

# Response to the Latest Complaint Against Georgia by the Lavender Caucus

by Dialogue not Expulsion  
January 31, 2021

[The complaint by the Lavender Caucus against the Georgia Green Party](#) submitted to the Accreditation Committee consists, in essence, of six points, though the internal numbering is extremely confusing. Let's take up each of these points and consider them one by one:

## **1) The Georgia Party has endorsed the “transphobic ‘Women’s Declaration of Sex-Based Rights.’”**

The name of the text in question is the “Declaration on Women’s Sex-Based Rights.” We note at the outset that the fact-checking of the Lavender Caucus (and those who cosigned its complaint) was not even capable of accurately stating the name of the offending document. Does this, perhaps, raise a question about the accuracy of other assertions, things declared to be “facts” by this complaint? It is at least a reasonable issue to pose as we begin our assessment.

More importantly, on the substance: The word “transphobic” is introduced by the Lavender Caucus and used more than once to describe this declaration. However, not one quote is offered which justifies such a characterization. This is, on its face therefore, an assertion that cannot become the basis for further action by the Accreditation Committee or by the national Green Party. Allegations of “transphobia” or “racism” or anything of that nature should, under any and all circumstances, be accompanied by quotations from the offender which justify their use. That “should” becomes a “must,” however, if the accusations are going to become the basis for disciplinary action against those who are alleged to have engaged in such behavior.

## **2) The Georgia Party challenges the wisdom of current medical interventions that are being practiced to enable the transition of young people who identify as transgender.** The complaint asserts, in support of this point in its indictment: “The treatment of trans youth are well established and have been so for more than two decades.”

A similar statement might have been made in the past, however, about many medical diagnoses and treatments that later became discredited—including the inclusion of homosexuality on the list of mental disorders by the American Psychiatric Association, or the “disease” called “hysteria” in women, named for the female uterus itself. Those who believe that a particular medical standard, no matter how well established (and two decades is the blink of an eye in this respect) is inappropriate, even damaging, have a right to express that view and call for a revision of current medical protocols. There are, in fact, a significant number of medical practitioners who have objected to the prevailing treatments for “gender dysphoria.” Lay people are also entitled to an educated dissent. This is not a crime, and cannot be treated as if it were by the Green Party.

## **3) The Georgia Green Party did not participate—in the midst of an election campaign and on a time line demanded by the Lavender Caucus—in a process initiated by the Dispute Resolution Committee attempting to mediate between Georgia and the LC.**

How many have refused in the past to participate in the Green Party's dispute resolution process? Has anyone, before now, had that refusal held against them and used as evidence that they ought to be suspended or disaffiliated?

The DRC is there for members of the Green Party to use if they agree it will be useful. There is no statute or bylaw mandating anyone to participate in the DRC process if they do not believe it will be useful. So Georgia's action, assuming it is accurately reported, was completely compatible with the general standards of membership in the national Green Party and does not, therefore, constitute evidence that disciplinary action should be taken against that state party.

We also note that on more than one occasion the Georgia party has proposed the development of an open discussion about issues related to sex and gender in the national Green Party as a way of resolving this dispute. For example, in its [written response to Dario Hunter and the LC](#) on April 7, the Georgia Green Party clearly stated: "The resolution of this conflict must engage a party-wide conversation on the underlying issues." Georgia has repeatedly opened the door to ongoing dialogue including proposals to initiate a written exchange on the political matters in dispute.

Our caucus has likewise called for the same kind of political debate. In [our April 2 response to the GPUS Steering Committee](#) letter condemning the Georgia Green Party for its "unfortunate statements" in support of the Declaration on Women's Sex-Based Rights, we clearly propose an open debate of the political disagreements as the appropriate alternative to a formal DRC process in this case.

To date there has been no response from the Lavender Caucus and its supporters to any of these proposals for a structured political conversation in which all members of the Green Party can participate. So if we want to point fingers at one side or the other for blocking "dispute resolution" that finger could point at least as reasonably toward the LC as it does toward Georgia.

#### **4) "Georgia Green Party is in violation of several sections of our Platform."**

The Green Party platform is a living document that can and does change on a regular basis. There is a process for introducing amendments to the platform as opinions in the party on various matters shift over time. This suggests that dissent and discussion about specific platform planks is completely in order. Further: there is not, and cannot be, any bylaw or statute that requires members of the Green Party to agree with or support every plank in the platform. It would be a grave disservice to the democratic functioning of our party therefore—indeed an action far beyond the limited authority delegated to your committee—for the AC to now take it upon itself to establish "violation of the national platform" as a new offense punishable by suspension or discreditation.

The national platform, for example, endorses the "Nordic Model" for dealing with prostitution—criminalizing those who hire prostitutes while decriminalizing those who are hired. However, the Howie Hawkins campaign and many others in the Green Party have advocated the legalization of "sex work" as a different response to this social reality. Should Howie Hawkins and others who advocate legalization of "sex work" have their membership suspended until they "correct" their stated views?

