



# Green Party of Michigan

## 2016 Platform

This platform shows how the Green Party of Michigan (GPMI) translates its values into practical policies on major issues. It's not a comprehensive document. It's published in the spring, and we ask our candidates to support the positions in it. Naturally, new issues emerge and old ones become critical as events and campaigns develop. You should see our website <http://www.migreenparty.org/>, our blog (listed under "Worthwhile Links" on the website), our news releases and our candidates for the most up-to-date information. You can participate by making comments on the blog or sending us an article to be published there. (No personal insults or irrational rants, please.)

**Ecological wisdom, social justice, grassroots democracy, and non-violence** are the "Four Pillars" of Greens around the world. To the "Four Pillars", US Greens add six more values to form the "Ten Key Values": **decentralization, community-based economics, feminism, respect for diversity, personal and global responsibility, and sustainability**. See the page of this document headed "Ten Key Values ..." and our website for more on this subject. If you agree with these values you are already Green. We hope you will work for these values in your own way, and also join GPMI, vote for our candidates, and perhaps become a candidate.

**GPMI is on the ballot statewide.** That means we can nominate **candidates for any partisan office**, from Governor to County Commissioner and Township Trustee. GPMI candidates use this platform and the Ten Key Values to take stands on key issues for their offices. For information on how to become a candidate, or take part in our state convention or a county nominating caucus, check our Website.

Many other elected offices in Michigan are considered non-partisan: city commissions, school boards, and library boards, for example. GPMI can't nominate candidates for those offices. However, **Greens can and should participate in those elections.** We share information on how to do that: making community contacts, raising funds, organizing a campaign committee, using print materials and the Internet to communicate with voters.

Of course, election campaigns aren't the only way to work on political issues. We've seen political change come from non-partisan movements around the world. **Greens are active** in movements for peace, the environment, human rights, jobs, and other causes. We can all do a lot with our own resources: study issues, discuss them in our communities, and take direct action ranging from community gardening to street demonstrations and strikes.

**The issues in this platform are not isolated from each other.** One big obstacle to making the transition to a sustainable energy economy is that it will eliminate many jobs of the fossil fuel economy. Naturally, people who have these jobs will object. Today, loss of your job means a crisis which might ruin your life and destroy your family. With single-payer universal health care, anyone could lose a job without also losing health insurance. With a guaranteed income, anyone could lose a job without becoming impoverished and homeless. With free education for all (paid through taxes), anyone could learn new skills for a new job. We could make the transition without ruining lives. Will we learn to use other tools than violence to resolve conflicts? Will we learn to live within the limits of the natural world or continue destroying our environment? **It's up to us.**

## Democracy and Human Rights

At its founding, this nation declared all people had unalienable rights, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Especially since the PATRIOT Act, the government has claimed great power over us and shown no respect for our rights. Candidates from “both” major parties have shown their unity by ignoring the spirit of the Declaration and the letter of the Constitution. People who have committed no crimes are arrested, jailed, even killed. Powerful people and institutions commit fraud, perjury, and worse with no penalty. But **we the people have a right to alter or abolish government that no longer works for us.** We need a strong and persistent popular movement to regain “liberty and justice for all.”

GPMI wants to give the majority of voters who lack enthusiasm for both Democrats and Republicans something to vote *for*. If you're disenchanted with politics as usual, you don't have to sit on the sidelines and you don't have to waste your vote on either corporate party's candidate. If enough of us **register our protest at the ballot box** by voting Green, we'll actually see change start – instead of just hoping for it and being disappointed.

GPMI is firmly on the side of **rights for people, not for corporations**. We support **amending the US Constitution** to overrule the Supreme Court, which invented corporate “personhood” long before its 2010 *Citizens United* decision blocked controls on corporate donations for advertising during election campaigns. We back any amendments that say **corporations are not people with Constitutional rights – and money is not speech**.

No human should be denied rights based on race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other discriminatory category. GPMI strongly supports granting **the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to all humans** – including immigrants in this country, and refugees around the world. We actively support First Nations' struggles for **full tribal sovereignty, land reform, and honoring of treaties**. GPMI fully supports the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People**, and the world indigenous movement working to protect the Earth from industrialism. **Women need to have the right, and the practical ability, to choose abortion** – and health insurance should cover that choice.

We also seek to **end the influence of money in politics**. Democracy should express the will of the people through a “one person, one vote” process. **Public financing and free airtime for all legally qualified candidates** and **ending gerrymandering** would make ballot access meaningful. Other reforms include a ban on political ads for the two weeks before elections and a ban on corporate donations to politicians, parties, PACs or lobbyists.

