

The Pandemic Platform of the 2020 Congressional Slate of the Georgia Green Party

A collaboration between

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Our History

Our nation's most popular president, FDR, implemented necessary economic reforms, the New Deal, to a devastated depression-era economy. The "pump-priming" measures of the New Deal used government spending as a substitute for the money previously in circulation in the private economy. This became known as Keynesian economics, and this economic model was heralded with saving millions of Americans (although privileging whites) from starvation and misery during the depression. The Keynesian model was credited with America's wartime economic success and post-war expanding economy and relative prosperity. The wealthy elites of the era despised FDR's policies with an ideological zealotry, even policies that did not impact them financially, and planned for opportunities to reverse them all. They went as far as planning a military coup against the Roosevelt Administration, which was only thwarted by the loyalty of General Smedley Butler, who had been approached about leading the effort.

The Keynesian economic model was considered by most economists to be the most successful economic model until it was replaced by Reagan with a subversive economic theory called supply-side economics that shifted wealth to the rich

through regressive tax policy. The revenge of the wealthy elites had begun. Even George H.W. Bush criticized supply-side economics as "Voodoo Economics" during Bush's run for the 1980 Presidential nomination.

Supply-side economics, or "Reaganomics", delivered austerity for the poor and tax cuts for the wealthy elites. Reaganomics was a reverse-Robin Hood tax plan that was never repealed, with the tax cuts for the rich ever increasing since the 1980's, creating a skyrocketing national debt under Republican administrations, enriching the rich, helping impoverish a once robust American middle class, and creating a spiral of poverty for working class and poor Americans. While most economists in the 1980's regarded supply-side economics as a sham to dupe the public and a theory with no evidence to back its absurdist claims, the theory was promoted with evangelical fervor at home and abroad during the Reagan era and beyond.



Derailing the Economy and Public Health

Supply-side economics began being re-branded as neoliberalism around 1994 during the Bill Clinton administration. The Clinton administration and their Democratic Leadership Council allies embraced and implemented neoliberal policies previously perceived as Republican policies, slashing the social safety net, student aid / college grants, and deregulating Wall Street & banking with the repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act. Deregulation of banking and the repeal of Glass-Steagall are frequently cited as the biggest factors leading to the 2008 Great Recession. Much of the American middle class, working class and poor never enjoyed any of the post-2008 economic recovery, which largely accrued to the 1%, leaving everyone else behind. This new American poverty also fed into America's health care crisis BEFORE the pandemic, causing many middle class and poor Americans to neglect their health for financial reasons, thus making some of these endangered groups even more susceptible to COVID-19.

As the pandemic has shut down our political economy, the impact felt by the rich has been real and in some cases deadly, but middle class, poor, undocumented and otherwise marginalized Americans are dying



at a disproportionate rate, especially people of color¹. Many middle class and poor Americans pay outrageous sums for health insurance with substandard coverage with deductibles and copays that are unaffordable, dissuading policy holders from seeking the health care they need and the individual health care which might best enhance public health. Still others can't afford coverage at all or find themselves forced to choose between buying groceries, health insurance or rent, a catch-22.

A pre-pandemic, Feb. 15th Lancet study² shows that annually, some 68,000 Americans die prematurely due to a failure to implement a single-payer healthcare system that would save Americans, on aggregate, 13% in national healthcare expenditures. The failure to enact single-payer healthcare is shared between the Democratic and Republican leadership, as is responsibility for those 68,000 annual premature deaths. Both parties should take responsibility for creating this catch-22 scenario that has fueled the fire that is the COVID-19 pandemic.

What the Administration Knew and When They Knew It

We now know that Peter Navarro, Trump's Trade adviser, circulated a January 29 warning in the White House stating:

"The lack of immune protection or an existing cure or vaccine would leave Americans defenseless in the case of a full-blown coronavirus outbreak on U.S. soil". "This lack of protection elevates the risk of the coronavirus evolving into a full-blown pandemic, imperiling the lives of millions of Americans."