Another example: The national platform endorses ecosocialism. There are, however, within the Green Party at least some who advocate for "green capitalism" while others identify with a "deep green"

viewpoint that actively and consciously rejects ecosocialism. Should these individuals have their membership suspended until they “correct” their stated views?

Clearly the answer is “no.” We should, instead, embrace the idea of a politically diverse party which allows for debate and discussion on controversial issues, even those where specific positions may have been adopted as part of our platform, rather than resolving such difficulties through an administrative process of “suspending” or “discrediting” current members because they disagree with one or another platform plank.

In addition, on the issues in dispute between Georgia and the LC the national Green Party platform makes contradictory assertions, also affirming feminism and the rights of women in ways that would seem more compatible with the interpretation given by the Georgia party than those given by the Lavender Caucus. This, too, points to the need for political debate and discussion rather than some administrative solution.

**5) Georgia’s action violates the “Green Key Values of diversity, social justice and feminism,” because “we [the national GP] support full legal and political equality for all persons regardless of sex, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity, characteristics, and expression.”**

But Georgia, too, endorses the “Green Key Values of diversity, social justice and feminism.” The question in dispute is a political one, about how “full legal and political equality for all persons regardless of sex, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity, characteristics, and expression” fits into that broad agreement.

Surely we are not going to act based on the idea that taking what some believe to be the wrong position in a political dispute about *how to apply* our key values is now an offense which justifies one segment of the party expelling another.

**6) “Multiple State and local parties have inveighed on this as have all of the Caucuses and several National Committees; all of whom support the Lavender Caucus in this dispute.”**

This suggests that there is a unanimity of opposition in the Green Party to the political position on women’s sex-based rights that Georgia has affirmed, and a unanimity of agreement with the Lavender Caucus that Georgia should therefore be suspended or discredited. There is no such unanimity, however, on either point.

We note in particular that the question before the AC is suspension or discreditation of Georgia. Many, perhaps most, of the official comments referenced by the LC in the quote above, however, included no statement whatsoever on the question of suspension or discreditation. They merely expressed an agreement with the LC in terms of its political judgments about Georgia’s endorsement of the “Declaration on Women’s Sex-Based Rights.” It is quite misleading, therefore, for the LC to suggest that this record establishes a unanimous support for its complaint to the AC calling for suspension or discreditation.

Further, it is a well established principle of democratic functioning that opinion polls taken before a full discussion of the political issues in question cannot be considered definitive. They represent, at best, an initial “straw poll.” The Green Party, as a national collective, has failed to organize a meaningful

political debate about the relationship between “trans rights” and “women’s sex-based rights.” Those who co-signed the LC complaint did so after hearing the LC’s position in this dispute. Did any of them contact the Georgia Green Party and ask to hear the Georgia side? If not, then the validity of the claim that “all support the Lavender Caucus” can, at the very least, be strongly questioned. It is as if a jury in a criminal trial came to a verdict after hearing only the prosecution witnesses, before listening to the defense. No one, except those most prejudiced against the defendant, would accept such a verdict as meaningful.

What process was used to authorize the signatures on the complaint that was filed with the Accreditation Committee? Did a full and democratic discussion take place in the Arizona party, the Illinois party, the Maine party, the North Carolina party, the Pennsylvania party—to list only the state parties that are official sponsors? Or did the endorsements take place based on discussion in some state leadership body? If the latter then we at least have to consider the possibility that after a process of democratic discussion the rank and file of these state parties might have expressed a different point of view, or decided that the prudent course was to refrain from expressing any point of view at all. At the very least we can say with some confidence that a more-or-less-substantial minority would have expressed a dissenting viewpoint more sympathetic to the positions Georgia has taken. The online petition titled [“Dialogue not Expulsion”](#) which gave birth to our caucus has (as of January 31) received endorsements by 275 individuals, including some from each of the states named as signers of this complaint. That is considerably more support than the 209 who signed [a similar on-line petition](#) endorsing the LC position during the same period of time.

In a collective that aspires to bottom-up democracy *and consensus functioning* all of this does, at the very least, mean that we cannot accept the assertion, in the LC complaint, that there is virtually unanimous support in the Green Party for the proposed action against Georgia.

Finally we pose two additional questions:

- a) Were there any state parties or Green collectives which were asked to sign this complaint but declined to do so?
- b) In those leadership bodies which voted to support the complaint, were there any “no” votes or objections raised? (We know that there were in at least one case.)

If the answer to either of these questions is “yes” then once again the claim of virtually unanimous support for the LC position cannot reasonably be sustained, and it cannot therefore constitute a basis for action by the Accreditation Committee.

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If there is not even a single point in this complaint that justifies the action proposed, and it is clear from the assessment above that there is not, then the complaint itself should, simply, be rejected both by the AC and by all Greens who are interested in maintaining a spirit of democracy and political pluralism in our party.