Whereas, the by-laws of the Georgia Green Party provide that the Annual Convention of the Party may adopt a platform; and

Whereas, the Party held two Nominating Conventions in 2000, in Americus on March 18th, 2000 and then in Brunswick on June 3rd, 2000; and

Whereas, each of these state conventions considered amendments to Platform - 1999 of the Georgia Green Party as that Platform had been ratified by the 1999 Coordinating Council on June 29th, 1999.

Whereas, the minutes of the Americus Convention held March 18th, 2000, published in the *Internal Discussion Bulletin* #00-1: pages 3 through 20, amended and accepted by the Council on May 1st, 2000, document how the delegates considered sixteen proposed changes to the Platform, referred two papers to the next nominating convention, adopted seven as a part of a consent agenda, consented to the author's withdrawal of one paper, while debating, amending and consenting to the adoption of the other six proposed amendments; and

Whereas, the minutes of the Brunswick Convention held June 3rd, 2000, published in the *Internal Discussion Bulletin* #00-2: pages ____ through ____, amended and accepted by the Council on _____, 2000, document how the delegates considered nine proposed changes to the Platform, referred two papers to the next nominating convention and debated, amended and consented to the adoption of the other seven proposed amendments; and

Whereas, the 1999 Platform was revised by compiling it with the amendments passed by the each of the 2000 State Conventions of the Georgia Green Party, and this compilation was accomplished by Hugh Esco, in his capacity as clerk of the Party, and published in the Party's *Internal Discussion Bulletin* #00-2: __ through __; and

Whereas, the clerk has compiled and the Council has adopted an amendment to the compiled Platform, as published in the *Internal Discussion Bulletin* #00-2: __, correcting stylistic, punctuation and spelling errors as enumerated in that amendment.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Coordinating Council, ratifies IDB#00-2: __ through __ as corrected by the stylistic amendments, as the 2000 Platform of the Georgia Green Party.

RESOLVED, that the Web Clerk and web Team are directed to publish this platform on the web site of the Georgia Green Party.

RESOLVED, that the Quick Decision Council is authorized to provide for the publication to our members and to the public of *Platform - 2000 of the Georgia Green Party* on the web and at a price not to exceed \$5.00 for a bound complete text copy or by excerpt in brochures, press releases, tabloids, flyers and other suitable means of sharing the Party's positions on important issues with the general public and the media.

RESOLVED, that the members of the Coordinating Council are authorized and encouraged to speak and write publicly on behalf of the Party on the issues addressed in this Platform, being careful to distinguish Party policy from personal positions.

RESOLVED, that in publishing the Platform, the Party shall invite interested Georgians to get involved with the Party, to organize affiliated locals to send delegates to the 2001 Convention, to offer their input to expand and refine this Platform and to work with the Party and in their communities for the fulfillment of the Green vision articulated in this document.

RESOLVED, that the Clerk may publish a version of the Platform, line-numbered for reference and discussion, and distribute it as part of a package on local organizing developed in cooperation with the Local Affiliation Committee for not more than \$20.00 as a merchandise item, and for free to organizing or affiliated locals for internal duplication and distribution.

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AGRICULTURE

"Create higher quality foods with lower environmental and community damage"

Modern Industrial Agriculture has been a mixed blessing. While large factory farms are producing more food than ever before, meat and produce products have actually become hazardous for consumers. Toxin levels are increasing, and overall quality of food is decreasing.

Many factory farm techniques exhaust organic nutrients in farm lands, creating the need for higher and higher levels of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. As a result, soils, rivers, and products are being poisoned. Finally, agricultural conglomerates have forced most small farmers out of business, consigning farm labor largely to immigrants who work in hazardous conditions with no benefits, no legal protections, and very little pay.

In all, short-term savings and profits are coming at the expense of substantial long-term damage -- for the consumer, for the environment, and for the farmer. The Green Party of Georgia offers the following reforms as a starting point for the dialogue on Agriculture:

1. Keep Corporate Money Out of Politics.

Policymakers will make better decisions about agriculture if large political donations from agribusiness interests are prohibited. The interests of consumers and community must take precedence over private interests.

2. Support and Develop Ecological, Organic, and Bio-Dynamic Farming Methods.

Vegetables and fruits can be raised without chemicals. They're a lot healthier to eat that way, and they end up tasting better, too. Moreover, natural techniques re-generate the earth, instead of exhausting it. We need to phase out poisons in agriculture, and phase out ecologically destructive practices such as factory farming and mono-cropping; in their place we need to implement organic and bio-dynamic farming techniques. We need to research and teach these techniques and methods in agricultural schools.

3. Support a Moratorium on Genetically Modified Organisms in Agriculture.

We don't need these, and the risks of putting them to use are too enormous. Nature's wisdom in creating the existing divisions between species developed over the course of more than a billion years. It is astonishingly presumptuous for profit-minded corporations and investors to imagine that in a few short decades we can make deep, radical changes in these boundaries without serious repercussions, and it is politically contemptuous to visit these repercussions on everyone without their universal consent.

4. Develop Consumer-Right-to-Know Labeling Laws.

It is unfair that all manner of pesticides, hormones, radiation and genetic engineering are used on food and fiber crops and the results sold without labeling what was used--while organic growers are required to pay for intricate certification procedures in order to prove they are not using any of the above. Political decency requires that all the insecticides, fungicides, herbicides, hormones, radiation and genetic modification used to produce or process food crops be listed on labels when they are sold."

5. *Healthy School Lunches*

Prohibit the use of BGH-treated dairy products, irradiated meats and produce and the products of genetic engineering in the preparation of school lunches. Phase-out over seven years all non organic meats and produce from school lunches. Establish a unit of the Cooperative Extension Agency, Board of Regents to cooperate with the Gorgia Organic Growers Association to assist farmers in the transition from the use of Chemical inputs to operating practices that will allow for Organic Certification."

6. *Support Local Famers*

We will require that government institutional buyers give purchasing preference to products of local Farmers. We would make local purchasing a critereon in the award of government contracts.

7. *Phase Out Factory Animal Farms, and Replace Them with Pasture Farms.*

Most meat animals raised today in America spend their entire lives packed in dark boxes, shoulder to shoulder with other animals, knee- to hip-deep in their own waste. The meat from these animals is unhealthy to eat. The waste from these farms pollutes entire rivers. And the production of the grains used to feed these animals relies heavily on chemical fertilizers and techniques that deplete farmlands (see #2). Carefully managed pasture farms would feed livestock naturally (and less expensively), and sunshine, mobility, and organic diet would vastly improve quality of their meat. Animal wastes would be used to build topsoil of the pastures.

8. *Develop Requirements for Composting Animal Confinement Wastes.*

Presently the concentration, holding and disposal of urine, manure and carcasses in animal confinement operations pollutes our air, surface water and ground water. Composting these materials for use as fertility inputs would transform them from pollutive wastes into valuable assets.

9. *Investigate Alternate Sources of (Pulp) Fiber, Food and Oil.*

We have to use trees for lumber, but we probably don't need them to produce paper pulp. First we should maximize recycled content in all paper (and other) products. Next, alternate sources of fiber such as kenaf, bamboo and hemp (the non-narcotic kind) are faster and cheaper to grow. At the same time, keeping more trees standing cleans more pollution (carbon dioxide) from the atmosphere, and saves more wildlife habitat.

10. *Educate Farmers*

No farmer sets out to destroy the environment and produce unhealthy food -- market forces and current agricultural techniques create these phenomena. We need to teach organic and bio-dynamic farming methods to working farmers, and to young farmers in schools. As the average age of farmers pushes 70, a new emphasis on Urban Farm Schools is necessary and appropriate.

11. *Educate Consumers*

No consumer sets out to buy toxic foods. What we don't know, however, really is hurting us. A Nutrition Awareness Program could educate consumers about health implications and issues surrounding both factory- and organically-grown produce and meat.

12. Encourage Municipal Composting and Recycling of Biological Wastes.

Composting turns these liabilities into assets. Cities need only to be shown how.

AUTO INSURANCE

“If we need to buy it, make the prices fair.”

Auto insurance companies claim that high jury awards and large numbers of fraud cases force them to jack up insurance rates. Yet the past five years have shown record profits for nearly all the major auto insurers.

Legislators have made auto insurance mandatory in the state of Georgia (and nearly every other state). We question the justice of that law. We wonder if a state mandate for auto insurance would have passed in an environment of publicly funded elections. We view this as another example of corporate welfare. But we do maintain that if we are required to purchase insurance, (or anything else for that matter), the sellers of this commodity shouldn't be getting rich off us.

At the same time, rampant medical and legal fraud is becoming increasingly expensive --for the consumer. More often than not, insurers take a why *bother* attitude when prosecuting bogus claims, because they know they can pass the costs directly on to the rest of us. Good drivers are footing the bill for bad drivers, resulting in an annual premium penalty of hundreds of dollars per driver.

