

# Steuben County Green Party Platform

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The Steuben County Green Party has developed this platform to propose ways in which people living in Steuben County, New York can achieve greater democracy in our county. In developing this platform, we have been guided by the 10 Key Values of the Green Party of the United States which include grassroots democracy, social justice and equal opportunity, ecological wisdom, nonviolence, decentralization, community based economics and economic justice, feminism, future focus, local and global responsibility, and gender equity and respect for diversity. These values then shape innovative ideas that reflect the equal inclusion and free choice of democracy. Our platform planks are ways we can put these ideas into practice in Steuben County.

## Direct Democracy

We encourage residents of Steuben County to seek the enactment of local laws supporting direct democracy. Direct democracy is a form of democracy in which people decide on policy initiatives directly. This differs from the majority of most currently established democracies, which are representative democracies.

### Direct Democracy through Initiative and Referendum

We encourage residents of Steuben County to seek the enactment of initiative and referendum laws for local municipal governments and school boards as a way of achieving greater democratic participation in local decision making. Initiative and referendum laws allow citizens to vote directly on particular pieces of legislation. An initiative law allows citizens to propose or initiate a law. A referendum law allows citizens to refer a law enacted by a legislative body to the ballot so that voters can enact or repeal it. We are preparing a model initiative and referendum law to assist those interested in working for the adoption of such laws in our county.

### Direct Democracy through Participatory Budgeting

We encourage residents of Steuben County to seek the enactment of participatory budgeting laws for local municipal governments and school boards as a way of achieving greater democratic participation in local decision making. Participatory budgeting is a democratic process in which community members directly decide how to spend all or part of a municipal or school budget. We are preparing a model participatory budgeting law to assist those interested in working for the adoption of such laws in our county.

### Direct Democracy in School Decision Making

We encourage residents of Steuben County to seek the enactment of initiative and referendum processes and participatory budgeting processes as a way of obtaining more community involvement in the management of our local schools.

## **Direct Democracy in Police Decision Making**

We encourage residents of Steuben County to seek the enactment of initiative and referendum processes, participatory budgeting processes, and civilian review boards as a way of obtaining more community involvement in the management of our local police departments.

## **Economic Democracy**

We encourage residents of Steuben County to seek the enactment of local laws to enhance democratic participation in business ownership and decision making through the development of cooperative businesses, basic incomes, commonly owned resources, and community workshops in order to develop democracy in economic policy decisions.

### **Economic Democracy through Community Energy Production**

We encourage residents of Steuben County to seek the enactment of local laws that support the development of community owned and cooperatively owned clean energy installations and remove local property taxes from locally owned clean energy installations.

### **Economic Democracy through Community Internet**

We encourage residents of Steuben County to seek the enactment of local laws that support the development of municipally owned or cooperatively owned community internet services.

### **Economic Democracy through Living Wages**

We encourage residents of Steuben County to seek the enactment of local laws that explain the benefits to the local economy of paying living wages to workers in the county and encourage local governments and businesses to pay living wages.

### **Economic Democracy through Local Tax Fairness**

We encourage residents of Steuben County to seek the enactment of local tax laws that promote tax fairness and do not rely entirely on sales and property taxes. Regressive taxes are those that have a greater financial impact on low income individuals than high income earners. Local sales taxes, excise taxes, and real estate property taxes are generally considered to be regressive taxes. In contrast, progressive taxes have a greater financial impact on higher income individuals and businesses, and less on low income earners. Income taxes that impose higher marginal tax rates on people with higher incomes are considered progressive taxes.

The Steuben Greens meet on the 3rd Monday of each month by conference call or in person. To join our email list, send an email to [info@steubengreens.org](mailto:info@steubengreens.org) . For more info about our activities, visit our website: [www.steubengreens.org](http://www.steubengreens.org) . Current events are posted to our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/steubengreens/> .