

# **BYLAWS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA GREEN PARTY**

## **ARTICLE 1: NAME AND PURPOSE**

1.1 NAME. The name of the organization shall be the South Carolina Green Party (hereafter referred to as “Party”).

1.2 TEN KEY VALUES. The Party is founded on Ten Key Values: grassroots democracy, social justice and equal opportunity, ecological wisdom, nonviolence, decentralization, community-based economics and economic justice, feminism and gender equity, respect for diversity, personal and global responsibility, and future focus and sustainability.

1.3 PURPOSE. The purpose of the Party is to uphold and advocate the Ten Key Values by organizing and empowering citizens to engage in political and educational activities. These activities include, but are not limited to, recruiting candidates for public office, nominating and/or endorsing candidates for public office in partisan and non-partisan races, publicly endorsing or opposing issue campaigns, and supporting the efforts of local groups and candidates.

## **ARTICLE 2: MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION**

2.1 ELIGIBILITY. Participation in Party activities is open to any resident of South Carolina who wishes to support our political efforts. According to state law, eligibility for membership in the Party is restricted to residents who are (a) at least eighteen years of age, (b) a registered voter, and (c) a citizen of South Carolina and the United States.

2.2 REQUIREMENTS. To be considered a member of the Party, a citizen must have, within the preceding year, either (a) paid annual dues or (b) been an active member of a party organization in the state. The Party will maintain a list of current members.

2.3 PARTICIPATION OF NON-MEMBERS. Residents of South Carolina not meeting age, citizenship, or voter registration requirements are encouraged to participate as fully as possible in Party activities.

## **ARTICLE 3: STATE CONVENTION**

3.1 PURPOSE. The Party shall hold an annual State Convention for the purpose of nominating candidates, electing members to Party offices and committees, electing delegates to the Green Party of the United States, amending the Party platform, and other matters. The State Convention is the highest decision-making body in the Party.

3.2 PARTICIPATION AND VOTING. State Conventions are open to the general

public. In even-numbered years (general election years), eligible voters will be the official delegates selected through the procedures outlined in Article 6. In odd-numbered years, eligible voters will be members who have been on the Party membership list for at least thirty days. The Convention shall seek consensus on all decisions. In the event consensus is not reached, a two-thirds vote of members present is required for adoption of any proposal. Abstentions shall not be counted as votes cast.

#### **ARTICLE 4: STEERING COMMITTEE AND COORDINATING COUNCIL**

4.1 RESPONSIBILITIES. The Steering Committee (hereafter “Committee”) shall be the administrative body of the Party. The Committee shall have responsibility to oversee and manage the day-to-day business and operations of the Party between meetings of the State Convention and Coordinating Council.

4.2 NUMBER AND OFFICERS. The Committee shall be comprised of nine members elected by the State Convention. Every effort should be made to elect a membership that reflects the gender and ethnic diversity of South Carolina. At the first Committee meeting subsequent to each State Convention, members of the Committee will designate two Co-chairs (one of each gender), a Secretary, and a Treasurer. These offices can be rotated at the discretion of the Committee. The Secretary shall be responsible for taking minutes at meetings of the Committee and State Convention and distributing them widely within all levels of the Party. The Treasurer shall be responsible for all the financial affairs of the Party and for filing reports with the appropriate state and federal offices as required by law. The other members are expected to take a leadership role on at least one state committee (such as fund-raising, communications, and elections).

4.3 TERMS AND ELECTIONS. Committee members shall serve two-year terms, staggered so that one-half of the terms expire each year. Members will be elected by the delegates at the State Convention, using approval voting. If a member is unable to complete a full term, the Committee shall select a replacement to finish that term.

4.4 NOMINATIONS. No later than one month before the State Convention, a Nominating Committee shall call for nominations for potential Committee members. Two weeks before the State Convention, the Nominating Committee will provide a final list of nominees, certifying that (a) they are members of the Party and (b) do not occupy a leadership position in any other political party. All nominees should submit a brief personal statement for inclusion in the State Convention agenda packet.

