

Progress Grove City

Candidate Endorsement & Support Policy

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Purpose

Progress Grove City is a community-based organization, not a party organization. Our engagement with candidates and elections is guided by our core values, not partisan affiliation. This policy defines when and how PGC may extend page access to a candidate, offer support, or formally endorse... and the rules that govern each level.

What Makes a Candidate "Aligned"

Alignment is not determined by party registration. A candidate is considered aligned with PGC if their platform, record, and public conduct meaningfully reflect our six core values:

- **Promoting Truth** — commitment to evidence-based information and actively countering misinformation
- **Inclusivity** — ensuring every individual feels welcomed, valued, and represented
- **Equality** — advocating for equal opportunities and rights for all individuals
- **Collaboration** — working with others to create lasting community impact
- **Education** — fostering lifelong learning and access to information
- **Advocacy** — building a thriving, sustainable future that addresses social and economic disparities

Alignment is assessed by PGC leadership. A candidate may be aligned without receiving a support designation or endorsement.

Tier 1 — Page Access

All aligned candidates are welcome to use the PGC page to:

- Publicize their campaign
- Request volunteers
- Share events and announcements
- Engage with our community

Page access is the baseline level of engagement PGC offers. It does not imply support or endorsement, and candidates should not represent PGC's access as an official backing.

How to Request Access

Candidates interested in posting on the PGC page should reach out to a member of the PGC leadership team to schedule a meetup. The purpose of this conversation is to get to know the candidate, understand their platform, and assess alignment with PGC's core values.

- Meetups are preferably held in person. We understand that circumstances vary and are willing to be flexible when needed.
- Leadership will respond to access requests promptly. We commit to never using a delayed response as a way to stall or deny access without explanation.
- If a candidate is granted access following the meetup, they may begin posting on the PGC page.
- If PGC determines that alignment is not present, we will communicate that decision directly to the candidate, provide our reasoning, and give them the opportunity to respond, clarify, or address our concerns where possible. We believe in good faith engagement even when the answer is no.

Page Access Rules

1. Access is extended to any candidate who demonstrates alignment with PGC's core values following a leadership meetup.
2. Candidates are expected to respect the open nature of the page and the broader community it serves.
3. **Candidates may not directly solicit donations from PGC members on the page.** Sharing fundraising events, linking to a campaign website, or directing members to external pages where donation information is available is permitted — as long as the nature of the post is honestly and clearly represented. For example, if attending an event requires a donation or ticket purchase, that should be stated plainly. What is not permitted is any direct ask for money within the PGC page itself.
4. Candidates are expected to post responsibly and respect the feed space shared by all members and candidates. **Posting is limited to no more than 3 posts per day and 15 posts per week.** Exceeding these limits, or any pattern of posting that floods the feed or disrupts the community experience, may result in revocation of posting privileges. PGC will issue a warning before revoking access unless the behavior is egregious enough to warrant immediate action.
5. Candidates must accurately represent their relationship with PGC at all times. Page access is not support. Support is not endorsement. Candidates may not characterize or communicate any level of PGC engagement as something it is not — in their own posts, in campaign materials, in public messaging, or anywhere else. Any use of PGC's name must accurately reflect only the level of engagement explicitly granted by PGC

leadership. Misrepresentation of PGC's position may result in immediate revocation of posting privileges.

Tier 2 — Support

Support means PGC believes a candidate is a good person who genuinely wants to serve and represent their community... and that their values and intentions are worthy of recognition. It stops short of full endorsement, which may be due to a policy difference, incomplete alignment, or simply that we haven't yet had enough opportunity to fully evaluate them.

Support is not a ranking against other candidates. PGC may support multiple candidates in the same race without endorsing any of them.

- PGC may share candidate content, events, or information
- **PGC's name is not used as a formal backing stamp**
- No active member mobilization on behalf of the candidate
- Leadership decision; does not require unanimous agreement

Individual Member Activity

Members are free to personally support or volunteer for any candidate. However, when doing so, members **must make clear they are acting as individuals** and not as representatives or spokespersons of Progress Grove City.

Tier 3 — Endorsement

An endorsement is the highest level of commitment PGC can make to a candidate.

