

Bylaws of the Green Party of Virginia

Mission

I. Name and Definition

The Greens of Virginia/Green Party of Virginia (also referred to as the GPVA) is an autonomous, independent political party. The GPVA shares kinship, common goals and values with other Green Parties and Green organizations in the U.S.A. and throughout the world through our common adherence to the Ten Key Values.

II. Ten Key Values

The Ten Key Values of the Greens in the U.S.A are:

- Ecological Wisdom
- Social Justice
- Grassroots Democracy
- Nonviolence
- Decentralization
- Community-Based Economics
- Feminism
- Respect for Diversity
- Personal and Global Responsibility
- Future Focus/Sustainability

III. Purpose

- A. Promote throughout Virginia the Ten Key Values of The Greens.
- B. Publicize purpose and issue position statements.
- C. Encourage the development of Green Locals.
- D. Serve as a networking structure so that the Green Locals in Virginia can better communicate, share ideas and experiences, and provide mutual support and fellowship.
- E. Coordinate joint activities among GPVA Locals.
- F. Nominate Green candidates for office, and support these candidates with contributions of money and labor.
- G. Occasionally endorse independent candidates.
- H. Work to end the two-party duopoly in Virginia and the nation.
 - I. Seek to establish and maintain legal party status in Virginia.
 - J. Seek to establish a multi-party system based on citizen participation.

IV. Political Practices

- A. The GPVA is accountable to its Green locals and members thereof.
- B. The GPVA may designate spokespersons in addition to the Co-Chairs and the Press Secretary.
- C. Chairs, officers, delegates and other representatives of the GPVA shall be recallable at any meeting of the GPVA, by consensus or three-quarters vote.
- D. Chairs, officers, delegates, and representatives will be rotated regularly. An attempt will be made to include new members in these positions.
- E. Representatives and delegates of the GPVA may express personal opinions, but must act and vote within the guidelines agreed on by the GPVA.
- F. The GPVA is committed to encouraging participation by all Virginia residents but in particular members of those groups which tend to be underrepresented: women, racial and economic minorities, and minorities of sexual orientation.
- G. Significant minority opinions within the GPVA will be recorded in the minutes and communicated to other national and regional Green organizations as appropriate.
- H. Meetings and records of finances, membership, and minutes of the GPVA shall be open to inspection by any member of the GPVA in good standing. GPVA meetings may be closed to non-members on a majority vote in personnel or legal matters or if required by law.
- I. A full range of nonviolent strategies and tactics shall be considered permissible and desirable in pursuing Green social change, such as rallies, demonstrations, boycotts, citizens' initiatives, civil disobedience, direct action, building alternative institutions, and/or electoral politics.

V. Other Green Organizations

- A. The GPVA may join or affiliate itself with regional, national, global, etc. Green organizations which share the values of the GPVA.
- B. The GPVA may choose to send delegates to these organizations.
- C. Delegates should represent the policy of the GPVA to the extent possible.
- D. Delegates, where possible, should seek explicit direction previous to representation.
- E. GPVA agrees to endorse and support only those national candidates selected by the Green Party nominating convention, if such candidates exist. Other decisions and rules of other organizations with which GPVA is affiliated or a member of will in no way be considered binding upon the Green Party of Virginia.

Members

VI. Locals of the Green Party of Virginia

- A. Definition

1. A Local is a group of three or more Virginia residents who meet together on some regular basis to advance the Ten Key Values.
2. Locals shall be defined geographically.
3. Locals may accept members as they wish, consistent with their own rules.
4. For the purposes of representation in the Green Party of Virginia, a person can claim membership in only one Local at any given time.
5. An at-large local called the Greens of Virginia is available for membership by those Greens in Virginia who are not members of an affiliated Local.