To foster auto insurance policies that truly protect the public, the Green Party will:

1. Make Auto Insurance Optional.

While we understand that it can be prudent to carry insurance and do not intend to impair any contracts by lenders which require insurance, we oppose the state laws which prohibit operating an uninsured vehicle. This creates a class barrier to jobs and other necessary travel and serves to criminalize poor people for their poverty.

2. Demand Accountability

Medical and legal fraud could be, and should be, more aggressively prosecuted by insurance companies. Let the insurance companies recover their losses at their own expense through tighter claims review and civil litigation.

3. Mandate Immediate Rate Reduction

Impose a 20% reduction in auto insurance rates. Our program would closely parallel California's Proposition 103. This program's success in California has led to a 1% increase in average premiums since 1988, compared with 32% nationwide. The California proposition mandated a 20% reduction in premiums and is yielding great results. The Greens played a major role in pushing the legislation through in California.

4. End Discrimination

Prohibit rate discrimination based on sex, race, or income under the guise of geographical risk factors. Premium rates should be determined by drivers' personal records and age only.

5. Deny Automatic and Arbitrary Decision-Making

We will eliminate automatic rate increases and provide consumers the right to challenge the cancellation of their insurance policies.

6. Reject Caps on Awards

Insurance companies have no right to penalize us for exercising our rights in court. We will maintain our right to pursue tort claims for pain and suffering, with no limitations imposed other than the good conscience of an impartial jury.

7. Require Legislator Integrity

Legislators with direct ties to the insurance industry -- clear conflicts of interest -- should not be allowed to write legislation for the industry.

8. Create the Office of Public Advocate

The office of a full-time administrator should be created to act on the taxpayer's and consumer's behalf, not the insurance companies'. This Public Advocate would monitor the insurance companies' profits and methods of rate determination, and challenge all rate increases.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

"Create a criminal justice system that protects our communities, our tax revenues, the rights of the accused and the wages and working conditions of Georgia workers."

Currently the state of Georgia is incarcerating an ever increasing number of its citizens at great cost in both the tax money needed to operate the Prison system and in the human potential being wasted. Georgia has abandoned any intention to rehabilitate its inmates -- most of whom will one day return to our communities. The get-tough-on-crime policies of the status quo is making our communities less safe and promises to bankrupt the state's coffers and human potential.

Meanwhile critical threats to the safety of our communities are practically ignored by the criminal justice system. Our state lacks both the commitment and the infrastructure to address the ecological crimes of corporations and the very real and ever present threat of violence in our homes.

Corporate boards and officers make decisions every day that result in the introduction of poisons to the air and water which we all share as our common heritage. These same acts committed by individuals would be considered and prosecuted as criminal. Corporations hide behind immunity and poison our communities and food supplies, killing our neighbors with impunity.

Half or more of the women and children of Georgia suffer physical abuse in their own homes. Assaults that would be considered criminal if they happened on the streets are shrouded and protected in a cloak of familial secrecy. Creating justice for women and children can not be done with police and the courts, alone. But these institutions must play their role. We also need to recreate a culture where this sort of violence is not tolerated and where parents and spouses are supported in finding non-violent ways of resolving conflicts.

Georgia has become the focus of International attention for the human rights abuses that go on in the state's prison and juvenile detention centers every day.

1. Create a Restorative Justice System

Create a justice system that focuses on police accountability, public safety, rehabilitation and re-integration into the community and court and judicial accountability (which includes: speedy trial, the rights of the accused, the rights of prisoner, the rights of ex-offenders and the rights of victims). The criminal justice system must be equally fair and accessible to all people, regardless of wealth. To that end, every person accused of a crime should be offered competent, adequately funded legal counsel at all stages of the proceedings.

2. Non-Violent Juvenile Offender Sentencing Reform

No youth accused or convicted of a non-violent crime shall be incarcerated. Communities, courts, local and state government should fund alternatives to incarceration and the elements of a restorative justice system.

3. Declare Peace in the War on Drugs

Police officers do and sell drugs from confiscation rooms. The DEA and CIA make millions on drug laundering, sales and use. Corruption exists in all levels of drug enforcement. The Drug War is a waste of money and a counterproductive policy. In the interest of ending corruption in law enforcement, saving tax dollars and maintaining non-violent offenders as contributing members of our communities, we urge that the state offer treatment for addictions instead of a war on drugs. Replace a criminal justice response to substance abuse with treatment and addiction counseling. Focus on shifting resources away from the prosecution of victimless crimes. We advocate that simple misdemeanor possession of marijuana be dealt with with minimal fines and that we stop incarcerating our citizens for this offense or using this, unsupported by other evidence, as a basis for a finding of deprivation. We advocate the repeal of all mandatory minimum sentences for simple drug possession. We will correct the sentencing disparities between crack and powder cocaine that have resulted in the disproportionate incarceration of African-Americans in Georgia and across the country. We will extend amnesty to any offender who was previously sentenced in a manner inconsistent with these sentencing parameters.

4. Protect the Rights of the Accused.

Fully fund indigent defense and roll back the 1999 increase in jail bonding fees.

5. Rehabilitate Inmates

Reclaim public resources from the prison industry for reinvestment in prevention. Make rehabilitation the purpose of incarceration. Respect for the humanity of all inmates must be the foundation of incarceration. We will redirect public resources from incarceration to fund drug rehabilitation programs available to all regardless of income or offender status.

6. Protect Workers from Slavery

Prohibit private prisons from using inmate labor that would leave Georgians working in unsafe conditions for declining wages in competition with unpaid, inmate slave labor. Amend the XIIIth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution to repeal the exception to the Constitutional prohibition against slavery and involuntary servitude.

7. Prevent Domestic Violence

Increase resources to prevent and respond to domestic violence. Commit funding, resources and personnel to build a coordinated community based response to domestic violence in our homes, that emphasizes the accountability of the perpetrator and the protection of those victimized by abuse. Implement the recommendations of the *Commission on Gender Bias in the Judicial System* in their June 1992 Report to the Supreme Court of Georgia. Train police and court personnel to do their part to end domestic violence. We urge Greens and Georgians to challenge the sexist assumptions of our culture which are used to justify family violence.

8. Prosecute Environmental Crime

Increase resources to respond to crimes against ecological integrity. We oppose immunity for corporate officers from liability for criminal acts of their corporations.

9. Prohibit State-Sanctioned Murder

The Death Penalty is barbaric, archaic, and morally reprehensible. Capital punishment is imposed in classist, racist and freakish manner. The death penalty has no place in a world moving into the next millennium.

10. Indict Wayne Garner

We call for the dismissal and indictment of Corrections Commissioner Wayne Garner.

DEMOCRACY

"Create a government of, by and for the people."

Despite the rhetoric of high school civics classes, we don't live in a democracy but in a corporate oligarchy where public policy is made at the behest of and to benefit wealthy business interests. This has cost us more than just democracy and the right to meaningfully participate in the governance of our own communities. It has also cost us access to clean air, water, soil and food. It has cost us the common wealth of mature forests and unpolluted oceans. It has cost us our ability to offer our children a future that serves their best interests.

Incumbents through the reapportionment process have more influence over who wins an election than do voters. Corporate lobbyists and wealthy campaign contributors have more influence over the direction of public policy than do the citizens and tax-payers of Georgia.

1. Eliminate Barriers to Voting

All citizens have the right to participate freely and equally in an electoral system free of onerous barriers to voter registration which protects the principle of one-person/ one-vote.

2. Democratically Finance Elections

We must provide public financing of election campaigns so that a candidate's meaningful access to the electoral system is not determined by money; and where candidate viability is determined by their appeal to the electorate not their appeal to wealthy contributors. Prohibit the use of private money in public elections.

3. Ensure Open Access to the Ballot

Open up ballot access to independent political parties. If the right to vote is to mean anything, a voter's candidate of choice must have access to the ballot and their votes must be counted.

4. Proportional Representation

Georgia's elections laws provide for a system of winner-take-all, majority election rules. The right to govern belongs to the majority. But the right of representation belongs to everyone. As Greens, we advocate the use of proportional representation rules in the counting of ballots. These will allow voters to vote their convictions instead of their fears. We propose that the Electoral College, the Georgia Congressional delegation, the state House and local Councils and Commissions be elected by a system of multi-member proportional representation and that single member races be filled by single transferable voting or preference voting.

5. Provide for Recall, Initiative and Referendum

Provide for a meaningful recall procedure to challenge and hold accountable sitting elected officials. Provide reasonable means to access the ballot for voter initiatives to set policies that elected officials ignore or refuse to enact. Protect the right to referendum.