Yet meaningful action was not taken, even when a "public health emergency" was declared³ Jan. 31. Trump's inaction on the declared emergency delivered measurable results. The COVID-19 death toll is the metric of his mis-leadership and that of his party of yes-men, their fawning, uncritical media, the bipartisan cult of neoliberalism, and an incompetent opposition party in the Democrats. Note that former federal prosecutor Glenn Kirschner sees Trump's inaction as involuntary manslaughter⁴ on a massive scale.

The Problematic Misleadership of Congress

The solutions offered by Democrats & Republicans are not only inadequate, but demonstrate the servile relationship between legislators and the elites who fund their campaigns. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act⁵, passed on March 27, will issue \$1200 direct deposits for some adult income tax filers. But targeting tax filers who use direct deposit is classist and racist, disproportionately missing the target of working class and poor Americans as well as the undocumented, all groups who need these funds the most.

Worse yet, the CARES Act provides opportunities for unprecedented cronyism for large corporations in the amount of \$4.5 trillion being made available through Treasury Secretary Steven T. Mnuchin via the Federal Reserve. This is the largest direct wealth transfer from average Americans to the elites in modern history⁶. The 4.5 trillion slush fund epitomizes the "Shock Doctrine / Disaster Capitalism⁷" tactic documented by author Naomi Klein. Note that the Fed has also eliminated reserve requirements⁸, which concerns policy analysts that the \$4.5 trillion figure may be less than the amount planned for corporate distribution.

The Green Party insists that every penny of this fund must be accounted for, regardless of Trump's signing statement to the contrary. Our campaigns demand that everyone be held responsible for their actions, including corporate "leaders" who currently hide behind the absurdist concept of "limited liability". We believe that every Corporate officer and members on the board of directors of recipient companies

must be held both civilly and criminally liable for the unethical disbursement of any funds received.

People Aren't Disposable

We know who is bearing the worst of the current pandemic: the elderly, the medically vulnerable, the incarcerated, those experiencing homelessness and the black and brown working poor in essential sectors where social distancing isn't practiced. Our message is simple: You are not disposable. The Green Party is committed to policies that protect your well being, regardless of drops in stock prices or changes in the lifestyles of the wealthy. Georgia Greens are committed to aligning U.S. law and policy with the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a document co-written with Eleanor Roosevelt.

COVID-19 is a Message from Our Planet

In 2016, the United Nations Environment Programme wrote:

There is a worldwide increase in disease emergence and epidemics particularly from zoonoses – diseases that can be passed on between animals and humans. The emergence and re-emergence of zoonotic diseases are closely interlinked with the health of ecosystems. The risk of disease emergence and amplification increases with the intensification of human activities surrounding and encroaching into natural habitats, enabling pathogens in wildlife reservoirs to spill over to livestock and humans⁹.

The Green Party is committed to expanding nature reserves and biodiversity and limiting harmful agribusiness livestock practices.

Healthcare Solutions

The current, economically-rationed, private insurance "system" may as well be described as the "Coronavirus For All" plan. Americans, our guests, and undocumented workers deserve:

- Single Payer - Establish an improved "Medicare for All" single-payer insurance program to provide everyone with affordable, quality healthcare. This plan will also cover vision, dental and mental health care, on the principle of 'everyone in, no one out'.
- Prescription drugs should be covered for all without charge.
- Free testing and treatment for the COVID-19 virus.
- Immediate importation via airfreight of COVID-19 test kits and Personal Protective Equipment and related supplies and facilitation of US-based manufacture wherever prompt delivery is possible
- Hazard pay for medical, agricultural & other frontline workers
- Pandemic case contact tracing to reduce spread.
- Acceptance of help offered from Cuban doctors and all other competent professionals for pandemic relief, regardless of politics.