B. Affiliation

1. Locals may request affiliation with the Green Party of Virginia by sending at least one representative to a meeting of the GPVA and affirming their commitment to the Ten Key Values.
2. Requests for affiliation will be considered according to the standard decision-making process of the GPVA.
3. As a requirement for affiliation, each local shall designate the following officers:
 - a. a Treasurer, responsible for all financial transactions
 - b. a Representative to the Interim Committee. Such designees may, but need not necessarily, be the same person.
4. As a requirement for affiliation, each local shall prepare a set of written bylaws.
5. Affiliated locals are referred to herein as "Green Locals."

C. Disaffiliation

1. The GPVA may suspend affiliation of a Green local for valid reasons by a three-fifths vote of the GPVA membership at a business meeting.
2. Valid reasons include but are not limited to:
 - a. actions in contradiction to the Ten Key Values.
 - b. concerted efforts to undermine the stated purposes of the GPVA.
 - c. failure to attend GPVA meetings or otherwise participate in GPVA activities for over a year.
3. Members of the affected local may submit a motion to override the suspension decision at the next GPVA business meeting at which quorum is satisfied, supplying evidence and/or arguments, but may not vote on this or any other matter.
4. If the local's motion to override passes according to the rules for a Major Decision, the affiliation suspension is revoked. Otherwise disaffiliation is permanent.

D. Local Contacts

1. Each Green Local must choose a Local Contact for the GPVA.
2. The Local Contact will be responsible for bringing information from their local to GPVA meetings and for bringing information from those meetings back to their local.
3. The Local Contact will be responsible for ensuring that their local has a democratic and timely procedure for reviewing GPVA decisions. The Local Contact will communicate this decision to a Chair.
4. The Local Contact must ensure that the Co-Chairs have up to date information on how to reach the Local Contact.

VII. Membership

A. Membership in the Green Party of Virginia is open to all members of Green Locals in Virginia and/or any member holding membership in the Greens of Virginia at-large local, except for officers, official spokespersons, candidate and central committee members of other competing political parties. The GPVA shall determine which political parties are competing.

B. The GPVA welcomes and embraces all members regardless of age, race, color, gender, spiritual belief, physical challenge, sexual orientation, or national origin.

C. Members of GPVA are expected to:

1. uphold the Ten Key Values
2. be honest and forthright in all dealings
3. be scrupulous in the handling of GPVA and/or Green Local funds.

D. Membership Review Process

1. Charges of violation of the above membership standards may be made by any member or members.
2. Such charges should be forwarded to one of the Chairs of the GPVA who will confer together.
3. If either or both Chairs believe that the charges are warranted, or if half of the affiliated locals vote to formulate a committee, they will formulate a fact finding committee of three persons composed of:
 - a. one person chosen by the Chairs
 - b. one person chosen by the accused
 - c. a third person chosen by mutual agreement of the first two committee members.
4. The fact-finding committee will investigate and prepare a report of the extent of truth of the charges as expeditiously as possible but no later than 90 days after the formation of the committee.
5. After completing the report, the fact-finding committee will meet with the accused and the accuser to see if a mutually agreeable resolution can be found.
6. If the dispute cannot be resolved there, then the Chairs or any member of the fact-finding committee will bring the matter, including the written report of the fact-finding committee, to the next meeting of the GPVA. The portion of the GPVA meeting considering the charges should be closed to observers. A three-quarters vote is required to withdraw the membership of the accused where the burden of proof is on those making the charges. However the process ends, the Chairs should file a brief minute giving the names of the accused and the accuser, and stating what, if any, resolution was reached.
7. If at any time during the above process the Chairs determine that the accused is not making a good-faith attempt to cooperate, they may bring the matter before the next meeting of the GPVA to seek a final resolution. If half of the affiliated locals vote to do so, the matter shall be placed before the next meeting of the GPVA to seek a final resolution.

E. Membership Voting Rights

Each GPVA member, who is registered with the state party for at least one year or is designated to party officers by his/her Local Representative or Alternate as a member in good standing of the Local, is entitled to vote on proposals presented at business meetings. At Large members who wish to exercise voting rights within the first year of joining the party shall be vetted by one of the co-chairs.

