

Bylaws Proposal: Restructuring

(draft 10, 3/24/2001)

Contact: Ricardo Newbery, newbery@greens.org, 619.286.5807

The following are some proposed bylaw amendments drafted by the Bylaws Committee to enable the structural changes outlined in the Restructuring Proposal approved during the Spring 2000 Plenary.

The Bylaws Committee has attempted to translate the original proposal language into a format appropriate for bylaws. In some cases, the committee created new definitions or new language to fulfill the intent of the original proposal and to address some concerns raised during the draft process. Most concerns (from both committee and non-committee members) have been addressed and the final draft has been approved by the committee. A few concerns remain unresolved and are listed below.

A concern was raised about paragraph 6-1.6 which states a requirement for two WG meetings. In original Restructuring proposal, this was "must have attended one previous WG session." Bylaws Committee recommends requiring attendance in least two WG meetings to make it easier for a WG meeting to satisfy a quorum.

A concern was raised about paragraph 6-2.2 which states that "new" agenda items shall be for information only and not for action. It was felt that this would hamper the ability of groups to take action on new matters. The Bylaws Committee recommends requiring at least two weeks notice for any action to give potential stakeholders fair notice of the impending decision.

A concern was raised about various group "duties and authorities" in Article 8 (and maybe Article 7). It was felt that too much of the original Restructuring proposal "mission statement" language was left out or changed and that this was important language written specifically to help the groups focus and prioritize in the directions detailed within the statements. In this draft, an attempt was made to trim or reword overly-specific language which didn't help restrict or expand the charge of the groups. The Bylaws Committee feels that much of this language was not intended or appropriate for bylaws rules and recommends that the bylaws should clearly and succinctly define what is delegated to the group without going into unnecessary and unenforceable detail or legislating potentially transient policy objectives. The committee also suggests that all groups are free to draft a more elaborate mission statement, independent of the bylaws, as long as it doesn't limit or exceed its bylaw charge.

A concern was raised about the last line of paragraph 6-1.4 which states that committee members may be recalled with a 2/3 vote of the CC. It was felt that this needed more clarification whether 2/3 approval was required for removal or 2/3 approval was required for retention. The Bylaws Committee recommends revisiting this issue after the Voting Threshold discussion scheduled for the next Gathering.

The following changes are proposed:

- 1) Delete all of Section 5-8,
The Function of General Assembly Committees in Meetings.
- 2) Substitute all of Article 6,
Committees - Formation and Function
- 3) Substitute most of Article 7 (except Sections 7-1 and 7-10),
Committees of the General Assembly
- 4) Add new Article 8,
Working Groups of the General Assembly

The text of the proposed new Articles 6, 7, and 8 follow.

ARTICLE 6: COMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS - FORMATION & FUNCTION.

SECTION 6-1. DEFINITIONS, FORMATION, AND MEMBERSHIP

6-1.1 Definitions

- a) A **Committee** is a standing group defined and established by these bylaws, composed of one or more persons appointed by the Coordinating Committee, to consider, investigate, or take action on certain matters considered sensitive enough to warrant special supervision as defined in its charge. A Committee is generally established to formulate the policies and execute the tasks needed to maintain and facilitate the internal functions of the GPCA.
- b) A **Working Group** is a standing group defined and established by these bylaws, composed of one or more non-appointed persons, to consider, investigate, or take action on certain matters as defined in its charge. A Working Group is generally established to formulate and propose to the General Assembly, the GPCA's opinions, positions, and actions on political and social issues that are relevant to the Party's philosophy and political agenda.
- c) A **Special Group** (or ad hoc group or subcommittee) is a group established by the General Assembly or a standing group to consider non-recurring business of the party or is otherwise expected to dissolve itself after completing its charge. Special groups do not have General Assembly agenda privileges (see proposal authority, 6-2.5).
- d) A **Caucus** is a group established by GPCA members for the purpose of promoting a special interest, unique perspective, or certain consciousness. Caucuses do not have General Assembly agenda privileges (see proposal authority, 6-2.5).