Income Support Solutions

1. Our allies in Denmark¹⁰ and Canada are introducing solutions where workers unable to work during the crisis are being provided with up to 90% of their prior wages / salaries until they are able to return to work, through government payments. Spain is introducing Universal Basic Income (UBI). And the United States could and should implement a similar system to prevent a "Greater Depression" or worse. The United States is a far richer country than Denmark.

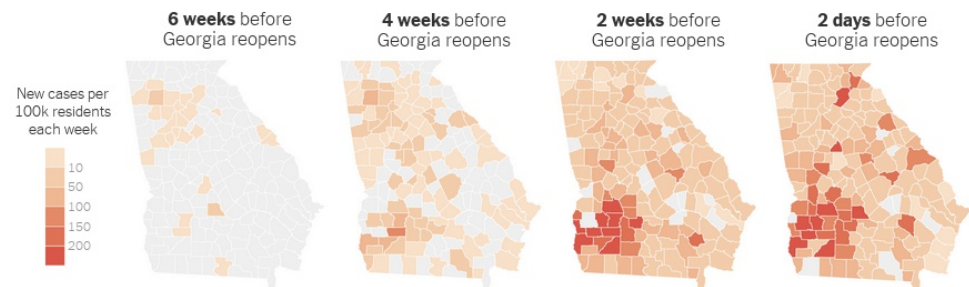
2. Universal Basic Income (UBI) will guarantee every American a share in our nation's enormous wealth, improve the quality of life for all Americans, and ensure that every American can afford basic food and shelter by paying a guaranteed minimum of \$2080 per month for every adult, and \$350 per month for every child, regardless of health, employment, or marital status. We have a moral obligation to our fellow Americans to make these payments permanent and adjusted each year for in-

The New York Times

Opinion

Why Georgia Isn't Ready to Reopen, in Charts

By Nathaniel Lash and Gus Wezerek
APRIL 24, 2020



flation. A permanent UBI, along with other economic reforms, would prevent us from having to take emergency actions, after people are already suffering, when we have future crises and would minimize government bureaucracy and intrusiveness into people's lives, eliminating the nightmarish bureaucracy of the welfare "system".

The two above plans are the minimum required to stabilize the economy, and a just economy will transition solution 1 into UBI post-pandemic. Without a simple income replacement option such as Denmark's plan or UBI, far more complex systems will be required to prevent the economic hardships of the pandemic from destroying America as we know it. Outside of a generous UBI-type scenario, all workers, including "gig" and undocumented workers, will need to have their rights extended to include:

- Protection from job termination without cause
- Extended unemployment compensation
- Family leave job protection

Economic Solutions

- Implement a REAL Green New Deal to achieve a net-zero carbon economy in 5 years.
- Incentivize US businesses to produce raw materials and finished goods by rebuilding the U.S. manufacturing sector, for creating domestic supply chains.
- Fund sustainable public works infrastructure projects.
- Suspension of debt collection and accrual of interest for those with assets under \$1 million dollars.
- Promotion of "victory gardens" and neighborhood-scale food production everywhere.

Labor Solutions

- Implement living wage initiative starting at \$15/ hr transitioning to \$24/ hr¹¹ to provide relief to minimum wage workers
- Implementation of maximum wage by capping the deductibility of excess executive income¹².
- Incentivize US businesses to employ formerly incarcerated individuals.
- Uphold the right of workers to refuse a return to work under conditions which threaten their own health, or that of their families and communities.
- Retrain the unemployed for jobs implementing:
 - The REAL Green New Deal
 - Expansion of internet services to Americans living in underserved areas
 - Pandemic case contact tracers¹³.

"The CARES Act... is the largest direct wealth transfer from average Americans to the elites in modern history"

Housing Solutions

The Georgia Green Party endorses the following emergency measures that will protect citizens from pandemic period homelessness:

- Work with Housing and Urban Development to create a federal database of va-

cant residential properties controlled by owners or managers who manage more than one unit, for use in providing emergency housing to the homeless, with federal compensation to the property owner, coordinated with local governments¹⁴.