Decision Making

VIII. Scope of Decisions

- A. Decisions of the Green Party of Virginia shall be divided into minor and major decisions.
- B. Minor decisions are process, scheduling, and communication decisions such as scheduling GPVA meetings and informal networking.
- C. Major decisions include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. organizational structure
 - 2. platform ratification
 - 3. candidate nomination or endorsement at the state level
 - 4. formally joining coalitions
 - 5. financial matters of the GPVA
 - 6. bylaw changes

IX. Local Review

- A. Major decisions may be reviewed by Green Locals.
- B. Major decisions will stand unless opposed by 25% or more of Green Locals before the next meeting of the GPVA which occurs 31 or more days after receipt of the minutes concerning the decision.
- C. Minor decisions cannot be overturned by Green locals.

X. Meetings and Decision Making

- A. Local Representation
 - 1. Each Local, through an inclusive democratic process shall designate a Local Representative and one or more Alternates to serve as its principal point of contact with the state party.
 - 2. The Local shall provide the names and contact information of the Local Representative and Alternates to GPVA Officers along with a copy or reference to published meeting minutes at which such representation was designated. Notice of changes in representation shall be submitted to the party within 31 days of the change so that the party can publish the change in a timely manner.
 - 3. The names and contact information of the Local Representative and Alternates shall be published to the GPVA website in a timely manner after they are received and validated by GPVA officers.
 - 4. The GPVA strongly encourages its locals to promote gender balance and diversity in the selection of its Local Representative and Alternates.
- B. Quorum
 - 1. Quorum consists of:
 - a. At least one of the Chairs or the Treasurer, and
 - b. A Local Representative or Alternate from each of 50% or more of the affiliated Locals.
 - 2. For the purpose of quorum-counting, officers and Local Representatives may be the same person, and one of the Chairs is deemed to be the Local Representative for At Large Greens.
 - 3. Locals which have no Local Representative or Alternate present and have not sent representatives to either of the two preceding business meetings of the GPVA will not be counted for purposes of the 50% quorum requirement.
- C. Major Decisions
 - 1. Major decisions shall be made by consensus of those GPVA members present, or if consensus cannot be achieved, a vote of three-fifths voting members present, unless the Bylaws specify a different approval threshold for the decision at hand.
 - 2. Decisions of Green Locals will be considered in the process but do not directly affect consensus or voting.
- D. Minor Decisions
 - 1. Minor decisions shall be made by consensus of those GPVA members present, or if consensus cannot be achieved, a simple majority of voting members present for approval.
- E. Conduct
 - 1. Participants in meetings of the GPVA are expected to treat each other with gentleness and consideration.
 - 2. Persons who violate this standard may be asked to remain silent and/or leave the meeting.
- F. Scheduling
 - 1. The Chairs of the GPVA may call an unscheduled meeting of the GPVA with the concurrence of a majority of the GPVA Local Contacts and GPVA officers. A good-faith effort must be made to publicize this meeting to all GPVA members.
 - 2. A future meeting date or continuance of a meeting may be set at any meeting of the GPVA with the concurrence of a majority of the Local Representatives and GPVA officers, and will be publicized to the Contact Person for each local.
- G. Meeting Agenda
 - 1. The agenda and any proposals to be presented at a GPVA meeting must be distributed to the Local Contacts at least 31 days prior to the meeting.
 - 2. Items which have not been distributed 31 days prior to the meeting may be placed on the agenda by consensus or a majority vote of the Local Representatives and GPVA officers.
 - 3. Bylaw amendments added to the agenda at the meeting will be placed on the agenda for discussion only.