GPMI has lots of ideas on **election reform and democratic government**. For example, **taxpayer-funded primary elections should be eliminated**. They cost us all millions, and marginalize alternative political parties. Let each party set up and pay for the process by which it selects candidates. The people can judge if their methods are fair and democratic. We could require legislators to spend **26 weeks a year in their districts**, and **hear from all their constituents** instead of seeing only other politicians and lobbyists.

Voter power depends on guarding **each voter's right and ability to cast informed votes** free from long lines or other pressures. **Instant Runoff Voting** lets voters list their full preferences among candidates, not settle for one “lesser evil” candidate. **Paper ballots (counted by human beings instead of machines), election audits, voting holidays, no-reason absentee voting** and other reforms can help all votes count – and be counted.

From Julian Assange, Chelsea Manning, and Edward Snowden we know the culture of national security secrecy has corrupted our government, and how far out of control and beyond Constitutional limits the US police state is. GPMI calls for **immediate repeal of the PATRIOT Act**, which intelligence agencies abuse to claim excessive powers of surveillance and investigation. And we demand **real transparency in government** – no more secret budgets, secret prisons, unwarranted data searches and abuse of prisoners. To end such atrocities, we must curtail secrecy and police power and restore the rule of law.

GPMI also supports **Net Neutrality**, which keeps anyone from controlling the Internet with restrictions on content, platforms, transmission speed, or equipment. If courts will not let FCC enforce this democratic concept under current law, we call for new laws to make sure people have fair and equal access to online information – and to each other, to share it.

Here in Michigan, Governor Snyder promised “transparency” when he signed PA 252 of 2013. What we got was more influence for secret money in elections and doubled fat-cat contribution limits (redoubled by a new law that also limits public talk on ballot issues). This followed a “Right-to-Work” law, taking the decision on wolf-hunting away from the voters and abortion out of standard insurance coverage, re-animating the Emergency Manager law after voters rejected it, and more acts of contempt for the will of the people. No wonder our state was recently flunked by the Center for Public Integrity. **GPMI calls for repeal of all these acts**, and **an end to “referendum-proofing.”** Michigan should also **ban fracking** – and **legalize growing and sale of marijuana**, while regulating any use proven hazardous. Industrial hemp can bring our state benefits including jobs in growing and processing.

The US leads the world in percentage of citizens in prison, most for non-violent drug offenses. A disproportionate number are blacks and Hispanics due to racial profiling, though drug-use rates are evenly spread across racial/ethnic lines. The disadvantages that come with criminal records have created a new kind of Jim Crow. GPMI would work to **end this injustice**, and the financial incentives set up by prison privatization and the “War on Drugs.”

We believe that **Black Lives Matter**, so we support re-establishing democratic control of local police forces. One way is to make sure **proceeds of police seizures go into a state or local government's general fund**, not the budget of the police that carry out the seizures. This way, no police force can become a self-financing entity outside the budget control of elected officials – which keeps related corruption in check. We also support **elected Citizen Review Boards** to oversee law enforcement, with the power to fire police officers and start prosecution of criminal acts even if other authorities reject accountability.

Utilities and other **essential community services should be in the community's hands**, not privatized for corporate profits. Local governments should support time banks, transition towns, community gardens, and similar non-profit organizations which build their communities. GPMI also supports **community involvement in schools and literacy programs** as well as shelters for battered women, men, and children. **Training in non-violent conflict resolution** should be a regular school program – for students and parents.

**Workplace democracy** would enable workers and managers to implement and use democratic principles. Adults and students should both get training and practice in the tools and methods of democracy and justice: voting systems, due process, debates, and non-violent conflict resolution such as mediation and arbitration.

If you believe that democracy at all levels should mean that decisions affecting the lives of the people are made by the people and for the people . . . you're already Green.

## The Environment

Some politicians talk of “balancing” economic and environmental goals. Others want to end all environmental protection. Both are wrong. ***Sacrificing the environment in the name of jobs and growth is short-sighted. It threatens our long-term survival.*** What we need is ***an ecologically sustainable economy*** which protects our environment. We must create a wiser relationship with the natural world, ending the fossil fuel economy in order to limit and eventually reverse climate change and ocean acidification.