6. Stop Privatization

Protect democratic control over government services by halting the trend to privatize public functions without community referendum. Ensure that workers providing government services receive a livable wage for their work.

7. Ensure Sunshine in Public Policy

Maximize sunshine and open meetings in all policy making.

8. Expand Democratic Control of our Communities

Expand Democratic Community Control of our communities, land-use, economic development, transportation planning, housing, schools, public safety, utilities and local media.

9. Hold Corporations Accountable

Eliminate corporate influence and interference in the community development decision-making process. Establish and enforce strict regulations that prohibit real estate and banking policies and practices that are hostile to the interests of the community. Establish a Corporate Charter Review Commission to consider challenges to a Corporation's Charter to operate in Georgia. Provide that a Corporate Charter may be revoked on a finding that a preponderance of the evidence shows that the activities of the Corporation willfully or recklessly threatens the health and welfare of the people of Georgia.

ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY

"Create an economy that recognizes the abundance of the planet and the right of all to share in that abundance."

Political democracy without economic democracy is meaningless.

Our economy is organized around a scarcity mentality which protects the profit and greed of an owning class while impoverishing a working class. For too long, public policy has been written by corporations, for corporations, and at the expense of working people and consumers.

Georgia and U.S. taxpayers subsidize corporations when we provide public assistance to support the families of people employed at substandard wages, benefits and working conditions. Georgia leads the country in infant mortality. Hungry children don't learn. Poverty creates hopelessness and disempowerment that leaves people turning to criminal activities to support their families.

1. Honor Economic Human Rights

Honor everyone's right to decent and affordable housing, health care, food, retirement benefits, education and childcare. This is guaranteed by the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and ought to be enforced by the state of Georgia.

2. We recognize that children are entitled to housing, food, healthcare, education, and the care of their parents. We oppose those aspects of Workfare which we feel violate the Constitutional prohibition against *involuntary servitude* and the punitive sanctions created by the 1996 Congressional welfare reform act and the 1997 Georgia Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Act. We commit to restructuring the public welfare program so that children have the benefit of their parent's time and energy; and that respects the autonomy of single parents.

3. Guarantee Livable Wages and the Right to Organize

Guarantee the right to a safe, secure job at a livable wage, with protection of the right to organize, to bargain collectively, to join a union and to strike without fear of retaliation, reprisal or firing. Prohibit companies from busting unions and attacking living standards through the use of scab replacement workers, prison labor, economic blackmail, taking reprisals against whistleblowers or the payment of unlivable wages to their workers.

4. Guarantee a Community's Right to Know

A Community has the right to know about a company's plans for downsizing, closing shop or moving out of the community; the right to know about a company's toxic emissions and workplace conditions; and the right to act to stop a company from pursuing policies and practices that are hostile to the interests of the community.

5. Repeal NAFTA and GATT

We call for the repeal of NAFTA and GATT. We support the Steelworker's Constitutional challenge of NAFTA's ratification process. We acknowledge that the economy is linked on a global scale, but the free trade agenda has created hardship for workers both here (where jobs have been lost) and abroad (where wages are so low that workers cannot support their families). We oppose the power granted to the World Trade Organization by the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs allowing them to overturn laws agreed to in a democratic manner by local communities, state and national governments. Corporate challenges before the WTO of worker

and environmental protection laws as an "unfair restraint of trade" have already overturned US Congressional laws to protect Marine Mammals and protected Nike's use of child labor paid 9¢ an hour for 14 hour days. We're committed to building an economy that is community based, sustainable and just. The Free Trade agenda has created increased dependence for Georgia's workers, on the farms and in the factories. It has accelerated the loss of family farms and increased reliance on chemically addicted factory farming. We are committed to building a Fair Trade Economy with our global neighbors based on respect for the rights of all working people to the economic rights and the environmental rights elaborated in this Platform.

6. Protect the Indigenous Worldview from the Free Trade Agenda

We endorse the Indigenous People's Seattle Declaration adopted on December 1, 1999 on the occasion of the Third Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization in Seattle Washington. We oppose the Agreement on Agriculture which has encouraged export competition and import liberalization destroying ecologically rational and sustainable agricultural practices that have formed the basis for the food security of Indigenous Peoples around the world. We call for the repeal of the provisions of the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights Agreement (TRIPS) which permit the patenting of life forms and have given rise to bio-prospecting projects to colonize indigenous cultural and biogenetic resources. We urge that scientific researchers and corporations be prohibited from appropriating and patenting indigenous seeds, medicinal plants, and related knowledge about these life-forms. The principles of prior informed consent and right of veto by Indigenous Peoples must be respected. We oppose the General Agreement of Services (GATS), with its focus on liberalizing investment rules and privatization of the service sector.

7. Arts Funding

We recognize the importance of public funding for the arts, public access television and radio and public broadcasting. Our ownership of the public airwaves is meaningless unless people have the resources to access those airwaves and set the priorities for programming.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

“Local self-reliance is the key to economic security”

We understand that economic democracy is a human right. We also know it will not be granted to us by the Corporations who benefit from the current economic insecurity. We intend to Re-Create the economy from the community out to foster sustainable practices, humane working conditions and lives of abundance.

As Greens we recommend:

1. Local currencies.

Local governments and non-governmental organizations can create new currencies issued by them to workers and vendors who commit to accept the currency. Local currencies recycle wealth in the community and multiply job creation opportunities. Time Dollars, LETS and Hours systems of local currency encourage livable wages and build a community base for widespread economic security.

2. Broad-based Ownership.

We favor policies including purchasing and contracting preferences that award and encourage companies that share meaningful ownership with their workers and community. This ownership would include participation in both the profits and in shareholder decision-making. We urge state accounts and annuities be invested in business enterprises which foster and create broad-based ownership, an equitable distribution of wealth and income and the principles of economic democracy.

3. Creating Accurate Measures.

We urge state legislation to give preference in state economic development grant making to local governments which participate in programs to measure and report relevant economic data to the public. These measures would include data on human and community needs (especially energy and food) either unmet or filled with imports which could be provided for locally.

4. Public Support for Lifelong Education.

An investment in life long education universally available will reap dividends in a culture of learning for our children and facilitate the ongoing development of the people—who are the most important resource of our economy.

5. Energy self-reliance.

The Public Service Commission can require that new investments by power utilities be made in energy conservation and new renewable generating capacity, especially photo-voltaic and wind. Plugging the leaks in our energy budget saves our money for local spending and local job creation.

6. Zoning for Home-based Businesses.

We urge local governments to amend their zoning codes to encourage mix-used development and home-based businesses.

EDUCATION

"Each and every person can attain whatever educational level they desire in whatever manner they desire regardless of income, race, disability or gender without discrimination."

An education should never be denied to anyone with a thirst for knowledge. For too long education has been a privilege and we want to make it a right financed by public funds.

As Greens, we will:

1. End Tracking

Stop tracking, compartmentalization and ability grouping in schools. These programs with the stated intent of giving each child the attention they need to achieve their own level of educational development have for too long been used to reinforce old racist stereotypes of who is capable of what in an educational environment. Young people are capable of far more than we give them credit for. Schools should transform the limiting myths of racism and sexism, not reinforce them.

2. Tax Money Should Fund Open, Inclusive and Democratic Education

Oppose school vouchers. Public funding must serve public schooling. We cannot simultaneously build an excellent public education system and finance private schools. Public resources must fund schools that provide open, inclusive and democratic access to all students who wish to attend.

3. Protect our young from manipulative recruiting practices.

We are committed to a future without war. We expect our schools to prepare young people for meaningful employment in a peace economy. While some appreciate the role that JROTC programs have played in providing structure, discipline and self-confidence among some students, we oppose these programs militaristic propaganda and their role as recruiting programs for the armed services. We insist that if military recruiters are invited to schools, that others are also invited who can tell the truth about the military and its enlistment promises and offer young people viable alternatives to enlistment. We oppose the practice of public schools using school hours for ASVAB testing and their providing lists of the student body to military recruiters.

4. Community Classrooms

Our community can play a dynamic role in educating young people in practical living skills. We encourage students to get out from behind their desks and to find teachers and mentors among their community as part of an organized volunteer program funded by state and local schools boards. Students can find skills such as gardening, cooking, construction (carpentry, electrical and plumbing), sewing, writing, music, art, auto mechanics, etc. Senior citizens and young people need opportunities to get to know one another again. By sharing on a practical level we can all benefit and gain a greater understanding for each other.

5. Stop Ritalin Abuse

Investigate the high incidence of children being diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder in Georgia's classrooms. A frighteningly high number of students in our schools are taking Ritalin and other pharmaceuticals to help teachers control their behavior. We believe that the real problem has more to do with the school's unrealistic expectations that young children sit still for extended periods of time. Addicting children to drugs as a method of control has got to stop.

