

RESTRUCTURING PROPOSAL for Spring 2000 Plenary submitted by the ad hoc Restructuring Working Group

Background/Process:

For many years, concerns have been expressed about the performance of our statewide working groups - inconsistent and shifting membership/participation/leadership/institutional memory, leading to little continuity from state meeting to state meeting and inefficient, underachieving work overall.

In September, 1998 the Coordinating Committee (CC) began a discussion about addressing this issue, along with the need for better long-term scheduling on the state level. In February, 1999 the CC appointed a 'Future Focus' group within the CC (Nancy Broyles, Linda Martin, Mike Feinstein), to make recommendations about a process. After trying unsuccessfully to get membership with full regional representation, an ad hoc Restructuring Working Group became established with the following members: Linda Martin (San Diego), Mike Feinstein (Santa Monica), Lisa Rizer (Emerald Region), Jim Guthrie (San Luis Obispo), Nanette Pratini (Riverside) and Lucy Colvin (San Francisco) who chairs/coordinates the ad hoc RWG.

In formulating the following proposals, the Restructuring Working Group has taken into consideration the dialogue and results of the prior effort to restructure the GPCA in 1992/1993; the Goals and Strategies Work Plan passed at the San Diego Plenary 1996; the brainstorming session from Orange County Gathering Spring 1999; the Santa Barbara plenary RWG informal written poll of goals and priorities; numerous input we have received from Green Party locals and individual members and a RWG presentation to the November State Coordinating Committee Retreat. There was overwhelming input concerning the need to streamline the Green Party of California's structure to enable our efforts to be less dispersed and more focused on the goals and priorities of the GPCA and to find structural ways to make Working Groups, Standing Committees, the State Coordinating Committee and the Plenary Body more accountable to its goals, strategies and work plans.

The acute need for restructuring can be seen in the poor performance of Project 2000. In September 1997, the GPCA state Plenary agreed to make Project 2000 its primary focus, authorizing it to hire staff and raise funds through direct mail solicitations. Now, more than two years later, this critical initiative has collapsed due to a lack of funds, inadequate support and supervision by the CC, and little support from the membership. Without a consistent ongoing efficient program of voter registration, outreach and fund-raising, the GPCA could soon find itself wiped off the ballot just like the Peace and Freedom Party. The demise of Project 2000 presses us to urgently consider significant restructuring efforts that will help us focus our energies on the GPCA's consensed goals and programs.

This Restructuring Proposal addresses the very identity of the GPCA. Currently, we look very much like a band of individually honorable and important efforts that don't work well in concert: well-intentioned endeavors that stray far afield from the GPCA's goals and priorities. The Restructuring Proposal is aimed at helping us push the Green agenda and be an effective political party through disciplined focus on consensual priorities.

What this proposal recommends is that we agree that the GPCA is first and foremost a political party. That is our unique contribution to the Greening of the country and the planet. We spread the Green message best when we are tabling and registering Green voters at street fairs and on street corners; when we are running credible articulate platform-based candidates who engage the public and the media with the green perspective on the issues of our times; and when we are pushing the envelope on electoral reform, endeavoring to open up our political system to achieve grassroots democracy and a Greener world.

PROPOSAL BODY:

The current "Standing Committees" (aka, Working Groups) structure will be changed as follows:

STANDING COMMITTEES: 5 Standing Committees whose members will be appointed by the State Coordinating Committee. The Co-Coordinators will be one State CC member and one other member of

said Standing Committee. At the Spring 1999 Orange County Gathering there was a lot of agreement amongst participants that it would be helpful to separate the requirements of committees that deal with internal Party business from those that are more externally focused. These Standing Committees deal with the internal matters of the party. They will be small (5 to 7 members) and not open to new members at plenary sessions. Appointments will be made based on county input and Green Party individual members desire to serve. The main criteria is that the person has attended State Plenaries for at least a year and has knowledge of the California State Green Party by-laws and operating procedures.

Appointments will be made yearly by a nominating subcommittee of the CC. Nomination suggestions will be formally requested from the locals by providing them with the mission statement for each committee, the previous years' work plan and the "bio" form that will be filled out by any potential nominee. The committee then will review and submit the nominations to the CC who make the selections. A commitment of a 2 year term will be requested and members can serve more than one term. New membership will be staggered to ensure Standing Committee continuity.