***Clean, accessible water is a fundamental human right and a public trust.*** That right and that trust were violated in Flint (lead poisoning) and Detroit (mass water shutoffs instead of an affordable water plan). We should ***ban hydraulic fracturing*** because it pollutes the water supply. We should ***revoke the sulfide-mining permit for the Eagle mine***, which will drain acid into the Yellow Dog Watershed and Lake Superior. We certainly ***oppose Canada's proposed nuclear waste dump*** on the shores of Lake Huron.

As the Fukushima disaster shows, nuclear power poses long-term risks to all life on Earth. GPMI ***opposes new nuclear plants***, and calls for phasing out existing reactors. Fossil fuels bring their own disasters, including the Enbridge pipeline break in Marshall. GPMI also opposes offshore oil drilling, Enbridge's pipeline over the Straits of Mackinac, tar-sands oil, and coal. Clean power creates local jobs. We need to ***develop renewable energy*** such as wind and solar power, in Michigan and nationwide, ***and reduce energy use generally.***

***There is no reason to limit Michigan's renewable electricity requirement to 10%.*** Michigan can economically generate electricity from wind power in many areas. We have much more sunshine than Germany, which already generates over 25% of its electricity from renewable sources – without using any nuclear power. Solar panels work well in Michigan at personal, and community-scale, and the cost is approximately the same as electricity from the power grid. Sunlight is also useful for direct and hot-water heating of well-designed buildings. Still, ***we must avoid treating rural areas as resource colonies.*** GPMI supports decentralized power generation when feasible, and giving local communities power to decide whether or not to accept large energy projects in their areas.

With any fuel, our internal-combustion engines pump carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Efficiency helps – but we still need to do less driving and much less flying. GPMI supports ***building a good network of efficient public transportation*** while minimizing use of destructive road salt.

GPMI ***opposes concentrated animal feeding operations, factory farms, GMOs, and suburban sprawl.*** We support revitalization of rural communities and small-scale, organic agriculture as remedies for unsustainable, petrochemical-dependent agribusiness. Our rich legacy of forests and lakes has a value beyond timber or tourist dollars. We should halt over-logging on state forests, provide more non-motorized lakes and campgrounds, outlaw wolf hunting, work to set aside more wilderness areas, and protect more of our Great Lakes shorelines from development.

Building a sustainable society that enhances the environment instead of degrading it will be a lot of work – plenty of jobs for Michigan's people for decades to come. But we need peace, democracy, and social justice to get there. If you agree . . . you're already Green.

## Resource Wars

Today, wars are largely about controlling the world's limited and diminishing reserves of fossil fuels, farmland, and other resources. Unless we change course, tomorrow's wars will be the same. These are wars nobody can win. War cannot restore depleted resources; rather, it uses them up faster. We must use and recycle resources peacefully and effectively.

All the non-renewable energy sources on which our industrial civilization depends – petroleum, coal, natural gas, uranium for nuclear power – will run out in a century or less if we keep using them as fast as possible. Today, our machines depend on fossil fuels for about 85% of their energy. As the availability of those fuels declines, the machines must stop and become useless. Energy per capita has been declining for at least three decades, and the rate of decline is increasing. We should understand these facts, and adapt to them.

**GPMI opposes wars for oil**, wrongly glorified as wars against terrorism. Like Bush before him, Obama attacks legitimate, non-violent opposition to his policies as “terrorism” or “support of terrorism.” GPMI has called for impeachment of both, for the same reasons.

**GPMI opposes individual terrorism – and state terrorism**, authorities using force and violence for their own political purposes: US “Shock and Awe” bombings; Israel's oppression of Palestinians by walls, settlements, and one-sided wars; unpunished killings by police, such as in Benton Harbor; drone strikes aimed at alleged terrorists that terrorize and kill civilians; the threat that anyone can be accused of terrorism (or the “treason” of whistleblowing), stripped of rights, and sent to Guantanamo or assassinated. GPMI calls for **repeal of the “PATRIOT Act”** and similar violations of human rights. We should get US troops and drones out of all countries on which we have not declared war. We should **end military aid**, and **all foreign aid supporting state terrorism** (particularly aid to Israel); such aid supports an American Empire which threatens US security and ideals, and should not exist.

We need to drastically **reduce use of imported energy** – but through a permanent change in direction: **reducing energy use generally, rather than increasing extraction of extreme energy from tar sands, methane hydrate, and shale**. Bringing the troops home would be a good start; the US armed forces are now our largest single consumer of energy. Conservation and efficiency will also help. GPMI supports putting millions to work **rebuilding cities** with walkable neighborhoods, public transportation, and community gardens – and **rebuilding the countryside** with low-energy farming for local consumption.