6. Schools Can Help Us Unlearn Racism

Teach children the truth in our classrooms. Children deserve to know the true history of labor, religion and politics. History has traditionally been written by the "winners." If we don't go back and re-examine the lies we were taught about those "victories," we'll never be able to peel away the layers of racism which continue to impact our communities still, on the brink of the new millennium.

7. Education Can Reduce Unwanted Pregnancies

Offer accurate, age-appropriate sex education which will 1) teach an understanding of the practical biological processes, 2) teach an appreciation of the responsibilities of parenthood, 3) encourage self-confidence, self-esteem and self-worth among young women and 4) teach men to respect women's choices, take responsibility for preventing unwanted conception, and for raising and supporting any children in order to reduce the need for abortions.

8. Our Youth Need Recreation Opportunities

Expand recreational services for our youth. Renovate existing schools and build new schools as needed.

9. Stop Short-Changing High School Athletes

High Schools must stop valuing athletics over academics. The purpose of the public educational system is to prepare students for their future. Athletics programs serve a role, but should not replace academic preparation. When an Athletic Program leaves the student unprepared for either higher education or employment that can effectively support them and their families, the school has failed both the student and the community.

10. Honest Nutrition Education in Public Schools

Georgians suffer greatly from an inordinate amount of heart disease, strokes and cancer. There is sufficient evidence in the medical community to advise the public that these and other debilitating and fatal diseases are preventable through diet changes as advocated by the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (P.O. Box 6322, Washington, D.C., 20015). Our economy is burdened by disease care costs that are a direct consequence of the meat, egg and dairy diet. Our landscape has been denuded for grazing and our water systems are degraded by fecal pollutants which runoff our farms or are discharged from rendering plants. We urge the State School Board to produce a Food Guide based on the recommendations of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine. We urge that schools promote in a gentle, encouraging fashion as an ideal, a Food Guide recommending four, totally vegetarian food groups, i.e. (1) vegetables, (2) whole grains, (3) fruits and (4) legumes – with other items (e.g. meat, dairy, eggs, sweets, fats) mentioned in a sidebar, but not actually recommended for health.

11. Academic Freedom

We advocate that teachers, like all workers exercise their right to organize on the job site. We support the right of collective bargaining for teachers and other public employees. Teachers like all working people deserve the right to collective bargaining and protections from unreasonable termination. We believe that the quality of our children's education is dependent on protecting the academic freedom of teachers.

12. Student Rights

We will establish independent student advocates in each school to speak on behalf of students, especially in disciplinary cases. We will ensure that students have reasonable due-process protections in school disciplinary actions. We call for the end of mandatory silent lunches for students. We call for the end of dress codes as they are unconstitutional and deny students freedom of expression and individuality.

13. Gateway Testing

Gateway testing is not an accurate means of determining the achievement or intelligence of our children. We oppose proposals to hold back students based on the score of one test or battery of tests. This practice can cause irreparable damage as some children do not test as well as others.

ELECTRIC RE-REGULATION

"Re-regulation of public utilities done in a way that protects consumers and small businesses and promotes the use of clean and safe renewable power sources."

The re-regulation of public utilities, especially of the electric power utilities, is going to happen. Several states have made these changes and others including Georgia are studying these changes. The President of the United States has repeatedly espoused this as one way to reduce our CO2 emissions to meet our commitments to the rest of the world.

It is essential that Georgia re-regulate in a manner that is good for the economy and good for the environment.

1. Demand Side Investments

Use the rate setting and regulatory powers of the Public Service Commission to encourage investment in demand side efficiency and conservation improvements over investments in new generating capacity.

2. Protect (Especially Residential) Ratepayers

Keep discriminatory practices out of electric service so that all consumers are guaranteed access to reliable electric service. Low income and rural communities must be offered programs in support of affordable electric service. Large consumers should not be given lower rates. Ratepayers must be protected from excessive rates during transition to a competitive market and protected from discrimination in rates or services in the long term.

3. Electric Reregulation Must Not Sacrifice the Environment

Public protection from environmental damages caused by power generators and facilities. Pollution from power plants must be reduced. Energy conservation must be increased and cleaner energy supplies must be developed to move our society towards a sustainable existence. All competitors must be required to meet safety standards for workers and for the community. Public oversight for electric utilities must be maintained. Consumers should be given full disclosure of emissions and waste data, compliance with safety laws and all other information necessary to make informed purchasing decisions.

4. Separate Power Distribution from Production

Electric restructuring done in ways that lead to a truly competitive market. It is essential that the power grid and the means of distribution be run by an organization that does not compete in the production of power. The power grid must allow a level playing field for all producers. This means that if the Southern Company's power grid is used, then it must divest itself of all power production for the state of Georgia or sell the grid to a truly independent organization.

5. Protect Ratepayers and Taxpayers from Stranded Costs

Taxpayers and ratepayers should not assume responsibility for losses from bad investments made by utility companies. Utility company stockholders or municipalities are not entitled to recover losses from bad investments from electric consumers or taxpayers.

6. Shut Down Nuclear Power Plants

No nuclear power plants will be allowed in Georgia. No power plants that are inefficient from an environmental point of view will be allowed. Before any new large capacity is provided it must be demonstrated that extensive demand side management has occurred. Investments in consumer efficiency are the most cost effective manner of serving our power needs.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

"Honor the rights of all to clean air, water, soil and food."

Our economy's production processes were developed without sufficient attention to the hazardous side effects they present. Toxic substances are accumulating in the food chain. Our current economy is built on the principles of consumption and waste, not sustainability and conservation of vital natural resources.

The fallout of these corporate choices for toxic technologies fall disproportionately on poor communities and communities of color. While urban dwellers are able to purchase products of convenience, in Georgia, it is primarily poor, African-American and rural communities who pay the health costs of toxic exposure. Workers are the first exposed. But the often short-sighted policies designed to protect work-place safety tend to shift the pollution into the communities, or to down-stream neighbors.

Ultimately we all pay the price since we all share the air and water which cycles throughout the environment.

1. Phase Out Toxic Technologies

Phase out toxic technologies such as nuclear power plants, the automobile, waste incinerators and landfills.

2. Shift Funding to Alternatives to Cars

Shift transportation investment from car-oriented road construction to projects and programs that serve pedestrians, cyclists, public transit users, the elderly and the differently-abled.

3. Prevent Pollution

Shift environmental policy from pollution control (which hasn't worked to protect human health or to conserve non-renewable resources) to pollution prevention - - not producing toxics in the first place. We support the establishment of a Zero-Waste Goal for the State of Georgia. We advocate a comprehensive program of education and other measures aimed at industrial, institutional, office, household and consumers generators of waste to reduce both the toxicity and the quantity of waste they produce. We urge container deposit legislation and other economic incentives and disincentives to promote the re-use of both products and materials. We urge the creation of household, community, municipal and agricultural composting programs to divert clean organics from disposal from household kitchens and yards, from institutional kitchens and from agricultural waste generators to both reduce the load on waste disposal systems and to build soil. We call for segregating industrial discharges from municipal sewage systems in order to protect the usefulness of these wastes for composting and non-food agricultural uses. We support bans of compostable materials from disposal facilities. We urge the development and public funding of programs for segregating and gathering used materials for recycling. We support an

ongoing survey of the waste stream destined for disposal to determine the potential for additional waste and toxic reduction, products re-use, organic composting and materials recycling.

4. Compensate Victims of Pollution

Protect the rights of victims of environmental pollution to receive full compensation for damages and quality health care. Create a Pollution Victim's Compensation Fund to receive dedicated revenue from a Pollution tax on all releases reportable in the Toxic Release Inventory. The Fund is to be divided into separate accounts and disbursed to pay a) the health-care costs of Pollution Victims; b) providing technical assistance to community groups in holding responsible corporations accountable for containing and cleaning up uncontrolled toxic sites; c) funding grants for technical assistance by the Office of Pollution Prevention to be matched by and to assist polluting industries to retool production processes to reduce reportable discharges; and d) for retraining, job placement and worker transition costs associated with displacement created by production process changes motivated by pollution prevention efforts.