4.5 MEETINGS. Regular meetings of the Committee shall generally occur monthly, and the time and place for regular meetings should be publicized widely within the Party. All meetings shall be open to all members of the Party. A quorum of a simple majority will enable the Committee to conduct its business. Special meetings may be held when called by three or more members of the Committee. Reasonable notice of the time and place of special meetings shall be given, at least twenty-four hours in advance.

4.6 DECISIONS. The Committee has the authority to adopt rules, policies, and

procedures in accordance with the Ten Key Values. The Committee shall follow a consensus-seeking decision making process based on trust, respect, unity of purpose, nonviolence, self-empowerment, cooperation, conflict resolution, commitment to the group, active participation, equal access to power, and patience. Meetings will be run by a facilitator who will use all appropriate techniques (such as stacking, go-rounds, brainstorming, fishbowl, silence) to lead to a consensus. In response to a call for consensus, members have the option of indicating minor concerns, major concerns, standing aside, and blocking concerns. Blocking concerns should be based on a generally recognized principle of the Party. All proposals must be approved by consensus. This decision-making policy may be amended as follows: at any meeting of the Committee, a member may propose an alternative decision making process; at the next meeting, a vote will be taken on the proposed process, and if three-fourths of the members present approve, the new process will be put into effect. Members may not vote by proxy.

4.7 RESPONSIBILITIES. The duties of the Committee shall include, but are not limited to: overseeing finances and fund-raising, coordinating communications both within the Party and with the public, establishing and overseeing committees, designating official spokespersons, hiring and supervising staff, helping to organize local and regional groups, and designating presidential electors.

4.8 COMMITTEES AND STAFF. The Committee may create standing and special committees and may appoint chairs for those committees. The Committee may also hire staff and consultants to facilitate the work of Party.

4.9 RESIGNATION OR REMOVAL OF MEMBERS. A Committee member may resign by providing a written letter of resignation to an officer of the Party or to the Party at its principal office. A member may be removed from the Committee with cause by vote of a two-thirds majority of the members then in office. The removal process must begin with a letter signed by at least two members, and the matter will first be submitted to a conflict resolution process. If the process does not yield an agreeable solution, the matter shall be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

4.10 COMPENSATION. Committee members shall be precluded from receiving compensation for their services but shall be entitled to receive such amount, if any, as the Committee may from time to time determine, to cover expenses of attendance at meetings.

4.11 COORDINATING COUNCIL. The Coordinating Council shall be comprised of the members of the Steering Committee plus two additional members designated by each affiliated organization (as provided in Article 5). The Coordinating Council will meet quarterly (in place of the monthly Steering Committee meeting) and will have all the same responsibilities and follow all the same procedures as the Steering Committee.

## **ARTICLE 5: LOCAL, COUNTY, AND REGIONAL GROUPS**

5.1 According to the principle of decentralization and grassroots democracy, Party members are encouraged to form local, county, regional, or identity-based Green Party

organizations throughout the state. Each organization is entitled to appoint an observer to the Steering Committee and Coordinating Council, who will be notified of all meetings. Organizations that meet the requirements for affiliation (under section 5.2) will designate two representatives to serve as voting members of the Coordinating Council; at least one representative must be female or a person of color. Representatives will be responsible for communicating local concerns to the Coordinating Council as well as relaying information to local members from the Council.

5.2 Any local, county, or regional organization may apply for affiliation with the Party by making a request to the Steering Committee. Applications for formal affiliation must be made in writing and must include a copy of the organization's bylaws and a list of the organization's officers. The application must also include evidence that the organization (a) has transparent finances, (b) has registered with the State Ethics Commission once required by law, (c) has at least six members, and (d) has met at least four times during the preceding year. The Steering Committee has the authority to accept or reject any application for affiliation, subject to appeal by the next State Convention.

## **ARTICLE 6: NOMINATING CONVENTION PROCEDURES**

6.1 In general election years (even-numbered years), the State Convention will follow the state laws (Title 7, Chapter 9) relating to convening a Nominating Convention.