Higher Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards for vehicles are good, but insufficient. A fossil-fuels **carbon fee-and-dividend system**, with **all fees returned in equal shares to the people** of the United States, would reduce energy use generally while giving the poorest households the means to cope with higher prices for energy. That would help us get ahead of fuel depletion and reduce carbon-dioxide emissions at the same time.

We should require energy-efficiency standards for all new buildings and encourage retrofitting of existing buildings. **Annual energy audits** for all government facilities and programs should become part of the annual budget process. GPMI supports **developing truly renewable energy** – wind, geothermal, and solar power, not industrial biofuels.

If you believe the twin wastes of war and conspicuous consumption make us and our world poorer . . . you're already Green.

## Jobs and the General Welfare

In the United States, the link between economic growth and prosperity has been broken for 40 years. Real wages have been flat or falling. Domestic production of oil peaked in 1970. Unwinnable wars have taken more and more of our depleting resources.

Economic problems were bad in the 2008 financial crisis – and for the 99% they have gotten worse, not better. Nobody has a secure job, secure health care, or a secure pension. No community has a secure future. In short, business and politics as usual are failing us.

Democrats, Republicans, and the Federal Reserve System only stimulate the economy from above. They bail out banks and promote the stock market. But they cut programs that help people directly: education, public safety, social services, and environmental protection. NAFTA, GATT, TPP, and all the other international trade agreements make things worse.

No matter what the corporate-funded parties say, ***the purpose of government is not economic growth*** – it is ***ensuring the general welfare. If the economy should be stimulated, we should stimulate it from the bottom up.*** For instance, a real jobs program would hire people directly to do useful public works, as the WPA did in the 1930s.

GPMI ***adamantly opposes any weakening of Social Security or Medicare.*** We should ***remove the cap on income subject to Social Security taxes.*** This would keep the system fully funded, without any need to cut benefits or raise the retirement age. In fact, more jobs would be available if full-retirement age was back down to 65. And ***we should not let Wall Street profit off our retirement*** by privatizing Social Security.

***Health care should be a right***, not a privilege reserved for those who can pay. The Affordable Care Act doesn't give health care; it requires insurance – which millions can't afford. ***Single-payer universal health care***, or ***"Medicare for All"***, could cover everyone equally and save us hundreds of billions annually (out of insurance-company profits).

We should ***stop the War on the Poor*** and repair our shredded social safety nets. ***Unemployment benefits should last as long as unemployment lasts*** – and ***all work should pay a fair, living wage.*** We should also ***make education free***, at least up to a bachelor's degree or the equivalent in training for a trade – and ***forgive college loan debt entirely (bail out people instead of banks)*** or at least make college-loan debt dischargeable by bankruptcy like all other debt.

GPMI supports a ***fair, simple, and progressive tax code.*** We should ***tax all types of income the same*** – wages, interest, capital gains, dividends – and ***cut out loopholes and exemptions.*** There should be ***no tax on income below the poverty level*** and a higher Earned Income Credit. Top-bracket ***tax rates for millionaires should rise to 80%.***

We should ***make Michigan a no-recourse state.*** This means that, if a family's house is foreclosed on, the foreclosure would entirely settle the mortgage debt. We should also require proof in court before a foreclosure proceeds, and impose a ***moratorium on home foreclosures and utility shutoffs*** when unemployment is high.

If you support these fair, common-sense measures to promote the general welfare and restore the social and economic dignity of jobs for all . . . you're already Green.

## Ten Key Values of the Green Party of Michigan

**Ecological Wisdom:** GPMI recognizes that the land does not belong to us; we belong to the land. Everything is interconnected and interdependent. All of nature, including humanity, is worthy of respect and freedom from exploitation.

**Social Justice:** GPMI wants to replace the worldwide system of poverty and injustice with a world free of all oppression based on class, gender, race, citizenship, age, or sexual orientation.

**Grassroots Democracy:** GPMI believes in direct participation by all people in the environmental, political, and economic decisions that affect their lives. In practice, we make decisions by voluntary consensus whenever possible.

**Non-Violence:** GPMI opposes the culture of violence. We promote non-violent resolution of international and domestic conflicts, and work toward lasting community and world peace.

**Decentralization:** GPMI supports a restructuring of social, political, and economic institutions away from a system which is controlled by (and mostly benefits) the powerful few to a democratic, less bureaucratic system.

**Community-Based Economics:** GPMI seeks an economics based upon the natural limits of the Earth which meets the basic needs of everyone on the planet. We value people over profits, when the two conflict.