5. Protect our Water Resources

We believe that the provision of a secure source for clean, potable water is one of the primary roles of governments. We recognize that many communities in Georgia can no longer offer uncontaminated water to their citizens. We insist that poor people be provided with clean bottled water. We oppose the privatization of public water and waste-water systems. We believe that responsibility for protecting our water resources is the most fundamental role of our governments and recognize this as a public function necessary to the security and the promotion of general welfare of Georgia's citizens. We are deeply concerned with the threats to our water security posed by surface and ground water contamination from agricultural, industrial, sedimentation and non-point run-off sources and by the depletion of the Floridian (and other) aquifers. We advocate that the issuance or renewal of surface or aquifer withdrawal permits for industrial use be conditioned on the existence of water conservation programs and on-site water recycling programs. We would condition the renewal of public withdrawal permits on educational and other programs including the Georgia Friendly Yard and Neighborhood Program to promote the conservation of water, the use of indigenous vegetation, water efficient irrigation and efficiency standards for household, institutional, commercial and industrial water appliances and processes. We urge the prompt separation of septic sewage lines from storm water lines to protect from the accidental discharge of untreated sewage into our streams and rivers. We support the use of sewer tap-on moratoriums in those drainage basins which lack the capacity to safely handle the existing and anticipated load on waste water systems. To insure the protection of ground water resources, we urge counties and municipal governments to provide for special use permits to encourage the experimental use and development of onsite composting toilets in the place of septic tanks. We urge riparian corridor and wetlands protections. We insist that Georgia pursue an environmentally responsible resolution to the Tri-State Water Conflicts.

5. Reduce Greenhouse Gasses

Support the honoring of U.S. commitments to international treaties to reduce green house gasses and other environmental concerns.

6. Population Growth

We oppose policies that work to encourage population growth. We encourage public education that urges individuals to take personal responsibility for the impact on the global resource base of population growth. We oppose policies for coercive sterilization or contraception. We urge sensitivity in these educational efforts to the diversity of cultures on the planet. We encourage policies and education to honor and respect cultural viability/ integrity and personal autonomy both in the U.S. and globally.

7. Make the Switch to Renewable Fuels

Greens advocate the conversion of the economy to truly renewable and clean fuels. Out of sight, out of mind pollution schemes are discouraged including electric power derived from coal burning and nuclear power plants. But we encourage the development of electric cars that derive their power from green energy, in particular, solar, wind and organically grown biomass (ethanol) fuels and power sources. We urge that ethanol be substituted for lead as a no-knock additive.

FOREIGN POLICY

“There is no way to peace, peace is the way.”

We oppose U.S. military adventurism. We are not isolationists. We are committed to both personal and global responsibility. Our government does have a role in international affairs. However, we do not support the federal government assuming responsibility as world policeman. We are wary of the motives of U.S. foreign policy that uses military force to selectively protect human rights for some but not all. We recognize that frequently US foreign and military policy have been driven by corporate interests instead of the country's interests.

As Greens we call for:

1. End Human Rights Violations both here and abroad.

The key to long lasting peace is economic and environmental justice and reparations to those who have suffered. Generations of war and genocide can only be stopped by ending the violence with peaceful negotiations and reparations, not with bombing, sanctions and economic devastation. We do not support the use of depleted uranium in weapons used by the NATO and U.S. military. Poisoning water supplies, the Earth and air leads to more death and mounting health travesties that will be seen in not only this generation, but future generations as well.

2. Forgive International Debt.

Restructure the World Bank and the IMF. We oppose the manner in which the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have been administered to manipulate access to investment capital to attack the rights of working people to safe jobs paying livable wages and air, water and food safe for consumption. We call for an end to the “Structural Adjustment Programs” and forgiveness of international debt. Investments and loans must be targeted to achieve self-sufficiency and ecological sustainability.

3. *Demilitarize the International War on Drugs*

We oppose the expansive new powers granted to the Director of the Office of Drug Control Policy (the Drug Czar) to conduct militaristic foreign policy missions under the cover of drug production intervention. We oppose the massive arms sales being conducted in the name of fighting international drug trafficking.

4. *Democratize the United Nations.*

We urge the United States to lead a movement for UN Charter Reform to eliminate the privileged position of Security Council members and to work to build the UN into a tool for international peace making, reconciliation and environmental protection.

5. *Abolish the CIA, End Covert Operations*

We would abolish the Central Intelligence Agency and those other federal agencies whose primary mission is and has been the conduct of covert military operations. Such activity is a direct threat to the security of democracy. We would reserve to Congress the power to declare war. And prohibit the Executive Branch from using military force without such a declaration.

6. *Create a Peace Force; committed to non-violent strategies.*

We believe that non-violence is the path to peace. While affirming the right of self-defense, we are committed to creating a future without war. The military serves a role we feel can be replaced by the organization and funding at both the national and international level of a Peace Force which utilizes non-violent strategies and tactics to pursue Foreign Policy objectives outlined here.

7. *Halt arms sales to Human Rights Abusers.*

Pass Congresswoman McKinney's bill.

8. *End the War of Economic Sanctions against the people of Iraq.*

The suffering has gone on too long. Thousands of children are dying every week in Iraq from preventable health problems and mal-nourishment as a direct result of the 1991 bombing and sanctions. Clinton ought to be held responsible for the 1998 bombing justified as retaliation for Hussein's refusal to cooperate with an UNSCOM inspection team staffed with U.S. spies. We ask the World Court to rule on the illegality of the use of Depleted Uranium weapons. We call on the U.S. government to commit to gathering and containing the radioactive waste left across the desert by its military actions.

9. *Create a Meaningful and Lasting Peace in the Balkans.*

Develop an effective strategy to create meaningful and lasting peace in the **Balkans**. Such a strategy must be based on an immediate end to the bombing and any other steps being proposed to escalate the violence. We call for the UN to intercede and protect the people of Serbia, Albania and Kosovo from both NATO aggression and from war crimes by Milosevic and others. We urge the OSCE to continue its reconciliation work interrupted by the bombing. We call on Congress to act to achieve these purposes.

10. Stop the War in Chiapas.

We call for an immediate halt to all arms sales (usually funded as drug interdiction activities) to the Mexican government. We recognize the rights of the indigenous Mayan people to autonomy and self-government in their homeland in the Mexican state of Chiapas. We urge the Zedillo administration to withdraw troops from their war in Chiapas and to restore the Constitutional protections afforded indigenous peoples prior to NAFTA's enactment.

11. End the War of Economic Sanctions against the people of Cuba.

End the economic blockade against Cuba. Adopt a policy of reconciliation toward our neighbor to the South. We call for the repeal of the Helms-Burton Act.

FORESTS

"Forests are indispensable to human and animal life and must be protected."

Vast forests once covered most land. They moderate the Earth's climate and provide habitats for myriad species of wildlife. The Earth's remaining forests are a critical resource in that useful products, especially medicines, originate in the forest. Today's global market economy in the hands of multi-national corporations irresponsibly uses and often destroys this valuable and irreplaceable resource.

Chip mill operations in the southeast have proliferated within the past 10 years. Wood chipping is the most unregulated, highly mechanized arm of industrial forestry. In Georgia, forests are being unsustainably harvested in order to feed the state's 20 wood chipping facilities which combined are responsible for approximately 115,000 acres of clear-cuts each year. Clear-cutting degrades water quality and air quality, causes soil erosion and destroys wildlife habitat. The U.S. Forest Service has documented that over-cutting is occurring throughout the Southeast and that softwood removals exceed growth. In Georgia, nearly every county has been over-cut. Hundreds of jobs are exported to foreign paper mills when the chips are exported for foreign processing.

Hardwood chip exports increased by 500% from 1989 to 1995. The port of Mobile, Alabama is now the largest exporter of hardwood chips from the U.S. The southeast is now the largest pulp colony in the world. Hardwood industries such as saw mills and furniture manufacturers are jeopardized by chip mills that are chipping young hardwoods that would make tomorrow's lumber if left to grow. Saw mills and other hardwood users employ more than twice as many people per unit of wood harvested as the pulp wood industry. Only 6-10 people are needed to run a chip mill that can devour more wood in one month than an average-sized saw mill goes through in an entire year.

1. Our Forest Must Be Protected.

We must overhaul Georgia and U.S. Forest Service rules to protect our forests and use them wisely. We must review, reform and restructure all Federal and State land-use policies so that landowners will not be burdened with extra taxes if they choose not to harvest their trees for lumber or pulp, and that forest practices become environmentally sustainable in a manner that will provide a continuing supply of high quality wood products.

2. Support and Develop Sustainable, Conservative Forestry Practices, and Curtail Chip Mill Activity.

An environmental impact study must be conducted on the impacts of the wood chipping industry in Georgia. A moratorium on the permitting of any new chip mills or the expansion of existing chip mills should be placed in effect until the results of this study are determined.

3. Eliminate Commercial Tree Harvesting in the Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests.

These forests are only 1% of trees harvested in Georgia. We must restore them to the great forests they once were. This will be more beneficial to local communities because recreation and tourism provides 40 times more jobs than does the timber industry.

4. Provide Economic Alternatives for Displaced Timber Industry Workers

Once a zero-cut rule is enforced on our public lands, we must redirect federal forest funds to preferentially hiring displaced timber workers to perform forest restoration work. We must ban the export of raw logs and wood chips that cost American jobs.