- Where insufficient vacant residential units are available to house the homeless, create a database of commercial / industrial property owners with more than one unit, for the same purpose as above.
- Suspend the eviction of families and individuals due to job loss and/or illness.
- Provide legal protections for squatting in unoccupied buildings and automobiles.
- In the absence of above listed "Income Support Solutions";
 - Enact a pandemic period moratorium on all rents and mortgage payments

Education Solutions

- Provide public school students and families with support to meet family nutrition requirements
- Implement school distribution of breakfast and lunch
- Provide one laptop per child
- Adopt equitable methods of funding school districts
- Eliminate student debt payments on outstanding loans

Protect Vulnerable Populations

- Prioritizing public transportation for our population with disabilities via accessible transport vehicles for purposes of medical visits and food shopping
- Mandating that parole boards should

give special consideration to the release of inmates who are elderly or have compromised immune systems and who can demonstrate a local support system

- Requiring courts and / or governors to release immediately non-violent offenders and misdemeanants, except those charged with committing predatory financial schemes on the public.
- Encouraging parole boards to consider the monitored release of other inmates, where the health of the incarcerated would benefit and public safety would not be jeopardized

Ensure Continuity of Public Services

- Fully fund the US Postal Service to retain existing services, employee pensions & prevent job losses
- Provide alternative access to government services online and through the mails.
- Prioritize public transit alternatives including public access to multi-use city bicycles.
- Install rooftop solar power on local government buildings, including community centers, to reduce government electricity usage and sell excess to the power grid, and in the case of those on fixed incomes, eliminate the cost of local utilities
- At the state level, state legislatures can follow the century-long success of North Dakota's "Bank of North Dakota" by creating a state bank. This helps a state's citizens and businesses get fair treatment in the financial marketplace, and state bank profits go into their state's general revenue fund, reducing the need for state taxes¹⁵.

Protect Democratic Institutions and Processes

- The elections must go on, by mail, if necessary, for social distancing.
- All elections must be auditable. New standards are required for meaningful audits in Georgia as current "standards" permit election rigging without oversight and consequences.
- Universal and Automatic Voter Identification and Registration for every citizen and taxpayer¹⁶, subject to application of the malapportionment penalty outlined by the Fourteenth Amendment.

Jumpstart Our Economy

- Incentivize the private sector and cooperatives to produce needed raw materials and finished products by reinvigorating the manufacturing industry throughout the United States.
- Create incentives for local food production networks where they are sustainable.

Repeal Trade Agreements that:

- Outsource critical healthcare drugs and consumables, such as "N95" masks, to other countries
- Use secret, rigged courts (ex. ISDS) to favor corporations over national sovereignty, human rights and the unalienable rights of nature¹⁷.

Fail to apply:

- The highest environmental standards for manufacturing of countries trading.
- Added value to products manufactured in a plant run by worker-owned cooperatives, or plants with indepen-

dently organized labor unions.

- Border adjustments for products produced with renewable energy¹⁸ (penalizing products produced with fossil fuels).
- Border adjustments for fossil fuels used in transporting products to the United States and to their final domestic destination.

International Policy

We recognize:

- That economic sanctions against foreign countries are considered an act of war.
- The U.S. has applied economic sanctions without regard for the extreme impact these policies have on the health and welfare of the citizens of affected countries.
- In sanctioned countries, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been generally much greater than that of non-sanctioned countries, leading to increased mortality and poor health outcomes.
- To respect the human rights of all those persons residing in countries under U.S. sanctions, all sanctions (excepting those prohibiting transfers of weapons and weapons components) are to be immediately lifted until further notice.
- Sanctions shall not be reconsidered by the U.S. government without a Congressional declaration of war and until the World Health Organization states the pandemic threat has ended.
- That Cuba has been leading the international fight against the pandemic by providing doctors to far wealthier countries such as France and Italy.