**Feminism:** GPMI acknowledges the importance of both men and women and their unique capacities. Both sexes are critical to creating a healthy, sustainable society. We actively promote cooperation and participation to further our goals.

**Respect for Diversity:** GPMI believes it is important to value cultural, ethnic, racial, sexual, religious, and spiritual diversity, and to promote the development of respectful relationships across these lines.

**Personal and Global Responsibility:** GPMI demonstrates a commitment to global sustainability and international justice through political solidarity and in personal lifestyles of self-sufficiency. We believe in the slogan "Think globally, act locally."

**Future Focus/Sustainability:** GPMI sees a need to counterbalance the drive for short-term profits by keeping development, technology, and fiscal policies responsible to future generations.

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**Become a member of the Green Party of Michigan!** [www.MIGreenParty.org](http://www.MIGreenParty.org)

Yes, I want to join GPMI because I agree with the Four Pillars and/or the Ten Key Values.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

There are no dues or membership fees required to join the Green party of Michigan. The only requirement is that you live in Michigan and support our values. However, it does take some money to keep the organization running, so donations are much appreciated.

I can offer the following skills: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

By state law, we need to know your occupation and employer (name and address) if you give over \$100.00 cumulative in a calendar year. Please help us meet reporting requirements.

## **Key issues in the 2016 Green Party of Michigan platform include:**

- Democracy & Human Rights**
- Build a strong, persistent popular movement to regain "liberty and justice for all."
  - Amend the Constitution to say corporations aren't people and money isn't speech.
  - Repeal the PATRIOT Act; demand transparency and accountability in government.
  - Restore the power to petition for redress on laws, and end "referendum-proofing."
- Recognize the rights, treaty protections, legal authority, and wisdom of indigenous peoples.
  - Women need to have the right to choose abortion, access to the service, and insurance covering it.
  - Voting reform: paper ballots, counted by people; election audits; all voters voting, all votes count.
  - Repeal emergency manager, right-to-work laws, 2x contribution limits; no taxpayer-funded primaries.
  - Public financing for all legally qualified candidates; free air time the two weeks before Election Day.
  - Legalize marijuana; end racial profiling, "War on Drugs," and militarized police; Black Lives Matter.
  - Keep key community services in public hands; support local schools, non-profits, workplace democracy.
- The Environment**
- Don't sacrifice the environment in the name of jobs and growth.
  - Build an ecologically sustainable economy & wiser relations with the natural world.
  - Clean water is a human right and a public trust – ban fracking and sulfide mining
- Develop truly renewable energy – wind, solar, geothermal; oppose new nuclear plants, close old ones.
  - Oppose offshore oil drilling, Keystone XL, Enbridge Mackinac pipeline, tar sands, coal, and biomass.
  - Decentralize power generation when feasible; let communities decide on big energy projects near them.
  - Reduce energy use – build efficient public transportation, reduce driving; also minimize road-salt use.
  - Oppose CAFOs, factory farms, GMOs and suburban sprawl; support small-scale organic agriculture.
- Resource Wars**
- Oppose wars for oil and other resources; oppose terrorism, by state and individuals.
  - Reduce energy imports by permanently reducing energy use generally.
  - Recognize that wars are wasteful; use and recycle resources peacefully, effectively.
- Get US troops and drones out of all countries on which we have not declared war.
  - End military aid, and all foreign aid supporting state terrorism (particularly aid to Israel).
  - Rebuild cities and countryside to encourage conservation and efficiency.
  - Pass a fossil-fuels carbon-fee system, with dividends paid in equal shares to people to help them cope.
  - Require energy-efficiency standards for new buildings, energy audits for government facilities/programs.
- Jobs & the General Welfare**
- Raise the minimum wage to a true, fair, living wage.
  - Pass a real jobs program hiring people directly to do useful public works (like WPA).
  - No cuts to Social Security or Medicare; tax all wages to support Social Security.
  - Tax capital gains, dividends, etc. same as wages; cut out loopholes & exemptions.
- No tax on income below poverty level; higher Earned Income Credit; 80% top rates for millionaires.
  - Pass single-payer "Medicare for All" to make health care a right, not an insurance-dependent privilege.
  - Make unemployment benefits last until a job is found; bar foreclosures, shutoffs when jobs are scarce.
  - Make college (or trade training) tuition-free; have current college debt end at bankruptcy, or forgive it.
  - Make Michigan a no-recourse state, so a house foreclosure would entirely settle the mortgage debt.
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