5. Educate Consumers on Recycling, Renewable Resources, and Sustainability

We should enforce practices that encourage reduction of paper usage since most of our forests are cut to make paper. We should develop comprehensive recycling and require that high content post-consumer waste paper be used for copying and printing, toilet paper, napkins, etc. in all government offices and public schools. We should grow and use hemp, bamboo and kenaf as plentiful and renewable resources for the manufacturing of paper and other forest products. Public policy must maintain, restore and protect wildlife habitats, fisheries, bio-diversity, scenery and recreation. We must accept responsibility for the effect local actions have on the global economy and ecology.

GLOBAL POPULATION

"We must demonstrate our leadership for equity and sustainability."

The exponential growth of the impact of the global human population is arguably among the more serious threats to environmental integrity our planet now faces. We would like to stabilize this impact. But we reject the easy answers. This is a complicated issue with no clear "bad guys."

We reject the short-sighted premise that this is solely about population control. Throwing contraceptives and access to sterilization at this issue won't address the underlying causes of the exponential growth in the human population. People have large families to provide for their security. Creating meaningful security for everyone is the only guarantee we have of our own security. Our first priority is to recreate Georgia's infrastructure and our very culture of consumption.

Immigration is not the cause of declining real wages, growing income disparity, inequality and oppression. The cause is corporate exploitation. The solution is not nativism or protectionism. It's engaging in the sort of consciousness raising that enables us to see how these divisions are exploited to the advantage of a slim minority. The solution is to fight racism, sexism, classism, homophobia and heterosexism in ourselves and our own community. The solution is to join together to fight exploitation (of both people and the environment) on a local level and globally.

The United States does not have an overpopulation problem. The world does. Eliminating immigration would not do a single thing to ease the population burden on this planet. The US does, however, have an over consumption problem. 6% of the world's people live in the United States, but we use 50% of the world's resources and produce ___% of the world's waste. We're all interdependent. As Greens, we will

1. Support Women's Voices

Working for a political voice for women is a prerequisite for women accessing education and family planning services on their own terms. These are the factors which have tracked declining family sizes.

2. Stop the Exploitation of Immigrant Labor

American workers are being pitted by the forces of fear and division against immigrant workers in a race to the bottom. It is time we loosen (if not eliminate) our restrictions on immigration. We must create an environment where workers subject to substandard wages and working conditions are safe from deportation when they organize on their job site or seek the enforcement of basic worker protections. Our failure to protect immigrant workers from exploitation dooms native born workers to declining wages and working conditions. The elimination or severe reduction of legal immigration won't stop illegal immigration. People are going to keep coming to this country as long as we live in a world where wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few and moving to this country is seen as a way to access a piece of that wealth. Slowing or stopping immigration is not a solution to any problem. Reducing inequality is.

3. Minimize income disparity.

Higher standards of living usually correspond with lower birth rates. We endorse the maximum wage bill proposed by United for a Fair Economy, which would cap the deductibility from corporate taxable income of employee or contractor compensation which exceeds twenty-five times the annualized wages or salary of the lowest paid employee or contractor in a firm. It's time we stopped using our tax dollars to subsidize corporate behavior which has led to such great income disparities. No other mechanism is more apt to encourage responsible corporate behavior than creating this economic incentive.

4. Forgive Foreign Debt.

We endorse the Jubilee 2000 Campaign's call for international debt relief. The US must reduce its consumption and help developing nations increase the standard and security of their living.

5. Addressing the Impact of Global Population Growth

We as a nation must address within our borders the inequalities in wealth and income distribution and health care. We must focus on unsustainable consumerism. We can have comfortable lives with out consuming the worlds resources. The U.S. is the primary destroyer of the Earth, we must accept responsibility for this and change our ways. We must clean up our own act first. Having taken these steps ourselves, this nation would be better positioned to engage in the international arena on the impact of global population growth and to help our global neighbors devise non-coercive strategies to address this impact which are respectful of the autonomy of the world's diverse cultures.

6. Sex Education, Family Planning and Infant Mortality

We encourage domestic and international education that urges individuals to take personal responsibility for the impact on the global resource base of population growth. We oppose policies for coercive sterilization or contraception. We urge sensitivity in these educational efforts to the diversity of cultures on the planet. We encourage policies and education to honor and respect cultural viability/ integrity and personal autonomy both in the U.S. and globally. We must reduce infant mortality globally. We must focus on preventative health care. We must help improve the likely hood that newborns will survive into old age themselves. We will restore aid cut off in previous administrations to countries that includes education on abortion in their family planning programs.

HEALTH CARE

Return to us control over our own bodies!

As individuals, it can be said that if we truly possess nothing else, we possess our own physical bodies. Our right to protect the life, death, health, and ultimate welfare of own bodies should be absolute.

Currently, health care resources are distributed overwhelmingly to the upper class, and to the upper middle class. At the other end of the social spectrum, the elderly and the very poor obtain basic relief through Medicare and Medicaid.

In between, the system fails the "working poor" and much of the middle class -- those people who are neither able to afford private health insurance, nor able to pay for health care directly.

The new Governor spent his political capital and honeymoon session enacting an HMO package that offers little relief to the problems faced by both healthcare consumers and practitioners. Further, his bill exempts from the scrutiny of the new insurance advocate the Columbus based AFLAC, a major campaign contributor. The current trend is to restrict choice of both practitioner and modality of care. We oppose the limited window for exercising one's choice for out-of-network practitioners and the 17% monetary penalty for exercising this choice, imposed by Governor Barnes's new laws. We urge the Georgia Assembly to look at existing proven models that will provide universal access to healthcare for less money than the insurance industry charges now, serving only a fraction of the population.

Universal health care coverage needs to be administered by the state for two reasons: first, because access to health care should be considered a right of every American citizen; and second, because health insurance has evolved in a manner that deviates from the traditional insurance actuarial principles. Bending to competition between insurers and corporate pressures to reduce costs, health insurers have resorted to "experience based" "insurance" for small groups. Actuarial science is based on the theory of large numbers. By deviating from these principles, employees of small companies end up unable to afford health insurance and do not get good medical care. This happens to small businesses who tend to hire the "working poor" and lower middle classes. Those who need health care the most - the sick and the dying - are inevitably denied insurance and care.

But because private health insurers treat risk in the same manner as auto insurance companies and homeowner's insurance companies, those who need health care the most -- the sick and the dying

-- are inevitably denied insurance and care. To promote a healthy respect for the living, the sick, and the dying, the Green Party will strive to:

1. *Make Health Coverage and Consumer Choice a Right*

Other great democracies already recognize Universal Health Coverage as a right of citizenship. It is time for America to do the same. We need to support a national single-payer health care system that includes all providers, and assures consumer choice and freedom. The model is simple. The plan pays for basic services, and up to a specified amount. Sums and services beyond those basic levels can be paid for on an elective basis by the patient individually.

2. *Tobacco Settlement Can Fund Universal Care*

Create a Georgia Health Care Corporation to receive the tobacco settlement funds and to use them to provide universal access to health care in a system that includes all providers, and assures consumer choice and freedom, including proven "alternative" and "complementary" health care disciplines and practices, and with emphasis and priority given to health measures and education designed to prevent the need for curative health measures.

3. *Separate Health Care from Employment*

A single-payer system also separates health care from employment status and share risks much more broadly. Employees shouldn't be tied to bad jobs for fear of losing coverage. And employers shouldn't have to worry about hiring employees with existing medical conditions.

4. *Honor Parents Choices About Vaccines*

No consensus exists for the use of vaccines. In fact there exists no definitive studies which demonstrate the efficacy of vaccination as a means of preventing disease. Evidence continues to surface suggesting that vaccinations – intended to produce immunity from disease – are actually contributing to diminished health and increased susceptibility to health problems. Many parents who are committed to healthy diet and wholistic health care are opposed to the use of pharmaceutical vaccinations. We oppose policies which would force these taxpayers to compromise their health care choices in exchange for access to public education for their children.

5. *Shift Emphasis to Prevention*

Preventive health care has made great progress. Preventive health measures and education should be given funding and priority over curative health measures.

6. *Promote Reproductive Health*

Create maternity care that results in healthy mothers, babies, and families. Guarantee access to a full range of reproductive health services in and out of the hospital including prenatal care, delivery and post-partum care, midwifery care. Also provide access to and funding for family planning information, contraceptives for both men and women and as a last resort, abortion.

7. *Fund and Study Alternate Forms of Medicine*

Only 150 years ago, physicians talking about *bacteria* and *germs* were labeled kooks. Today, progressive thinking and research should not be similarly derailed. Alternative health therapies should be carefully researched. Currently illegal drugs, such as marijuana, should be studied to determine potential health benefits. By the same token, legal drugs, such as nicotine and alcohol, whose harmful effects are already known, should be more closely regulated.