6-1.2 Formation of Committees and Working Groups

Committees and Working Groups must be defined and established by these bylaws. Establishing a new Committee or Working Group or dissolving a current one requires an amendment to these bylaws.

6-1.3 Formation of Special Groups

Special groups may be established by the General Assembly or any standing group with a 2/3 vote. The statement of purpose or charge of the group and whether its membership is open or appointed must be stated at the time of formation. A special group may be dissolved with a 2/3 vote of the establishing body, but in any case, is automatically dissolved two years after its establishment or after completing its charge, whichever comes first. Expiring special groups may be reestablished at the discretion of the establishing body.

6-1.4 Committee Membership

Coordinating Committee (CC) membership is defined in Section 7-1. Other Committees shall be composed of no more than eight members not including ex-officio members (see ex-officio members, paragraph 6-1.7). At least once a year or whenever vacancies exist, the active counties, Group coordinators, and individual CC members shall be given the opportunity to submit nominations or recommendations to the Coordinating Committee for committee membership. Eligible candidates must have attended at least two prior plenaries within the previous 12 months and demonstrate a working knowledge of the GPCA bylaws and operating procedures. Committee members shall be appointed by the Coordinating Committee and shall serve for two years or the remainder of the current term, or if appointed more than 12 months after the start of the current term, shall serve for the remainder of the current term plus two more years, unless a successor is appointed before this time. Terms begin and end at the start of the second plenary of each year and must be staggered whenever possible. Any Committee member may be recalled with an 2/3 vote of the CC.

6-1.6 Working Group Membership

Working Group membership shall be open to any Green Party member willing to participate. Voting privileges are reserved for those members who have attended or participated in at least two Working Group meetings within the previous 12 months.

*** Unresolved concern, see introductory text ***

6-1.7 Ex-Officio Members

Ex-officio members are Committee or Working Group members by virtue of office as defined in these bylaws or in the group's charge. Ex-officio members have all the privileges of other members, including the right to vote, but not the obligation to attend meetings regularly. Unless present, ex-officio members are not counted in determining a quorum.

- 6-1.8 **Liaison to the Coordinating Committee**
Each Committee and Working Group shall be assigned a Coordinating Committee (CC) member by the CC to serve as Liaison to the CC, an ex-officio member of the Group. The liaison is charged with facilitating communications between the group and the CC. Liaisons appointed to Committees also serve as one of the committee coordinators (see coordinators, paragraph 6-1.9).
- 6-1.9 **Coordinators**
All Committees and Working Groups shall have two coordinators (see coordinator duties, paragraph 6-2.6). Committees shall elect one coordinator from among its membership in addition to the CC-appointed liaison-coordinator. Working Groups shall elect two coordinators from among its membership. Elected coordinators shall take office upon confirmation by the General Assembly and, while still eligible, shall serve for two years in staggered terms whenever possible or until a successor is elected and confirmed.

SECTION 6-2. GENERAL DUTIES, AUTHORITY, AND FUNCTIONS.