Standing Committees submit proposals they desire to be considered by the GPCA General Assembly to the Plenary Agenda Committee. The Agenda Committee will consider and prioritize proposals based on GPCA's Goals and Priorities.

Bylaws: Purpose: To be the official conduit for changes to the GPCA Bylaws for the plenary body to vote on. To formulate and prepare and to work in conjunction with other SCs and WGs to formulate and prepare any Bylaw changes to the GPCA Bylaws to be voted on by the plenary body so that any changes are in concordance with the languaging and the content of the GPCA Bylaws; to provide the official interpretation of the Bylaws for the GPCA; and to provide the official delegate count for each plenary to be sent with the plenary packet.

Finance: Purpose: To work with the GPCA treasurer to oversee the financial operations of the GPCA as the yearly GPCA Goals and Strategies plan defines them to be. This includes working with the treasurer to: collect county dues to the GPCA and any other monies allocated to the GPCA; ensure the allocating and disbursing of funds to WGs, SCs, and the CC per their yearly workplans; provide quarterly financial reports to the CC; provide an annual budget report to the plenary; to provide any official reporting required by the State of California; and to be the official conduit for fundraising done by and for the GPCA.

Platform: Purpose: Responsible to keep the official platform for the GPCA and ensure that copies are available for distribution; To identify issues not in the platform and to suggest and formulate platform planks with substantial input from appropriate experts in the field; to provide the final language for any additions and changes to the platform that will be submitted to the plenary; advise the CC and the Media Spokespersons on taking positions on any issue or initiative relative to the state platform.

International Protocol: Purpose: To network with and handle the administration and hosting of international Greens.

Clearinghouse: Purpose: Responsible for archiving all GPCA documents, maintaining database, website, returning communications received by phone, email, and postal mail. In addition to appointed members and CC Co-coordinator, membership on this committee would include the Liaison to Secretary of State. Appointed members would include a web master.

WORKING GROUPS: 4 Working Groups whose membership will be open to any Green Party member interested in working to develop the California State Green Party in each particular area. To be an active decision making member of each Working Group a Green Party member must have attended one previous Working Group session as stated in the current by-laws. Each Working Group will have a liaison from the State CC. Working Group Co-Coordinator will be chosen from the active Working Group members.

Working Groups submit proposals they desire to be considered by the GPCA General Assembly to the Plenary Agenda Committee. The Agenda Committee will consider and prioritize proposals based on GPCA's Goals and Priorities.

Voter Registration & Outreach/Organizing Locals: Purpose: To facilitate coordination of locals into statewide efforts to register Green Party voters and do public outreach through tabling; provide training for county locals in tabling; to be a resource for organization of locals; maintain and develop key literature piece for tabling efforts; maintain list of registered Green Party voters statewide; publish a statewide GPCA

newsletter; engage in direct mailings statewide to Green Party membership for purposes of fundraising and membership outreach.

Campaigns and Candidates: Purpose: To educate Green Party members about our electoral strategy with an emphasis on local initiatives that open up the system and local candidates who can win; to identify key political campaigns in which Green Party activists can play a pivotal role; to educate Greens about the importance of running credible candidates in strategically chosen races and avoiding poor candidates and unconstructive races; where appropriate, to identify registered Greens who would make credible candidates; to promote regional strategies for winning campaigns so that Greens avoid spreading resources too thinly; to train Green Party activists in methods of waging political campaigns either for candidates or for issues; and to raise money for Green Party campaigns.

Electoral Reform: Purpose: to educate Green Party members, the public and the media about electoral reforms that will open up the political system, including Proportional Representation, Instant Runoff Voting, and public financing of elections; to identify strategies for enacting these reforms such as promoting the use of Proportional Representation for County Council elections; to encourage Greens to initiate or support successful local campaigns for electoral reform; and to advise GPCA of internal party voting mechanisms and electoral policy

Green Issues: Purpose: To identify current issues and events for which the GPCA or its platform has no position; to sponsor debate of issues that may impact the platform; to sponsor resolutions on current issues to be passed by the GPCA plenary body; when appropriate, to interface with the Platform Standing Committee and with candidates whom are running for office as Green Party members; and where appropriate, to build coalitions with other organizations.

The State Coordinating Committee will remain an elected body with regional and open seats as stated in the GPCA by-laws. The GPCA will have Co-coordinators, meet monthly for teleconference as long as finances permit and post the GPCA CC minutes on-line for all working groups and Green Party members to have access to.

