

The National Black Caucus an affiliated caucus of the Green Party of the United States By-Laws

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Background:

BC-GPUS has evolved since 2004. The revisions and amendments to the 2004 by-laws reflect the current needs of the Black Caucus.

Name:

The Black Caucus of the Green Party of the United States initially existed as the only Black Caucus in GPUS. In the past years states and locals have created their own Black Caucuses as such, in order to distinguish the valuable work of states and local caucuses, the BC-GPUS national caucus will be known as the National Black Caucus an affiliated caucus of the Green Party of the United States (National Black Caucus or NBC, for short).

I. A. Mission Statement:

The mission of the National Black Caucus (National Black Caucus or NBC) is to maximize the participation of people of African and African American descent in the political and policy-making process of the Green Party of the United States. It is further to introduce the Ten Key Green Values and the Green Party Platform to the African American/Black communities in the United States, as well as abroad, as relevant and appropriate for advancement of Black issues globally. The mission of National Black Caucus is to increase the participation and election victories in United States electoral politics of Black, African descended, and African Americans who support the GPUS Platform, and to ensure that the GPUS conducts and implements programs that concretize its platform in the interests of communities of African-American and African descent addressing community needs and disparities.

B. Guiding Priorities:

The National Black Caucus Membership will annually develop guiding priorities via on-line survey, membership conference calls and/or National Black Caucus annual planning meetings. Members should NOT misrepresent discussions, decisions, business or mission of National Black Caucus in public statements and unless designated to do so should not act as spokespersons for the caucus.

II. Membership:

The National Black Caucus has two categories for membership or participation in its organization. All members complete a membership application for registration, tracking, and communication purposes.

A. Full Membership: is reserved for African Americans and persons of African descent who (a) are registered voters having designated the Green Party as their party affiliation, are members

of the GPUS or Campus/Young Greens, or (b) are registered Independent in states with laws that preclude recognition of or registration in the Green Party; and (c) whose contact information is forwarded to the National Black Caucus. Members should not be members of any other political parties. Voting rights are granted after a member has participated in a National Black Caucus national conference call or national meeting. Other membership requirements, such as dues, will be decided by the membership.

B. Affiliate Membership: Other persons ineligible for full membership who are interested in the mission of the National Black Caucus, above, may participate in National Black Caucus activities. Affiliate members may participate in discussions with no voting or office holding privileges in the National Black Caucus.

C. Member/Affiliate Rights

- Members have the right to attend/participate in meetings, committees/working groups, debate and vote. Members must be present for three meetings and active for a minimum of a six month period to be eligible to vote on issues or elections before the caucus, prior to voting.
- Affiliates have the right to attend/participate in meetings, committees/working groups and debate but cannot vote or hold office.
- Members/Affiliates have the right to be treated with fairness and in good faith.
- Members/Affiliates have the right to confidentiality.

D. Membership Meetings:

Members are expected to participate in once monthly membership conference call in addition are encouraged to participate in annual GPUS Annual Meeting, National Black Caucus annual planning meetings, National Black Caucus committees/work groups and national, state, local, and National Black Caucus events and activities. Members are especially encouraged to participate at the grassroots level.

III. A. Equity in National Black Caucus Leadership:

The National Black Caucus will work to ensure equity in all areas of its leadership, organization, programs and activities. The NBC will seek representation throughout the leadership that is reflective of the diversity within the party and the United States. We strive for an equitable balance of leadership while honoring and supporting those willing to serve in caucus leadership This does not preclude anyone from running and we do not support tokenism as a method of achieving equity because tokenism is inherently disenfranchising.

B. Officers:

The National Black Caucus Steering Committee shall elect the following national National Black Caucus officers: 2 Co-Chairs; Secretary; a Treasurer; a Parliamentarian, 2 Delegates and 1 Alternate Delegate to the National Committee, and 2 Youth Ambassadors (Young Ambassadors will be National Black Caucus members age 30 and under, they may or may not be members of the youth caucus.) These officers will comprise the NBC Steering Committee.

C. Elections of Officers:

The terms of office shall be for two years without limits. After its initial full election, elections shall be held annually within 45 days following the Annual National Meeting or Presidential

Nominating Convention. General election guidance includes: Call for nominations will occur immediately, but within one week following the national meeting and close within 15 days of the national party meeting. Nomination period to be conducted for 1 week to 10 days. Discussion period 1 week to 10 days, and voting for one week. During the 45 day period the caucus can host a candidate forum, whose audio and/or video, when available, can be made accessible by the membership. The caucus has the option of inviting outside party members to view the forum but only members can question the candidates because only members can vote for candidates. Elections shall be conducted through instant runoff voting with the option of voting None of the Above, when there are more than one candidate for office. If there is only one candidate for any office the NBC can opt for a simple vote by the caucus for or against affirming that person to the office in question. -This may be amended by the National Black Caucus members as deemed necessary. No proxy voting is allowed.