- 6-2.1 **Work Plan**
Each Committee and Working Group shall prepare a yearly work plan to be submitted to the Coordinating Committee along with any budget requests. The work plan must identify the objectives of the group for that year, any proposals it foresees bringing before the General Assembly, and a projected timeline for the group's activities. The stated objectives must be congruent with the group's charge as defined in these bylaws and the goals and strategies of the GPCA.
- 6-2.2 **Meetings and Deliberations**
Each Committee and Working Group shall determine how many meetings are necessary to achieve the objectives outlined in its work plan. Each group shall also prepare and announce the proposed meeting agenda at least two weeks in advance of the meeting date. New agenda items announced after this date shall be for information only and not for action. All deliberative and decision-making meetings shall be open to all Green Party members unless closed by a 2/3 vote of the membership. However, groups may be required by the General Assembly or the CC to produce detailed minutes of a closed meeting.
*** Unresolved concern, see introductory text ***
- 6-2.3 **Quorum**
A Committee or Working Group quorum is more than 1/2 of a group's voting membership. For Working Group meetings properly announced in the agenda distributed prior to a regular meeting of the General Assembly, a quorum is more than 1/2 of the voting membership OR one group coordinator and at least four additional voting members, whichever is fewer.
- 6-2.4 **Decision-Making**
The decision-making process in Committees and Working Groups may be informal but must be consistent where feasible with the process described in Section 5-9. Proxy votes are not allowed.
- 6-2.5 **Proposal Authority**
All proposals to be considered by the General Assembly must first be approved and presented by a standing group established within these bylaws (see committees, article 7, and working groups, article 8). These groups shall act in the role of advocate for the proposals they present to the General Assembly. The presenter shall disclose to the General Assembly whether the group brings the proposal forward with consensus or by a vote. If by a vote, the details of the vote shall be disclosed.
- 6-2.6 **Coordinator Duties**
The responsibilities of the Committee and Working Group coordinators shall include:
- a) Preparing and announcing the proposed agenda for a group meeting;
 - b) Facilitating and coordinating the activities of the group;
 - c) Submitting group work plans and budgets to the Coordinating Committee;
 - d) Presenting group proposals or other official communications to the General Assembly;
 - e) Maintaining a physical notebook containing the group's Statement of Purpose, membership information, meeting minutes, and any other documents relevant to the work of the group;
 - f) Filing meeting agendas and minutes with the Coordinating Committee secretary in a timely fashion including a summary report after the conclusion of a General Assembly meeting with general contact information, active membership list, and status report;
 - g) Designating a temporary acting coordinator to perform the duties outlined above whenever an official coordinator is unable to perform those duties, and notifying the CC and Group membership accordingly.

ARTICLE 7. COMMITTEES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SECTION 7-2 FINANCE COMMITTEE (FORMERLY SECTION 7-10)

7-2.1 Duties and Authority

The Finance Committee is charged with overseeing the financial operations of the GPCA. This includes working with the Treasurer to:

- a) Collect county dues and any other moneys owed to the GPCA;
- b) Facilitate the allocation and disbursement of funds;
- c) Provide quarterly financial reports to the CC;
- d) Provide an annual budget report to the General Assembly;
- e) Provide any official reporting required by the State of California;
- f) Provide assistance for GPCA fundraising activities.

7-2.2 Ex Officio Member

The Treasurer is an ex officio member of the Finance Committee.

[the rest of the original Section 7-10 is not changed]

SECTION 7-3. BYLAWS COMMITTEE

7-3.1 Duties and Authority

The Bylaws Committee is charged with maintaining the GPCA Bylaws and assisting with their amendment or revision. All Bylaw amendment proposals must be reviewed by the Bylaws Committee before submission to the General Assembly.

7-3.2 Bylaws Interpretation

In cases of bylaw ambiguity or procedural disagreement, the General Assembly shall decide for itself the meaning of its bylaws or the appropriate procedure to be followed. Between General Assembly meetings, the Coordinating Committee shall decide these questions subject to review at the next General Assembly meeting. The Bylaws Committee and its coordinators are charged with assisting with the interpretation of the Bylaws and the resolution of procedural questions.

SECTION 7-4. PLATFORM COMMITTEE

7-4.1 Duties and Authority

The Platform Committee is charged with maintaining the Platform of the GPCA and assisting with its amendment or revision. All platform proposals must be reviewed by the Platform Committee before submission to the General Assembly.

7-4.2 Platform Research and Interpretation

The Platform Committee shall identify issues not in the platform, and suggest and formulate platform planks with substantial input from appropriate experts in the field. The Platform Committee shall also assist the General Assembly, the Coordinating Committee, and the Media Spokespersons with formulating positions or statements on issues or initiatives related to official platform positions.

