



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
Monday, March 20th, 2000

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Green Party Takes Stand on Issues

Party's Americus Nominating Convention Adopts Extensive Revisions to Party Platform

"Our Priorities remain the same," said Reverend Zack Lyde, chair of the Party. "We intend to democratize elections, instigate a just industrial transition that eliminates toxics from our lives, fight for universal access to health care and free our society from an over-reliance on incarceration as a panacea."

Still, at its state party convention, held at Koinonia Farms South of Americus Georgia, the Georgia Green Party both called for the repeal of recent policy initiatives on Education and Welfare of the Barnes and Miller Administrations, and also elaborated on their own proactive agenda. "Our 2000 Convention spoke out about this war on the Constitution. We're taking a stand for our liberties. We will not be governed by fear. We're charting a course of hope, instead," said Brunswick pastor.

The Convention returned four state Council members who stood for re-election for another two year term. The Party is expected to soon name a new treasurer, following the resignation of Sean Michael, who served in that capacity from 1998 until Saturday's Convention. Mr. Michael's father has been ill and his letter of resignation said he intended to have more time to care for his parents.

Rev. Lyde is expected to serve a third term as the Party's chair. He sponsored only one platform amendment at this year's Convention. It was a call for a Constitutional Amendment to *repeal the exception to the Constitutional prohibition against slavery and involuntary servitude*. "We have taken a stand against this pernicious institution of slavery. It's time we began to dismantle the most depressing force on the wages and conditions people face at their jobs in our society - - convict labor. If we let a corporation guard its workforce, instead of paying us livable wages, we'll never be able to go back."

Kerrie Dickson is the Party's development director and has travelled extensively across Georgia. "The problems people bring to us more often than any other is about getting their kids back from state custody. We've had people tell us they were threatened with a deprivation action if they refused to put their kids on Ritalin," said Dickson. The Convention advocated a narrower definition of deprivation to protect parents whose culture leaves them targets of discriminatory state action. "Vegetarians have been threatened because they refused to feed their children meat. One Native woman lost her child to a Baptist ex-husband, because he was *church-going*. Many of these cases come from middle class case-worker prejudices meeting the reality of poverty in Georgia. It should not be up to a state employee what cultural choices we make for our families and children. And poverty is not the same as deprivation."

The Convention considered sixteen platform amendments, postponed two for further drafting work, adopted seven without discussion and then debated and adopted six of the remaining seven.

The only controversial issue pulled from those headed into the Party's Platform dealt with global population. "I had offered the new plank," said Hugh Esco, 1998 Green candidate for Lieutenant Governor of Georgia, "because I heard several Greens saying we should take a stand on these issues. I knew it would be controversial. Too much racism and genocide has flown under a banner of population policy. I think this is a paper we can bring back with some rewriting, dialogue and internal education."

The Convention adopted other new positions in support of biomass liquid transition fuels, demand side efficiency and conservation, correcting racist sentencing disparities and using fines and treatment in the place of incarceration for non-violent marijuana possession offenses, restructuring the public welfare programs, protecting the indigenous world view from the Free Trade Agenda, defending public funding for the arts, public television and public access tv and radio, protecting students from manipulative military recruiting practices, defending and restoring academic freedom for teachers, expanding student rights and opposing gateway testing programs. The Convention also advocated a Constitutional Right to Housing, the roll back of corporate and governmental intrusions into personal privacy and autonomy and a list of Federal Budget Priorities designed to move the country toward a peace conversion.

These amendments will now be incorporated into the Party's existing 16 page Platform and be used to guide the Georgia delegates in national debates in Denver Colorado June 23-25 where the Party is expected to name its Presidential slate for the 2000 election.

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To read the Party's 1999 Platform, please follow the links at: <http://www.greens.org/georgia/> .