XI. Candidate Nomination and Endorsement Policy

- A. The GPVA may nominate or endorse candidates for local, regional, state, and national offices.
- B. The word "nomination" will be used when the candidate will be publicly identified with the GPVA.
- C. The word "endorsement" will be used in all other cases.
- D. A nomination/endorsement may occur at any official business meeting of the GPVA.
- E. Any nomination/endorsement will be subject to the usual process of review by the locals, unless the proposed nomination or endorsement was specified on an announcement distributed to all affiliated locals at least one month prior to the GPVA business meeting.
- F. A candidate may be proposed for nomination/endorsement by any member of the GPVA or affiliated local.
- G. No candidate will be nominated or endorsed by the GPVA if the nomination or endorsement is opposed by all of the Green Locals in the candidate's electoral district.
- H. It is highly encouraged that candidates who wish to be considered for nomination:
 - 1. Be an active member of an affiliated local.
 - 2. Seek the nomination of all locals within their district, and then seek the GPVA nomination.
 - 3. Attend, or send a letter to, the GPVA meeting at which their nomination will be considered.
- I. Candidates who accept a GPVA nomination for office will be considered official Green candidates. As such, they should:
 - 1. be a member of a Green organization.
 - 2. embrace the platform of the GPVA.

3. identify themselves as "Green candidates."
- J. The GPVA may endorse other candidates who support the Ten Key Values and who generally endorse the GPVA State Platform, provided there is no Green Party - endorsed or nominated candidate in the race.
- K. Locals engaged in electoral activity will be responsible for choosing to nominate or endorse candidates whose districts lie within their general area.
- L. If in a given area there is no local engaged in electoral activity, prospective Green candidates from that area may request nomination by the GPVA.
- M. If in a given electoral district, there are multiple candidates for a given office or if at least one but not all of the Green Locals in the district oppose a candidate, then a democratic process open to all GPVA members in that district will be used to nominate a single candidate or to not nominate any candidate. If the Locals in that district cannot agree on a democratic process in a timely fashion, then the Co-Chairs of the GPVA will conduct a ballot of GPVA members in that district.
- N. The GPVA will utilize all legal means to prevent self-description as Green or Green Party candidates by persons who have not been approved through the process described above.

XII. Amendments to the By-Laws

- A. Proposals in final form for Amendments to these By-laws must be published to the GPVA membership 31 days prior to the next state meeting.

XIII. Platform Revision Process

- A. The platform of the Green Party of Virginia and all revisions will be approved by the following process:
 1. Platform revisions shall be drafted by a meeting of the Green Party of Virginia or a designated committee.
 2. The recommended changes shall be mailed to each member of the GPVA in a format by which they can indicate approval or disapproval of each new or changed plank.
 3. Ballots will be tallied 30 days after the beginning of the polling process by a person or persons designated by a meeting of the GPVA.
 4. The tally clerk will forward all ballot materials to the Co-Chairs for archiving.
 5. New or changed planks in the platform are approved if the votes in favor are 75% or greater of the total votes for or against that change.
 6. Deletions are approved if supported by more than 50% of the total votes for or against the deletion.
- B. In extraordinary circumstances, the GPVA may amend the platform at any regular meeting.
- C. The Platform and all changes made through the above process shall remain in effect until changed by the same process.
- D. The GPVA, or designated committee, may approve non-content changes to the platform without the need for the above described membership ratification process. Such changes may include:
 1. titles
 2. arrangement of the planks of the platform
 3. grammatical and stylistic changes to the wording of planks
 4. creating and naming various subsets of the platform to be used in cases when the entire platform would be too cumbersome
 5. combining planks
 6. other similar changes

Officers

XIV. Officers

Qualifications

- A. The Green Party of Virginia shall establish the following positions ("Officers"): two equal positions of Chair, one woman and one man, a Treasurer, a Press Secretary, and a Webmaster.
- B. Each Officer shall be an active member of the GPVA.
- C. Each Officer shall be elected for a term of one year.
- D. Election of an Officer may take place at any business meeting of the GPVA by consensus or by a majority vote of members present.
- E. Officer vacancies may be filled at any business meeting of the GPVA by consensus or by a majority vote of members present or otherwise by a majority vote of the Interim Committee. Any such decision of the Interim Committee must be ratified at the next scheduled business meeting at which quorum is achieved.
- F. Recall of an Officer may take place at any business meeting of the GPVA by consensus or by a three-quarter vote of members present.