6.2 COUNTY MEETINGS. Each county will meet for reorganization during month of March of each general election year. The county committee shall set the date, time, and location for the county convention to be held; however, the date set by the county committee for the county convention must be at least two weeks prior to the state convention. Notices must be published by the county committee, once a week for two consecutive weeks, not more than three nor less than two weeks, before the day in a newspaper having general circulation in the county. When organized, the county convention shall elect officers, including a president, secretary, treasurer, county chairman, county vice-chairman, a member of the State committee from the county, and as many delegates to the State Convention as triple the number of members from the county in the House of Representatives, plus one. But county conventions at their discretion may elect double the number of delegates in which case each delegate shall have one-half vote. All officers except delegates shall be reported to the clerk of court of the county and to the Secretary of State prior to the State Convention.

6.3 STATE CONVENTION. The State Convention shall meet prior to May fifteenth, on a day and at a time and in a location determined by the Steering Committee and announced publicly at least ten days before the meeting. The Steering Committee shall notify the delegates to the state convention of the accommodations that are available for the delegates during the convention. The State Convention must be composed of delegates elected by the county conventions. Each county is entitled to one delegate for each six thousand residents of the county, according to the latest official United States Census, plus two additional members. When the State Convention assembles, it must be called to order by the co-chairs of the Steering Committee, and when business has concluded the convention shall adjourn sine die, or may

recess. The state co-chairs may recall the state convention into special session at any time determined to be appropriate. The state officers must be reported to the Secretary of State and to the State Election Commission within fifteen days of their election, and the reports must be public record.

6.4 NATIONAL CONVENTION. During presidential election years, the State Convention will express its choice of candidates to be nominated at the Presidential Nominating Convention of the Green Party of the United States and so instruct its delegates to that national convention.

## **ARTICLE 7: CANDIDATES**

All Party candidates must provide written assurance that they agree to (a) support the Ten Key Values, (b) follow state campaign finance law, and (c) provide the Party Secretary with copies of all filings to the State Ethics Commission and the Federal Elections Commission.

## **ARTICLE 8: PARTY PLATFORM**

The Party shall adopt a platform based on the Ten Key values that clearly defines the Party's position on issues facing our society and the world. The platform will be based on the platform of the Green Party of the United States, modified to address the specific policy concerns relevant to South Carolina. The platform will be a guide for elected officials and other Party members engaged in public policy making.

## **ARTICLE 9: RELATIONSHIP TO THE NATIONAL PARTY**

The Party is affiliated with the Green Party of the United States. The Party will appoint delegates and alternates to the national Coordinating Committee and will appoint representatives to other national committees. In even-numbered years, the Party will, at its State Convention, select delegates to national convention (which in presidential election years will be the Presidential Nominating Convention). These delegates and representatives shall be precluded from receiving compensation for their services but shall be entitled to receive such amount, if any, as the Party may from time to time determine, to cover expenses, including expenses related to participation in meetings.

## **ARTICLE 10: EXPULSION OF MEMBERS**

A member who acts in opposition to the Ten Key Values or other explicit principles and values of the Party may be expelled only by a vote of the Steering Committee, Coordinating Council, or State Convention. The expulsion process must begin with a letter signed by at least two members, and the matter will first be submitted to a conflict resolution process. All members, including the member proposed for expulsion, must be notified at least two weeks before the

meeting where the issue will be raised.

#### **ARTICLE 11: FINANCES**

The Party will adopt an annual budget, including anticipated expenses and sources of revenue. The Treasurer is responsible for overseeing the finances of the Party, making regular reports to the Steering Committee, and submitting financial reports to the appropriate State and Federal agencies.

#### **ARTICLE 12. PERSONAL LIABILITY**

The Officers, Steering Committee members, Coordinating Council members, and employees of the Party shall not be personally liable for any debt, liability, or obligation of the Party. All persons, corporations, or other entities extending credit to, contracting with, or having any claim against the Party, may look only to the funds and property of the Party for the payment of any such contract or claim, or for the payment of any debt, damages, judgment, or decree, or of any money that may otherwise become due or payable to them from the Party.

#### **ARTICLE 13. DISSOLUTION**

Should the Party ever dissolve, the Steering Committee shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the Party, transfer all assets to the Green Party of the United States.

#### **ARTICLE 14: AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS**

Amendments to these bylaws must be approved by either (1) a State Convention or (2) the Steering Committee, at two consecutive meetings. Amendments may be proposed by any member of the Party. Amendments to be considered at a State Convention must be submitted to the Steering Committee at least one month prior to the convention.

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