SECTION 7-5. INTERNATIONAL PROTOCOL COMMITTEE

7-5.1 Duties and Authority

The International Protocol Committee is charged with administrating, hosting, and networking with international Greens.

SECTION 7-6. CLEARINGHOUSE COMMITTEE

7-6.1 Duties and Authority

The Clearinghouse Committee is charged with maintaining an archive of all GPCA documents and data. The Clearinghouse Committee is also charged with facilitating internal and external communications and information dissemination including maintaining the GPCA website and returning communications received by phone, email, and postal mail.

7-6.2 Ex Officio Members

A Webmaster, appointed by the committee, and the Liaison to the Secretary of State are ex-officio members of the Clearinghouse Committee.

ARTICLE 8. WORKING GROUPS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SECTION 8-1. GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING WORKING GROUP

8-1.1 Duties and Authority

The Grassroots Organizing Working Group (GROW) is charged with facilitating voter registration activities and organizing locals. This includes working to:

- a) Coordinate locals into statewide efforts to register Green Party voters, do public outreach, and increase diversity in the party;
- b) Provide training for county locals in tabling and other grassroots organizing activities;
- c) Develop, maintain, and provide resources for tabling efforts and organization of locals;
- d) Maintain lists of registered Green Party voters.

SECTION 8-2. CAMPAIGNS AND CANDIDATES WORKING GROUP

8-2.1 Duties and Authority

The Campaigns & Candidates Working Group is charged with facilitating the electoral work of the party. This includes working to:

- a) Educate Green Party members about GPCA electoral strategy;
- b) Identify key political campaigns in which Green Party activists can play a pivotal role;
- c) Identify registered Greens who would make credible candidates;
- d) Promote and facilitate effective regional strategies for winning campaigns;
- e) Train Green Party activists in methods of waging political campaigns;
- f) Facilitate fundraising operations for GPCA-endorsed electoral campaigns.

*** Unresolved concern, see introductory text. A concern was raised about leaving out the statement, "educate Greens about the importance of running credible candidates in strategically chosen races and avoiding poor candidates and unconstructive races," as stated in the original Restructuring proposal. The Bylaws Committee recommends using the clause, "educating Green Party members about GPCA electoral strategy," which adequately covers this overly-specific and potentially transient policy statement. ***

SECTION 8-3. ELECTORAL REFORM WORKING GROUP

8-3.1 Duties and Authority

The Electoral Reform Working Group is charged with promoting the electoral reform objectives of the party. This includes working to:

- a) Educate Green Party members, the public, and the media about proportional representation (PR), instant runoff voting (IRV), and other electoral reforms as directed by the General Assembly;
- b) Identify strategies for enacting these reforms including use of PR and IRV in primary and county council elections;
- c) Encourage Greens to initiate and support successful campaigns for electoral reform;
- d) Advise GPCA on internal party voting mechanisms and electoral policy.

*** Unresolved concern, see introductory text. Concerns have been raised about the inclusion of potentially transient policy objectives within the bylaw language establishing the Electoral Reform WG. A concern has also been raised about the internal focus of item d since WGs were intended to focus on external matters. ***

SECTION 8-4. GREEN ISSUES WORKING GROUP

8-4.1 Duties and Authority

The Green Issues Working Group is charged with identifying and facilitating GPCA action on external Green issues not already delegated to another Committee or Working Group. This includes working to:

- a) Identify, facilitate discussion, and prepare proposals on issues and events that should be addressed by the GPCA;
- b) Advise the Platform Committee on the development of platform proposals on issues identified by the Working Group;
- c) Promote and provide support for Green issues to candidates running for office;
- d) Build coalitions with other organizations working on Green issues.

*** Unresolved concern. The term, external, is not adequately defined within these bylaws. ***