Duties

- G. The duties of the Chairs shall be as follows:
 1. Act as contacts and spokespersons for the GPVA.
 2. Schedule two in person GPVA business meetings each year, one in the spring and one in the fall, and any other meetings needed to expedite party business, whether in person or via teleconference. Arrangements for in person meetings shall be coordinated with the hosting local.
 3. Coordinate setting of the agenda for GPVA business meetings.
 4. Arrange for facilitation of GPVA business meetings.
 5. Record the minutes of GPVA business meetings and distribute at least one copy to each local within two weeks of the meeting.
 6. Certify acceptance or rejection of proposals adopted at GPVA business meetings by Green Locals, and notify the locals of the results.
 7. Maintain a list of all current members, contact persons and alternates for all Virginia Green locals.
 8. Other duties as specified by the GPVA.
- H. The duties of the Treasurer shall be as follows:
 1. Receive and disburse all funds of the GPVA and maintain records of all such transactions.
 2. Present a report at each business meeting covering the current financial status of the GPVA and other such information as requested.

3. Reimburse the Chair(s) for appropriate expenses incurred in the performance of their duties (i.e. phone, postage, etc.).
 4. File financial reports as required or requested by the GPVA and law.
 5. Present the annual budget for approval by GPVA no later than the beginning of the calendar year to which the budget applies.
- I. The duties of the Press Secretary shall be as follows:
1. See that all activities and events of the GPVA receive the maximum amount of favorable publicity that is possible.
 2. Assist the Locals in seeing that all of their activities and events receive the maximum amount of favorable publicity that is possible.
 3. Maintain a database of publications and other media for use in publicizing GPVA activities and events.
 4. Act as spokesperson for the GPVA, in the same manner as the Chairs.
 5. Distribute and follow up all press releases of the GPVA.
 6. Maintain a record of all known media coverage of the GPVA.
 7. The Press Secretary shall follow all written guidelines of the GPVA.
- J. The duties of the Webmaster shall be as follows:
1. Develop and maintain the GPVA website, including but not limited to: posting GPVA meeting agendas and minutes; bylaw and platform updates; newsletters; committee rosters; and officer contact information.
 2. Maintain GPVA listservs.

Committees

XV. Legally Required Committees

- A. As required by local, state, or federal law, the GPVA will create committees and/or organizations that comply with any and all necessary legal requirements for ballot access, elections, fund-raising, voter registration, etc.
- B. These committees and/or organizations will always remain subject to decision making articles of this document, but may be allowed limited autonomy as specified by the GPVA.

XVI. Central Committee

- A. Definition
In order to comply with state law, the GPVA shall establish a Central Committee.
- B. Composition
 1. Each member of the Central Committee must be a member of the GPVA, must be a registered voter, and shall not be a member of another political party.
 2. The Central Committee shall consist of one member from each of the eleven Congressional districts and two at-large members.
 3. The GPVA Co-Chairs shall assume the at-large seats, unless not lawfully qualified to serve, in which case they shall appoint qualified replacements.
 4. The Party Chair shall be a GPVA Co-Chair and shall be affirmed in this role by the Interim Committee.
 5. The Party Secretary shall be the other GPVA Co-Chair.
 6. The District seats shall be recruited by the GPVA Co-Chairs and affirmed by the Interim Committee, unless selected in an inclusive, democratic process by the GPVA members of the district.
 7. Alternates for the District seats shall be recruited by the GPVA Co-Chairs and affirmed by the Interim Committee, unless selected in an inclusive, democratic process by the GPVA members of the district.
 8. If a member leaves the Central Committee, the alternate shall assume the seat.
 9. Each District member of the Central Committee shall serve for a term of one year or until a successor has been affirmed by the Interim Committee.
 10. The terms of the At Large seats shall be concurrent with the terms of the GPVA Co-Chairs.
- C. Responsibilities
 1. The GPVA Co-Chair designated as Party Chair shall, in a timely fashion, certify the nominations that have been approved according to GPVA bylaws.
 2. Central Committee members shall inform the GPVA Co-Chairs of any changes of their address, legal name, congressional district or voter registration, or of their resignation from the committee.
 3. The GPVA Co-Chairs shall ensure that all Central Committee seats are filled at all times.
 4. The GPVA Co-Chairs shall communicate any changes in the composition of the Central Committee to the State Board of Elections in a timely fashion.
 5. The Central Committee shall have no decision making power.
 6. The Central Committee shall receive direction in any legally required decisions from the GPVA at a business meeting, from the Interim Committee, or from the GPVA Officers within the limits of their duties as defined in the GPVA bylaws.

