



ILLINOIS GREEN PARTY

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ILGP FACT SHEET 2008-011

Guide for Slating Congressional Candidates

Modified on February 12, 2008

This guide is intended to help candidates, committeepersons, and others understand the process for slating Green Party candidates for U.S. House. Separate Fact Sheets detail the processes for slating candidates for other offices.

In simplest terms, where there is a Green Party ballot line for a U.S. House seat without a Green Party candidate on it, a candidate can be "slated" onto the ballot line by a body called the Congressional Committee. This guide explains what the Congressional Committee is and how it conducts business as relates to slating.

1. Formation of Congressional Committees

The Congressional Committee is defined in Section 7-8(e) of the Election Code. There are two different methods for the formation of Congressional Committees. If the congressional district lies entirely within Cook County, then the Congressional Committee consists of the duly appointed or elected Ward and Township Committeepersons whose wards/townships are entirely or partially within the territory of the relevant congressional committee. All other congressional districts in Illinois include parts of at least two counties, and in these cases, the Congressional Committee consists of the County Central Committee Chairpersons for those counties. In both cases, in addition, the Congressional Committee includes the State Central Committeepersons for that congressional district, who shall be co-chairs of the committee. The State Central Committeepersons, unless they are also on the committee in another capacity, do not vote except in the case of a tie.

2. State Central Committeepersons

The Illinois Green Party has opted to use "Alternative B" as defined in Section 7-8(a) of the Election Code, which means that in every congressional district, the party may have one Committeeman and one Committeewoman who will be members of the State Central Committee. These individuals are elected to four-year terms at the general primary election held in gubernatorial election years. When there is a vacancy in one of the State Central Committeeperson seats for a given congressional district, the vacancy is filled by an action of the members of the Congressional Committee, except when the congressional district is partially within Cook County and partially within at least one other county. In such a situation, the body which is empowered to fill the vacancy consists of the County Central Committee Chairpersons for such counties outside of Cook County, and the Ward and/or Township Committeepersons from relevant wards and/or townships within Cook County.

3. Weighted Votes

The voting members of a Congressional Committee have weighted votes, where the weight of the vote is equal to the number of Green Party ballots taken at the preceding primary election by voters within the county, ward, or township represented by the committee members, by voters who were residents of the congressional district.

4. Powers

Congressional Committees are only explicitly given two powers under the Election Code. The first is the power to slate, or fill a vacancy in nomination, for the party's ballot line in the congressional district. The second is the power to designate proxies to vote in the stead of a State Central Committeeperson in the convening of a meeting of the State Central Committee. The provision covering designating proxies, which will not be addressed at greater length here, can be found in Section 7-8(k) of the Election Code. The power to fill vacancies in State Central Committeeperson seats is not explicitly given to the Congressional Committee, although in most cases the people so empowered are the same people who constitute the voting members of the Congressional Committee; therefore, the Congressional Committee is able to take such action in such cases.

5. Meetings

Congressional Committees are not statutorily required to meet, and frequently do not meet because they tend not to have business to conduct. When meetings are necessary, all members of the committee must be given five days written notice, and should be called by the State Central Committeepersons in their de facto roles as co-chairs of the Congressional Committee, or, if there are no State Central Committeepersons for a given congressional district, by other members of the committee.

6. Vacancies in Nomination

In general, there are two ways in which there can be a vacancy in nomination. The first is if no candidate ran in the primary for the office, resulting in no candidate being nominated by primary vote. The second is if a candidate was previously nominated – by primary or by a previous act of slating – and the candidate withdraws, dies, or is otherwise unable to continue being the nominee.

7. Time Frames for Slating

The statutory rules governing slating can be found in Section 7-61 of the Election Code. If the vacancy in nomination occurs because no candidate won nomination in the primary, then slating must occur within 60 days after the primary election. If the vacancy in nomination occurs for any other reason, and occurs prior to the date of certification of ballots for the general election, then slating must occur prior to the certification date. If the vacancy in nomination occurs for any other reason, and occurs after the date of certification but at least 16 days before the general election, then the vacancy must be filled within 8 days of the event causing the vacancy, and must be reported no more than 3 days after the action of the committee to fill the vacancy.

8. Paperwork

See Section 7-61 of the Election Code for the legal requirements. In general, in addition to any papers the new nominee must file, the committee must submit a resolution which must a) be notarized; b) identify the name of the original nominee if applicable; c) specify the office in question; d) identify the date on which the vacancy occurred (this is often the date of the primary election); and e) the name and address of the candidate selected to fill the vacancy. This resolution should be delivered alongside the candidate's paperwork.

9. Bylaws

Generally speaking, the Congressional Committee does not need bylaws, given the limited tasks that the committee performs and the statutory imperatives underlying those tasks. Since it is unlikely that the committee would meet unless it were meeting to consider a vacancy in nomination, it is unlikely that it would need to pre-approve bylaws.

10. ILGP Assistance

The Illinois Green Party, primarily through its Government and Elections Committee, can often provide logistic and technical assistance through any of these processes, including but not limited to samples of forms, pre-drafting of forms, lists of relevant Committeepersons and/or County Central Committee Chairpersons who would constitute the Congressional Committee, and contact information for such persons.

11. Will of Green Party Members

The Illinois Green Party strongly urges any Congressional Committee which might convene for the purpose of considering a candidate who might fill a vacancy in nomination to make some attempt to ascertain the will of those members of the Illinois Green Party residing within the relevant congressional district, either directly through a mail-in ballot or other communication, or by way of the affiliated Illinois Green Party locals which include territory overlapping with the geography of the congressional district. It is strongly advised that any candidate meet the criteria of an endorsed candidate as delineated in the Illinois Green Party Bylaws, Article 10, Section D.