



## The Georgia Green Party

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2000

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## UAW Weighs Endorsement of Green Presidential Candidate Ralph Nader

*Gore position on China Trade met with Hisses by Labor*

In a statement released Tuesday, 5/23/00, and reported by Reuters, UAW President Stephen Yokich announced that the 759,000 member United Auto Workers is strongly considering endorsing Green Party Presidential hopeful Ralph Nader, breaking from their traditional exclusive backing of candidates from the Democratic Party.

Yokich's statement came in response to Al Gore's support of legislation to grant Permanent Normalized Trade Relations (PNTR) to China, a last straw for Yokich which both he and Nader see as detrimental to human rights, labor and the environment. "President Clinton and Vice President Gore once again have sided with multinational corporations against workers here and abroad," Yokich said.

Labor unions believe that PNTR will result in hundreds of thousands of American jobs going overseas, as American multinational corporations gravitate to China's cheap labor force to boost their profits. Many workers in China earn less than \$1,000 a year and face oppressive working conditions which would be illegal in the United States.

"I just want to tell you forthrightly I don't share your views on this particular issue," Gore said as he addressed a Service Employees International Union meeting, just hours after Yokich's announcement. "I believe free and fair trade can create good, high-paying jobs for American workers." Gore's case for PNTR was received with cold silence and occasional hisses from the 1,000 delegate audience.

Yokich says that the UAW is “deeply disappointed” with Al Gore, but “obviously, we cannot turn to Republican candidate George W. Bush.”

This dilemma has traditionally left labor unions and other groups reluctantly supporting what they see as the “lesser of two evils” out of the fear that not doing so could help elect the “greater evil.” But this election may be different.

“It’s time to forget about party labels and instead focus on supporting candidates, such as Ralph Nader, who will take a stand based on what is right, not what big money dictates,” UAW President Yokich said.

Nader was pleased to hear of Yokich’s announcement, saying “I think you’re going to see increasing reluctance for organized labor to be told by the Democrats they’ve got nowhere to go, and they’ve got to swallow policies that are against the core of the union’s reason for being.”

Nader believes that the same may prove true for other organizations that have traditionally been Democratic supporters, and hopes that it will ultimately may prove true of voters in November as well.

"We have 48 days left to secure ballot access for our Presidential nominee and our other candidates here in Georgia. Momentum is building," said Kerrie Dickson, Party co-chair and challenger for a North Georgia Mountain House District seat in the November 7<sup>th</sup> election. The Party is planning another nominating convention for Brunswick on June 3<sup>rd</sup> to nominate additional candidates for local office. This Convention will also fill vacancies on the Georgia Delegation to the Presidential Nominating Convention scheduled for June 24-25 in Denver Colorado. The Denver Convention will choose between Ralph Nader and Stephen Gaskin, the last two of seven candidates who have vied for the party's nomination.

"Every day, we're reaching out to seniors, labor, enviornmental and women activists who are re-evaluating their options for the coming election," said Dickson. "More voters call us daily ready to get involved. Last week we met with petition circualtors in Brunswick and Statesboro. Next week its Macon and other cities. Our campaign is building and we invite you to get involved."

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