D. Co-Chairs:

The co-chairs shall be responsible for coordinating the affairs of the National Black Caucus and its staff, facilitating its meetings and representing the National Black Caucus as national spokespersons. They shall be responsible for representing the interests, ideas and needs of the National Black Caucus as established by the National Black Caucus. Terms of the co-chairs shall be staggered in the interest of continuity.

E. Secretary:

Shall be responsible for keeping and maintaining the minutes of the meetings, posting same in a timely fashion and shall be responsible for disseminating and maintaining official correspondence regarding meetings, agreements and other communications as needed.

F. Treasurer:

Shall be responsible for the fiscal management of the National Black Caucus and provide a monthly financial updates to National Black Caucus Steering Committee and an annual financial report to National Black Caucus Membership. The Treasurer shall be responsible for National Black Caucus funds through monitoring bank accounts or GPUS Black Caucus Accounts, deposits and expenditures authorized by National Black Caucus Co-Chairs. If possible, the Treasurer should represent National Black Caucus on the GPUS Finance Committee.

G. National Committee Delegates and Alternate:

They shall be responsible for representing the interests, ideas and needs of the National Black Caucus on the National Committee of the GPUS. In representing National Black Caucus, the Delegates and Alternate shall be guided by the priorities of the membership and the directions of the National Black Caucus Steering Committee. The Alternate Delegate shall serve in the Delegates place when the Delegate is not able to perform.

H. Youth Ambassadors:

In seeking to ensure both equity across generations and in building sustainability for the NBC, the caucus identifies and secures place in the leadership for youth voices. These roles does not preclude a youth person from holding any other office in the caucus but these seats on the NBC Steering Committee are designed to maintain access and inclusion of youth perspectives, voices, and issues in the context of the work of the Party and the NBC.

I. Parliamentarian:

The Parliamentarian shall ensure compliance with rules and procedures of the National Black Caucus, and such procedures as established by the National Black Caucus Steering

Committee; and may mediate any formal issue or discussions as required to reach a consensus.

J. Other Officers:

The National Black Caucus may elect such other officers as needed and define their duties. Representatives to all GPUS committees (especially media, outreach, diversity, fundraising and finance) should be considered. Their term of office will expire when the term of current officers expires or as identified in the proposal to create the adjunct officer. .

K. Removal of Officers:

Officers may be removed for Cause - for 3 or more absences without notice, or for dereliction of duty - by a majority vote of all designated members of the National Black Caucus Steering Committee at a specially called meeting to give each member of the Steering Committee an opportunity to participate and the officer charged the opportunity to respond. Upon the vacancy of any office, the National Black Caucus Steering Committee shall elect an officer to serve the remainder of the term.

L. Steering Committee:

The National Black Caucus Steering Committee shall be the decision-making body of the National Black Caucus, between meetings of the National membership meetings, and shall operate in accordance with its approved by-laws, policies and procedures. All official actions of the National Black Caucus must be sanctioned by this body including endorsements, proposals for grants and financing, financial management, approval of new programs, campaigns and activities, hiring decisions and supervision of staff, official statements, media releases, public statements, appointment of National Black Caucus representatives to GPUS standing and ad hoc committees. Any decisions by the Steering Committee can be called into question by a member, the question to be put forward on the next national membership meeting, or a special called meeting, with vote of the national membership; $\frac{2}{3}$ of those present are needed to vote to overturn the Steering Committee decision.

A quorum for decision-making must include at least one Co-chair and 30% of the total Steering Committee membership from 3 different states.

M. Steering Committee Meetings:

The National Black Caucus Steering Committee shall meet in-person, when possible, at the annual GPUS convention along with at least quarterly steering committee and National Black Caucus general membership conference calls. One steering committee meeting should take place annually at the Annual National Meeting or virtually during that time, unless otherwise decided upon by the Steering Committee and the membership is duly notified of the change no less than 15 days prior to the scheduled conclusion of the annual national meeting.

Members and affiliate members may sit in, be asked for comments or reports, but are not included in decision-making of the Steering Committee or executive session. The caucus shall be responsible for assisting where necessary and as possible, participation of any member whose personal circumstances would otherwise preclude such participation.