XVII. Interim Committee

- A. Definition
The GPVA shall have an Interim Committee, accountable to the GPVA and responsible for making GPVA decisions between GPVA business meetings.
- B. Composition
 1. Each member of the Interim Committee must be a member of the GPVA.
 2. The GPVA Co-Chairs shall be members of the Interim Committee.
 3. The GPVA Treasurer shall be a member of the Interim Committee.
 4. The GPVA Press Secretary shall be a member of the Interim Committee.
 5. Each Local Representative is an ex officio member of the Interim Committee. In the event a Local Representative is unable to participate in an Interim Committee session, the Local or its Representative may designate an Alternate to participate in his/her absence, unless another Local member has been so designated.
 6. One of the Co-Chairs shall be designated as the convenor of the interim committee.
 7. The position of convenor may be alternated, as the Co-Chairs choose, upon notification of the other committee members.
 8. If the representatives from half of the affiliated Locals with designated representatives to the Interim Committee so request, the convenor shall convene the Interim Committee.
 9. If any convenor fails to schedule the convening of the Interim Committee within five days after receiving the request, the requesting representatives may appoint another convenor, who shall be an Interim Committee

representative, to serve for the duration of the requested meeting of the Interim Committee.

10. All discussions of the interim committee are open to any member of the GPVA. Any member of the GPVA may participate in discussions unless the committee finds such participation to be disruptive.

C. Responsibilities

1. The convenor shall facilitate discussions of the Interim Committee.
2. The convenor shall certify and record any decisions made by the Interim Committee.
3. The convenor shall make reports to the meetings of the GPVA.
4. The Interim Committee shall conduct the day-to-day business of the GPVA.
5. The Interim Committee shall make decisions on any matters which cannot reasonably be put off until the next meeting of the GPVA.
6. The Interim Committee shall issue statements on behalf of the GPVA concerning current events.
7. The Interim Committee shall hire and oversee the activities of all staff of the GPVA.

D. Decision Making

1. A quorum of the Interim Committee for conducting business shall be the same as that required for GPVA major decisions.
2. The Interim Committee shall strive for consensus in all of its decisions.
3. A good-faith effort shall be made to contact every Interim Committee member on any decision pending before the committee. A specified period of time shall be allowed for discussion. Not less than seventy-two (72) hours shall be allowed for a vote, including at least two full business days.
4. If consensus is not achievable, then the decision making rules for major and minor party decisions outlined in XI.C and XI.D shall apply.
5. All decisions of the Interim Committee are subject to revision by the GPVA at any scheduled meeting.

XVIII. Standing Committees

A. Establishment

The party membership may elect to establish Standing Committees as it may from time to time deem necessary to conduct party business. Existing committees shall function until such time as they are dissolved. Establishment of a committee shall be considered a major party decision.

B. Dissolution

The party membership may elect to dissolve a Standing Committee whose purpose has been accomplished or whose function is no longer needed. Dissolution of a committee shall be considered a major party decision.

C. Records

The rules and archives of all GPVA standing committees shall be publicly accessible.

GPVA

The Green Party of Virginia
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