CAUCUSES: Prime time needs to be devoted for Caucuses during the plenary. Youth, Women, and Men's Caucuses can work with appropriate WG/SC to develop proposals. Proposals for the General Assembly can not be directly submitted by Caucuses to the Plenary Agenda Committee.

Goals and Strategies: The Working Group previously known as Goals and Strategies will become a function of the State Coordinating Committee. The purpose of the Goals and Strategies function is to articulate the priorities and goals of the GPCA; formulate sensible focused strategies to achieve the goals and priorities that realistically utilize and reflect GPCA resources; and to make sure that the GPCA provides the structure for adequate follow through to achieve these goals and strategies. The CC will use the following process to formulate goals and strategies. The CC will establish a two year "strategic plan" using input from a "brain storming" plenary session and draft work plans (see below) from the Working Groups. This will be formally presented and affirmed at the subsequent state plenary. The two year work plan will be reviewed and refocused by the CC and presented to the plenary each year. Included as part of the strategic plan, the CC will develop a two-year schedule, including potential agenda items, for the General Assemblies and Gatherings, with input from each WG work plan. The schedule would be revised each year and flexibility would still remain on content, date and location of General Assemblies and Gatherings.

Ecology Working Group, Social Justice Working Group and the International Working Group: These working groups will now be consolidated under the Green Issues Working Group. The international networking aspect of the current International Working Group is now the International Protocol Standing Committee. The Green Issues Working Group will interface with the platform Standing Committee and with candidates whom are running for office as Green Party members when necessary. The rationale for combining these groups is simply the need to consolidate our resources and energy towards building a viable political party instead of dispersing ourselves across numerous issues that arise. The issues Working Group can help to determine those issues that should be prioritized by the Green Party of California towards this purpose.

Education and Media Working Group: The work of this Working Group will be subsumed under the work of the three California State Green Party Spokespersons. The WG will remain dormant until there are the resources and leadership to make it a viable Working Group.

Proposed Policy pertaining to Both Standing Committees and Working Groups:

Each Working Group (WG) and Standing Committee (SC) Co-Coordinator will compile a physical notebook, containing each WG/SC Statement of Purpose, information about that WG/SC membership, meeting minutes from all WG/SC meetings, and other important documents of that WG/SC. Have this notebook at every state meeting. The RWG will provide notebooks and dividers for each WG/SC.

Each Working Group and Standing Committee Co-Coordinator will file meeting agendas and minutes with the Coordinating Committee Secretary and post the minutes to the Working Group internet list in a timely fashion.

Each WG/SC will prepare a yearly work plan to go along with any budget submissions. The work plan will identify what the goals are of the WG/SC for that year, and what, if any proposals it would want to bring forward for a vote of the General Assembly, and when. The goals of the work plan should be congruent with the WG/SC Statement of Purpose and the Goals and Strategies of the GPCA.

All WG/SC will prepare their agendas in advance for state meetings, including the assigning of time for items, and have this printed in the agenda pack. The content of the agenda items would arise from the work plans. Specific time would still be reserved for party members seeking to raise new agenda items. This advance planning would help the meetings run better, as people will know what to expect and can prepare, and time won't be wasted the way it is now in setting the agenda on-site. With the amount of time needed becoming more clear, this will also give the CC more flexibility in setting overall agenda times, as some WG may have different needs, rather than the 'one time fits all' that we currently have.

In addition to meeting face-to-face at state meetings, each WG/SC shall meet and hold at least one annual, regularly-scheduled phone conference for its active members.

If the coordinators or co-coordinators of a WG/SC are not going to be able to attend a plenary or a gathering where their group is meeting they need to designate an Acting Coordinator to stand in for them at the meeting. They need to notify the CC and WG/SC via email about this.

TO MAKE the GPCA and its WG/SC and General Assemblies MORE VISIBLE and ACCESSIBLE It is proposed to establish a ad-hoc working group to update the Green Party Introductory/Organizational manual compiled by Daniel Solnit. There shall also be a web version of the manual. In addition to updating the current information in Solnit's manual, others have suggested an organizational chart and more graphics and charts.

PLENARY: Need to establish a formal plenary structure that reflects our goals and priorities and 2 year work plan. Instead of using the previous plenary as a blueprint it is imperative that each plenary start fresh, looking at the work and planning for it logically. We need to prioritize and try to think of ways to keep people around for the second day instead of cramming the important business all into the first day's agenda.