- PGC's name and brand are publicly attached to the candidate
- We actively ask our members to volunteer for the candidate
- Full organizational weight is behind the candidate
- **Requires unanimous agreement among all PGC leaders** — a single objection is sufficient to block an endorsement

Requirements

1. **Unanimous leadership agreement** is required. A single objection is sufficient to block an endorsement.
2. The candidate must be aligned with PGC's core values (see above).
3. No active dealbreaker conditions may apply (see below).
4. **PGC does not endorse in primary elections.** We believe it is not our place to pick sides between aligned candidates competing for their party's nomination. This holds even in races where the primary is effectively the general election due to no opposing

candidate in the general. The rare exception to this rule is if a candidate in the primary has a specific, significant issue that PGC feels obligated to speak to publicly — in which case leadership may choose to weigh in, but must clearly and explicitly articulate the reason for doing so. This is a very high bar and should not be used as a back door to routine primary endorsements.

5. When more than one aligned candidate is running for the same office, PGC should **strongly err toward not endorsing** unless there is a significant, clearly articulable reason to prefer one over the other. General preference, personal relationships, or proximity to our community are not sufficient reasons on their own.

The "Showing Up" Factor

A strong contributing factor in any endorsement decision is whether the candidate has demonstrated genuine investment in people... not just in winning votes. We believe that how someone shows up in small moments tells us a great deal about how they will show up in big ones — in votes, in representation, and in accountability once elected.

Leadership will weigh whether the candidate has shown up in ways such as:

- Attending PGC events and engaging with our members
- Supporting causes that matter to our community
- Demonstrating a pattern of service or advocacy in their broader community — whether through PGC or not

A candidate newer to PGC who has a clear track record of showing up for people in other contexts carries real weight in this assessment. We're not just measuring attendance at our events... we're looking at character and community investment over time.

That said, there is an obvious practical reality: we get to know candidates better when they give us the chance to know them. A candidate who engages with PGC — comes to our events, talks with our members, participates in our community — gives us far more to evaluate than one who doesn't. The more we see, the more confidence we can have.

This is not a hard requirement — exceptional alignment across all other criteria may still support an endorsement — but a candidate who has never engaged with our community or demonstrated investment in people more broadly will face a higher bar. Showing up matters.

A Note on Accountability and Growth

PGC believes in the capacity for growth and accountability. Where credible evidence exists of past conduct that would otherwise be disqualifying, leadership may consider whether the candidate has taken genuine responsibility, made meaningful amends, and demonstrated sustained change over time. Relevant factors include whether the acknowledgment was sincere and not minimizing, whether concrete action was taken to make things right, whether enough

time has passed to demonstrate real change, and whether the behavior has not continued. This determination rests entirely with PGC leadership and will be weighed carefully on a case by case basis.

Dealbreakers

We don't believe in purity tests. We understand that politics involves compromise, and we can support candidates we don't agree with on everything. But we do believe that as individuals, as constituents, and as a community, we have both the right and the obligation to stand by our own ideals. There may be times when we fully believe a candidate is the best option in a specific race... and still cannot give a wholehearted endorsement because of fundamental differences we cannot set aside.

The following are the kinds of positions or conduct that would prevent PGC from endorsing a candidate regardless of other factors. This list will be expanded as PGC develops its full criteria.

- **Dealbreaker 1:** Accepting any amount of AIPAC funding
- **Dealbreaker 2:** Opposing abortion rights or bodily autonomy
- **Dealbreaker 3:** Opposing LGBTQ+ rights or marriage equality
- **Dealbreaker 4:** Opposing voting rights or supporting voter suppression measures
- **Dealbreaker 5:** Credible evidence of racist, sexist, or homophobic conduct or statements
- **Dealbreaker 6:** A pattern of spreading or amplifying misinformation. When invoking this dealbreaker, PGC leadership must be able to point to specific, citable examples of demonstrably false or misleading statements. A general characterization of a candidate's record is not sufficient.

Decision Authority

All endorsement and support decisions are made by PGC leadership. Endorsements require unanimous agreement. Support designations and page access decisions may be made by the leadership team without a formal vote, but should reflect shared judgment.

Decisions may be revisited if material new information emerges about a candidate's conduct, positions, or alignment with PGC values.

Communicating Decisions Publicly

PGC is not obligated to publicly explain every endorsement decision or non-decision. In many cases a simple statement that unanimous agreement could not be reached is sufficient and appropriate. However, PGC also reserves the right to state its reasoning publicly when leadership believes the circumstances warrant it... including when the public interest is best served by transparency. The decision of whether to speak publicly about a specific

determination, and how much to say, rests entirely with PGC leadership. Silence is an option, not a requirement.

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