N. Other Committees:

The National Black Caucus Steering Committee may also establish other committees, working groups and other entities as are necessary to do its work. A committee's membership, purpose and length of service will be established by the National Black Caucus Steering Committee.

These committees will report to the National Black Caucus Steering Committee on a monthly basis or as determined.

O. Committee Meetings:

These meetings shall be held at the convenience of the members of each committee. Members and affiliate members are encouraged to participate. Voting is limited to committee members that are full members of National Black Caucus. Dates and times of such meetings shall be made public.

IV. National Black Caucus Rules of Order:

Rules of Order provide a body of rules, ethics and customs that govern National Black Caucus membership and its members' conduct. The purpose is to conduct business in the most efficient way and consider the rights of the entire membership. A fundamental rule is respect for opposition.

A. Decision-Making:

The National Black Caucus will use unanimous consent for decision-making. If unanimous consent is not possible, a majority vote will decide. Any member may request an issue or motion be called by co-chair for vote by membership.

Unanimous consent- a vote is called by a co-chair, if there are no objections to the issue or motion it passes.

Majority vote is not the same as a vote of the majority of entire membership. Since all members are informed of the regularly scheduled meetings and given notice in the case of special called meetings; absence from the caucus meeting should not preclude the business of the caucus going forward. When membership consists of a significant part that is absent, members present/voting can conduct decision-making in the name of the membership.

B. Amendments to By-Laws:

Amendments to these by-laws may be proposed by the National Black Caucus Steering Committee or by petition of ten National Black Caucus Members representing five states.

Voting will be conducted on-line, email or at the National Black Caucus Annual Convention or Planning meetings. A quorum for decision-making must include at least one Co-chair and 50% of the total Steering Committee membership from 3 different states.

C. Suspension of Rules

Allows National Black Caucus to set aside its normal rules to do something that it could not do otherwise. A motion to suspend a rule can be adopted by unanimous consent or majority vote. Rules cannot be suspended that allow nonvoting members to vote or that take away member/affiliates right to participate.

If a violation of the suspension of rules occurs because of circumstances or expediency the action must be challenged at the time of the violation, otherwise as long as the action adheres to the fundamental principles of the National Black Caucus it will stand. A seconded motion called to rescind the action can be passed by majority vote with notice to the entire body.

D. Changing Action Previously Decided On

Membership has the authority to take actions and make decisions it purports to be valid. A seconded motion to rescind, repeal, annul or amend an issue or decision already adopted requires majority vote with notice to the body.

E. Disciplinary Procedures

Disciplinary actions of members/affiliates for violating Rules of Order includes Censure, Suspension and Expulsion. Disciplinary actions for violations in conduct or of Rules of Order must be held in executive session by the National Black Caucus Steering Committee. Offending member will be notified and may respond to violation either by email or during the executive session. When a member is recommended for suspension or expulsion it requires notification to the entire membership for majority vote. Offending members cannot vote in their own disciplinary actions.

Types of disciplinary actions:

Censure- expression of strong disapproval or harsh criticism of a member's offending behavior. This action does not require executive disciplinary session if issued as an informal action. Censure is to be issued by a co-chair if issued informally. If issued formally by executive session it does not require secondary voting by membership in order to be issued.

Suspension- when a member's offending behavior has been recommended for suspension it may include suspending all or some member rights including participating in conference calls, meetings and committees. Requires executive session and majority vote of membership.

Expulsion- when a member has multiple violations of the Rules of Order or conduct that has been determined as egregious they may be subject to expulsion from National Black Caucus. Any member subject to expulsion may apply to rejoin after 3 years. Executive session and majority vote by memberships required.

F. Rules for Out of Order

When members intend debate or participation to obstruct National Black Caucus business they may be considered Out of Order. Using dilatory motions or tactics to delay or obscure the caucus' decision-making or discussion process is NOT allowed. Examples of dilatory motions/tactics:

- demanding quorum/vote before discussion has concluded
- negative motions including asked and answered questions
- nonparticipation in process when it delays caucus business

The parliamentarian can issue a Cloture/Guillotine to a member who is required to end the issue. Any member can request a Cloture to be issued against another member who is engaging in dilatory motions or tactics. This is intended to overcome obstructions to the cohesiveness of the caucus. If member chooses to continue dilatory motions or tactics they may be referred for disciplinary actions.

Source Information:

Demeter's Manual of Parliamentary Law & Procedure
Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (TSC)

Robert's Rules
Democratic Rules of Order