8. Fund and Study Alternate Forms of Health Care

Establish evidence-based health care standards in all health care disciplines. Expand health care choices to include proven "alternative" and "complementary" health care disciplines and practices. Affirm and enforce the rights of health care consumers to have complete information about all the choices available regarding all aspects of their health care, and the right to refuse care. Change laws that prevent the use of alternative medical practices. Reduce the monopolistic power of the American Medical Association by subsidizing medical training for increased numbers of physicians

9. Honor Quality of Life over Quantity

Keeping patients alive beyond all reasonable standards of quality of life is both expensive and inhumane. We must stop extreme measures to "prolong" life when dignity and quality of life suffers. We must also provide for humane methods to end life when modern medicine fails.

10. Acknowledge that Resources are Limited

Support increased study in the outcomes of medical procedures. Adopt a plan similar to the plan proposed in Oregon, one in which the allocation of health resources is based on the expected outcome related to the expense. Expensive procedures that only marginally prolong life, or sacrifice quality of life, should not be funded by the single payer system. This should be left to the individual or family as an option for private funding.

11. Acknowledge an Individual's Right to Die with Dignity

Allow for the humane ending of a life under the directive of someone having a durable power of attorney to make medical decisions for someone. We encourage public education on the issues involved with a living will.

HUMAN RIGHTS

"End all discrimination."

We live in a society and an economy built upon the supremacy of wealthy, straight, white men. The privilege afforded people in this hierarchy exists at the expense of the oppression of others. Given the myth of scarcity that has driven the economy, these hierarchies of privilege have served as a means of allocating and distributing the wealth, material resources, and privileges of the culture.

But scarcity is a myth. We live in a world of abundance. And the notion of white male entitlement is silly at the very least. All life is sacred in the eyes of the Creator, by whatever name we may each individually know that Creative Force. The notions of manifest destiny and divine right do not serve the cause of justice. They serve the interests of private profit. They have justified disparate access to education, housing, jobs and wages.

We understand that racism and sexism are not about our personal prejudices. They speak to the deeply ingrained patterns that permeate the institutions of our culture. While we must individually strive to unlearn prejudices on a personal level, as a political party we must strive to transform our society's institutions.

Another myth is that the Civil Rights and Women's Movements have fully accomplished their goals -- that there is now equal access to the material and other benefits of the culture; that the need for affirmative action has been met; that anyone who works hard and perseveres can

succeed.

As Greens, we reject this myth. We know that the work of the Liberation Movement has only begun. We commit ourselves to claiming our role in that movement and speaking out for justice everywhere we see it lacking. Racism, sexism, heterosexism and classism are still prevalent, and their effects are still damaging. Those who are extended its privileges are often blind to its existence. Those who are denied its privileges often internalize the myths of their own inferiority, live invisible lives, and fail to reach their own potential.

We recognize that privacy, autonomy and personal sovereignty are fundamental human rights. We intend to transform a culture of fear into a culture of hope, creativity and possibility. We are profoundly committed to the preservation the Bill of Rights and those future changes to the U.S. Constitution that have expanded our conception of human rights and human freedom. We are now responsible to make our contributions to this document which written and ratified by slave and property owners, still has offered some seminal theory of human freedom. We intend to turn that theory into reality for all who find themselves in this country and for our global family.

As Greens, we will:

1. Protect and Expand Affirmative Action

To address the continuing inequities in access to education, jobs and promotions.

2. Ensure Legal Recognition for Domestic Partnerships

Including the right to marriage regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

3. Make Reparations to African-Americans

Officially acknowledge Georgia's and the United States' historic wrongdoing in the enslavement of Africans. Initiate substantive and practical dialogue on what Georgians can do today to make reparations to the African-American community for the past four hundred plus years of genocide, slavery, land-loss, destruction of culture and the present-day conditions which have evolved from this history.

4. Make Reparations to Native Americans

Officially acknowledge Georgia's and the United States' historic wrongdoing in removing Native Nations, and violating treaties with them, for the settlement of Georgia. Initiate substantive and practical dialogue on what Georgians can do today to make reparations for the past five hundred plus years of genocide, land-theft, treaty violations, destruction of culture and the present-day conditions which have evolved from this history.

5. Stop Violence and Discrimination

Against women, people of color, lesbians, gays, the poor, the homeless, children, elders, immigrants, the differently-abled, and the imprisoned.

6. Stop the Use of Racist Team Mascots

We support the American Indian Movement who has since 1975 urged sports teams to stop the offensive use of mascots which refer to racial or ethnic groups. We urge the Commissioner of Major League Baseball and Ted Turner, the owner of the Atlanta baseball franchise to honor the requests of the Native community for respect. We support legislation which would prohibit the

use of public funds to support professional, community or school teams which use offensive mascots and prohibit those teams from playing at publicly funded facilities. We urge the media to refrain from referring in their sports reports by name to teams which use offensive mascots.

7. *We will reclaim and protect our right to privacy.*

We will oppose and roll back the ever expanding web of corporate and governmental intrusion into our lives and persons experienced in so many ways, including random and universal searches of our persons and our property at schools, transportation centers and government buildings; police road blocks and random police stops; mandatory fingerprint, retinal scans, etc. identification for government or corporate uses; governmental eaves-dropping on its citizens whether by random searches of voice phone conversations or surveillance of political associations, absent a warrant issued in the investigation of an actual past crime; property seizures absent conviction of a crime.

8. *Rights to Parent without Unreasonable State Intervention*

We affirm the need for community and in some instances state intervention to protect children from abuse and deprivation. It takes a village to raise a child. Still we are concerned about the cultural, classist and racist biases of DFACS workers that so often result in the needless destruction of families without contributing substantively to the safety and welfare of children. When DFACS becomes involved, it can take up to four years for children to be reunited with their parents. In many cases children are placed in situations far worse than the homes from which they were removed. We recommend that the definition of deprivation be narrowed to prevent the Department of Human Resources and the Juvenile Courts from breaking up families for 1) refusing to participate in compulsory schooling that the child or parents find irrelevant to the child's education or harmful to the child's psyche; 2) refusing to participate in the dominant religious institutions of their community; 3) for choosing non-traditional living conditions; 4) for choosing vegetarian, vegan or other non-traditional, yet healthy, diets; 5) for refusing vaccinations, ritalin or other invasive pharmaceutical products or medical treatments; or 6) for following the reasonable advice of the child's competent health care practitioner.

9. *Right to Housing*

We support a constitutional right to housing and life-time tenancy and statutory tenant protections from excessive rent increases, condo conversion, unsafe living conditions and eviction without representation and sixty days notice. We support a prohibition on housing discrimination on the basis of age, children, race, ethnicity, gender, sex, sexual orientation, disability, HIV status, nationality, religious faith or lack of faith or practice.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

*"Provide services to all people who use public utilities
in an affordable and nondiscriminatory manner."*

The Georgia Green Party supports all people having access to these important services that everyone requires in this society.

1. Protect Consumers from Abuses by Monopolies

Prevent monopolistic structures and practices. If a truly competitive model with many producers and no barriers to entry to the market is not feasible due to the nature of the service, then the monopolistic practice must be strictly regulated. Such regulation must be enforced by a Public Service Commission that is responsive to the needs of all consumers and small businesses. It must also give top priority to protecting the environment.

2. Stop Merger Mania

Stop the merger-mania that is creating a few extremely large companies. Large companies that unfairly dominate the market can be stopped with current regulatory and anti-monopoly laws if politicians have the political will to enforce these laws. Large companies must be stopped from controlling the enforcement of these laws through the use of large campaign contributions.

3. Replace Nuclear and Coal with Solar Energy

Support the development of safe, cleaner energy, especially solar-derived energy. We support the immediate phase-out of inefficient and unsafe nuclear and coal plants. The Public Service Commission should use its rate approving authority to force the closure of coal and nuclear power plants.

4. Restructure to Protect Workers, Consumers and the Environment

Support restructuring the electric utility industry in a manner that will benefit all consumers. Ensure and promote environmentally friendly production facilities. Protect workers and citizens health and safety and reward clean and efficient producers of energy.

5. Protect Ratepayers from Unregulated Investments

Protect the consumer from out-of-control corporations. Consumers and ratepayers must be protected from the risks being taken by the Southern Company as they invest in foreign and unregulated markets.

SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS

"Close the School of Assassins."

The US Army School of the Americas (SOA), located at Ft. Benning, Georgia, has trained nearly 50,000 military officers from throughout Central and South America and the Caribbean.

More than sixty percent of the Salvadoran military officers cited in the 1993 United Nations Truth Commission report for massacres, assassinations, and other human rights abuses, were graduates of the SOA. More than forty percent of Colombian officers cited by an international human rights tribunal were graduates of the SOA. Many of the top military officials involved in Mexico's counterinsurgency war in Chiapas are SOA graduates. Many graduates of the SOA have been indicted for human rights abuses and drug trafficking in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, and Peru, including Gen. Manuel Noriega of Panama, Roberto D'Aubisson of El Salvador, Gen. Hector Gramajo of Guatemala, and Gen. Hugo Banzar of Bolivia.