- US foreign and domestic policies have been used for external and internal colonization, exploitation of populations, and tools for economic and labor resource extraction since the founding of this country, as summed up by U.S. General Smedley Butler “War is a racket”.
- That war is counterproductive, peace is the answer, and withdrawing troops from our war and occupation zones will help save both our troops and foreign citizens from disease and misery.

How we pay for it

Congress has the Constitutional authority for the creation of money, but handed its responsibility off in 1913 to the Federal Reserve, a private banking cartel. Greens have long recognized that Congress, however, still retains this Constitutional power, and can legislate a win-win solution with the use of “Greenbacks”.

“When the big banks refused to help the nation fight against its possible division in the Civil War, Greenbacks came to the rescue. Greenbacks are debt-free government money created as an asset, not a debt, and today offer the safest alternative to getting the nation and the world out of debt and through this and other crises. The hegemony of the global financial industry and its debt-based, private for-profit money system must now be replaced with a public money system in order to fund an effective response world-wide. Sue Peters, Green Party New York notes,

“Legislation was written, vetted and introduced to Congress in 2011, to replace the speculative Federal Reserve System with a reliable, stable-value monetary system. The NEED Act (HR 2990 – 112th Congress) was shelved by the Banking Com-

*mittee at that time and remains at the ready. Now is the time to make this important change”.*¹⁹



***The Greenback in 1862.
Demand modern Greenbacks!***

The harping on deficit spending has been demonstrated to be a concern only when socially responsible leaders want to spend funds on helping ordinary Americans, never when it is time for a war or when an elitist and toxic industry like fossil fuels is threatened. The class war started by the wealthy elites in the 1930s against ordinary Americans seems to have been based on the elites’ need to “other”, to demean and impoverish ordinary citizens. The article “Coronavirus has destroyed the myth of the deficit”²⁰ lays bare the myths and falsehoods of the American economy as demonstrated with the CARES Act’s cronyist trillions for elites while ordinary citizens now struggle for survival.

Other revenue solutions include:

- Reduce the military’s weapons budget by 50%
- Train and redirect 50% of military personnel to install REAL Green New Deal renewable energy systems and energy conservation programs.
- Restore the U.S. tax code back to a progressive, pre-Reagan tax code, to shift

burden back onto those who can afford it, restore the American middle-class, close the widening gap between rich and poor, and pay for programs that benefit all the American people.

- Increase tax collection on new purchases of firearms, automobiles or trucks costing more than \$20,000 and luxury boats.

In Conclusion

The deliberate evisceration of the modest, but insufficient New Deal policies of the 1930s over the past 40 years is pushing the American economy toward a Depression that will rival that of the 1930s. The American privatized healthcare industry, the least equitable healthcare system in the industrialized world, is delivering COVID-19 death and suffering in a manner predicted by epidemiologists. The disproportionate health and economic disparities impacting non-elite communities is an ongoing but unnecessary tragedy resulting from the idolatry of wealthy elites and their mythical gods of free-markets and neoliberal policies. The current pandemic may be the first of many, with climate change recently helping deliver zika virus around the world and dengue to Miami in the recent past. Neither the Democratic nor Republican leadership have shown competence in meeting the challenges of the past, present, and future.

The Green Party has long championed a science-based, economic transformation that invests in infrastructure, humankind, and communities, for a just society that co-exists with nature, such as our REAL Green New Deal. Current facts demand the immediate implementation of our policies above, for the sake of saving our country, our citizens, and a livable planet.

John Fortuin
for
US Senate
Special Election



**"The System Isn't Rigged, It Works
Perfectly for the 1%."**

**Get campaign updates at
www.FortuinForGeorgia.com**

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Jimmy Cooper
for
Congress
Georgia's 8th District



**"Bringing Americans Together
for the Common Good"**

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Our 10 Key Values

Grassroots Democracy
Social Justice & Equal Opportunity
Ecological Wisdom
Non-Violence
Decentralization
Community-Based Economics
Feminism & Gender Equity
Respect For Diversity
Personal & Global Responsibility
Future Focus & Sustainability



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