Human rights observers, church leaders, peasant organizations, student and lawyers' groups have identified numerous SOA graduates as responsible for acts of torture, assassination, kidnapping,

drug trafficking, disappearances, rape, and death squad activity throughout Latin America. Despite the US Army School of Americas' attempts to downplay the crimes committed by SOA graduates to deny that the SOA taught undemocratic and illegal acts, the US Department of Defense revealed in 1996, that training manuals used at the SOA included sections on torture, execution, blackmail, and paying bounties for the assassinations of community leaders.

The history of the SOA runs contrary to our principles of respect for human rights and democracy

As Greens, we call for:

1. Close the School of Assassins

The immediate closure of the School of the Americas. The U.S. Congress and the Executive Branch should, without delay, eliminate funding for and close the School of the Americas at Ft. Benning, Georgia.

TAXES

"Create a progressive tax system that taxes wastes, pollution wealth and income to support equitable access to a basic income for all."

The current trend in taxation in Georgia has been towards a regressive tax system that takes from the poor and gives to the rich. The capitalistic system our country has adopted, while offering many benefits, has also promoted a misallocation of wealth and income.

As Greens, we will:

1. Federal Budget Priorities

It is time our tax dollars were spent on the general welfare, as provided for in the preamble of the Federal Constitution, instead of the welfare of generals. We call for an immediate 50% or greater cut in U.S. Military spending. We urge the investment of the peace dividend in 1) the creation of a Peace Force committed to non-violent strategies, 2) retraining and job placement of workers displaced by changing federal spending priorities, 3) the containment and restoration of the Department of Defense's nuclear and hazardous waste sites, 4) the retirement of national debts incurred to prosecute wars, grants for assisting impacted communities in making the transition to participation in a peace economy, 6) programs to foster food, water and environmental security. We urge comprehensive cuts in corporate welfare and subsidies which undermine worker and environmental protection. We recommend the following programs as priorities for cuts: nuclear weapons development, testing, manufacture and deployment, including depleted uranium weapons.

2. Peace Tax Fund.

We urge the creation of a Peace Tax Fund to receive and disburse for non-military purposes, the tax payments of those who hold a conscientious objection to the payment of war taxes.

3. Institute a Progressive Tax Policy

Change the tax code so that it no longer benefits the extremely wealthy at the expense of poor and working people. The marginal utility of increased wealth is far lower for the rich person than it is for the poor. This is the reason we need a progressive tax system that equalizes the burden of the system rather than the dollar amounts paid.

4. Eliminate Regressive Sales Taxes.

Municipalities should obtain their income from local progressive income taxes or property taxes. Municipalities should charge large impact fees for new development that will pay for new infrastructure and schools needed as a result of the development. This will increase the cost of development and tend to slow down sprawl in new suburbs in favor of using and maximizing existing infrastructure investments. Existing residents of a community have already paid or are in the process of paying for their infrastructure. They should not have to pay for new infrastructure used to support new residents.

5. End Regressive User's Fees

End regressive user's fees that are being applied to basic services. Services that benefit the community should not be paid through user's fees by individuals.

6. Pollution and Extraction Taxes

We must give the appropriate economic signals to the marketplace by imposing taxes on raw materials extraction, waste generation and the discharge of pollutants into the environment. As Greens we will review the tax code for subsidies to wasteful or polluting industries and repeal these tax incentives so that our tax policy conforms with our public policy."

7. Stop Privatization

End the current trend to privatize public facilities and services. Privatization does not necessarily result in benefits to the community. It is often a way to shift the tax burden to users. Like other user's fees, this shifts the burden of paying for basic services to the poor. Private businesses are not implicitly more efficient than public services.

TRANSPORTATION AND LAND-USE

"Plan roads and neighborhoods that make it possible to live without a total dependence on the automobile.

Large metropolitan areas in Georgia are suffering from "sprawl" --new development that spreads farther and farther from the central city (and employment areas) into the suburbs and surrounding agricultural areas. The pattern assures an ever increasing dependence on the automobile, and works to preclude opportunities for more efficient means of transportation. The result is increased traffic congestion, increased smog and water pollution, increased illness and death from respiratory diseases, and more and more tax money needed to fund the maintenance and expansion of . . . more roads to the suburbs.

Today, metropolitan Atlantans drive more per capita than any other people in the United States, and the state of Georgia has already been denied federal highway funds because of its high ozone and pollution levels. Instead of reducing pollution to meet the laws, Georgia's only current strategy for solving the problem seems to be to lobby Congress to repeal the pollution laws --

laws that were designed to provide for us a bare minimum level of health protection.

Clearly, current transportation and land-use policies are not sustainable. It is time Georgia changes these patterns and adopts new alternatives. As Greens, we will:

1. Create Strong Regional Planning Authorities

We must adopt a regional approach to land-use and transportation planning. Regional planning authorities must be established that have the authority to require counties to comply with regional plans. In general, new road construction should be a last resort. Prohibit new road capacity in air polluted counties which are deemed non-attainment areas.

2. Oppose the Building of Atlanta's "Second Perimeter"

Common sense tells us that the building of yet another perimeter around Atlanta will re-visit and compound all the problems of sprawl, pollution and gridlock associated with the first perimeter. Numerous studies support that assumption. Plans for the Second Perimeter must be scrapped. Instead, HOV lanes must be expanded using existing lanes, and enforcement of appropriate HOV lane use must be increased. Traffic laws that protect the safety of motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists should also be strengthened and enforced.

3. Re-Establish Mixed-Use Zoning

Develop communities that put housing, workplaces and shopping all within walking and bicycling distance. This is the traditional model of development, and besides creating less dependence on the automobile (and therefore less gridlock, and less smog), it also creates an increased sense of community, and safer streets.

4. Oppose Giant Box Stores and Regional Shopping Centers

The sheer scale of Mega stores and malls forces people to drive to shop, brings strangers into communities, and creates more opportunities for crime. At the same time, the trend of building ever newer and larger stores leads to abandonment of older facilities, empty shops and blight. We will oppose this trend in favor of revitalizing existing shopping centers.

5. Make Communities Bike and Pedestrian-Friendly

Biking and walking in many areas of Georgia is currently a dangerous proposition. We need to encourage walking and bicycling by building more bike paths and pedestrian walks. Building residential, working and shopping areas in closer proximity will also help.

6. Aggressively Develop Mass Transit

Developing public transit is cheaper than building more roads and bridges. Public transportation that is effective, accessible, and desirable is a working reality in other metropolitan areas, and only requires political vision and will.

7. Free the State Motor Fuel Tax

Current state law requires that all revenues from the state motor fuel tax be spent on the creation of more roads -- which will of course create more automobile use, which will create more fuel tax funds. Talk about a vicious cycle! We need to amend the Georgia Constitution to make motor fuel tax funds available for all transportation projects --including public transportation, pedestrian and bicycle walkways; and transportation programs that serve the elderly and handicapped.

8. Create High-Density Housing

When we're not surrounded by freeways and six-lane roads, living next to parks and shopping becomes very desirable. High-density housing must be encouraged near shopping and industrial centers. Rather than zoning for minimum lot sizes, zoning should encourage minimum densities (that are still human scale) that will shorten walking distances, and protect surrounding open spaces. In addition, mixed income housing should be built to foster a sense of community.

VETERANS

"We owe military veterans a future where our children no longer face war."

We recognize the tremendous sacrifice our country has asked of its citizens who have served in the military in the conduct of war. While we frequently find ourselves and our commitment to non-violence at odds with the military adventurism of the U.S. federal policies, we stand with the Georgians who have served in these wars and insist that they and their families not be abandoned.

1. Our Commitment to a Future Beyond Wars

"Our first priority in foreign policy considerations is to creating a future without war -- and consequently without war veterans. We are committed that future generations not face the separations and sacrifices of war.

1. Honor our Commitment to Veterans.

We insist that the cuts to Veterans Administration funding be halted and that past cuts be restored. We must honor the promises we've made to veterans in the past.

3. Gulf War Syndrome

"Many of those U.S. Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen who served during Operation Desert Storm in the Arab East have been exposed to nuclear, chemical and possibly biological warfare agents. We insist that the Veterans Administration not ignore the suffering they have experienced since coming home from the war. The Congress should fund and the VA should implement a comprehensive program to survey Gulf Vets and the impacts of Gulf War Syndrome on them and their families and to provide the best possible medical treatment available to minimize the suffering of these men and women and their families. We insist that the Federal Government withdraw from deployment Depleted Uranium, nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. We insist that the military halt the practice of testing experimental medicines and inoculations on service members without their consent."