



NATIONAL GRANGE

1616 H ST. NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20006 | PHONE (202) 628-3507 | FAX (202) 347-1091

WWW.NATIONALGRANGE.ORG | INFO@NATIONALGRANGE.ORG

American Values. Hometown Roots.

March 1, 2022

National Grange President's Ruling on Situations Warranting Immediate and Permanent Removal from Office and/or Expulsion from the Order of Patrons of Husbandry

Grange membership is an important and valuable privilege that has been enjoyed by millions of our Brothers and Sisters for more than 150 years. Extending the benefits of membership in our Order to all who share our values and aspirations for a higher manhood and womanhood as well as our interests in promoting economic, political, educational, and social cooperation in local communities across our great nation has been a driving force in the growth and development of the Grange. Our desire to expand the benefits of Grange membership to as many of our potential Brothers and Sisters as possible exists alongside an equally strong history of tolerance for the views, actions, and lifestyle choices of our members. Opening the full benefits of Grange membership to many different individuals with unique experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives has made our Order stronger, more diverse, and more inclusive over time.

To protect the privileges of membership for our Brothers and Sisters from being arbitrarily revoked or curtailed over personal disagreements, the National Grange Digest of Laws has incorporated, by democratic debate and vote at our annual National Sessions, a series of procedures to assure that any member accused of violating their oath of office or their oaths of membership will be guaranteed a right of due process before they can be removed from office or expelled from our Order. In the overwhelming number of cases where this procedure has had to be invoked, it has accurately and correctly balanced the interests of the individual Grange member against the interests of the entire Order as a whole to expect a minimum adherence by every member to the mutual oaths and obligations of membership and of holding office.

However, these protections can be time-consuming. They also assume that all the parties involved in these controversies want to reach an amicable agreement to resolve the disagreements they may have. Finally, they assume that continued membership or holding of office by any member accused of violating their oath of office or oaths of membership during these proceedings pose no significant threat to other Grange members, guests at Grange functions, or the financial, physical, or reputational assets of the Grange. In an exceedingly rare number of situations, it has become apparent that the severity of the member's actions at issue and the conduct of individual members can reasonably pose significant, ongoing risk to the safety of our Brothers and Sisters and the security of our Grange property that must be immediately addressed. In these rare cases, it is apparent that following the procedures of the Digest to address the actions and conduct of these members is insufficient to protect the interests of the Order.

Therefore, I am issuing this National President's Ruling on Situations Warranting Immediate and Permanent Removal from Office and/or Expulsion from the Order of Patrons of Husbandry.

A President/Master of a State Grange may petition, in writing, the President of the National Grange for immediate and permanent removal from office and/or expulsion from the Order of Patrons of Husbandry of a Grange member when the State President/Master can reasonably demonstrate and document that the member in question poses an immediate or ongoing reasonable threat to the Grange, based on recent conduct or statements. Such a reasonable threat may be established from public conduct or provocative statements made entirely outside the realm of the Grange itself. Such a petition may be submitted under one or more of the following circumstances:

1. A threat to the personal safety of any Grange member or class of Grange members or the personal safety of any individual or class of individuals who may be guests at a Grange function.
2. A threat to the financial, intellectual, or physical property of the Grange through, but not limited to, theft, embezzlement, burglary, conversion for personal use, personal tax evasion, or willful destruction/damage of Grange property.
3. A threat related to misuse of Grange property for any illegal purpose or for any purpose unauthorized by the Grange that could result in the revocation of Grange liability, bonding, property, casualty, or fire insurance coverage.
4. A threat related to the attempt to recruit any Grange member or guest at a Grange function to engage in unlawful or illegal activity.
5. A threat related to making false statements against the Grange in any civil or criminal proceeding.
6. A threat related to participation in any civil or criminal proceeding where the Grange member in question alleges, in documents or testimony filed with a court of law or any regulatory body with authority to adjudicate disputes, that any of the governance provisions of the National Grange Digest of Laws, the Constitutions and By-Laws of any of the various State Granges or the Constitutions and By Laws of the various local Chapters of the Order are, *per se*, invalid or only advisory and not controlling, in their application to the case at hand.

The National Grange President shall review the petition and any supporting documentation thoroughly before issuing a decision in writing. The National President may refer the petition and charges therein back to the State President/Master for further action under the trial procedures or procedures to interpret Grange Law and Usage of the National Grange Digest of Laws. The President/Master of the State Grange need not inform the member in question of the petition to the National Master for immediate removal from office or expulsion from the Order if, in the judgment of the State President/Master, such communication would exacerbate or increase the threat to Grange members or the Grange from the member in question. However, once the National President has issued a ruling, the State President/Master shall make every effort to forward a copy of the petition to the National President, any supporting documentation provided to the National President, and the text of the National President's ruling to the member in question, regardless of the outcome.

If the ruling of the National President results in immediate removal from office or expulsion from the Order, the State Grange President/Master shall also forward to the member in question information related to their rights of appeal. The removed or expelled member shall have two avenues of appeal. First, the removed or expelled member may directly appeal to the Officers of the Assembly of Demeter by sending within 30 days of

receiving the decision from the State President/Master, a request in writing to review the petition, supporting documentation, and decision of the National President related to their removal or expulsion. No additional information shall be provided to the Officers of the Assembly during this appeal. The Officers of the Assembly shall have the authority to take one of the following actions related to this appeal:

1. Affirm the entire ruling of the National President.
2. Reverse or vacate the entire ruling of the National President.
3. Refer the original petition and charges therein back to the National President with recommendations for amendment. The decision of the National President to incorporate or not incorporate the recommendations of the Officers of the Assembly into a revised, final ruling shall be final and may not be appealed.
4. Refer the original petition and charges therein back to the State President/Master for further action under the trial procedures or procedures to interpret Grange law and Usage under the National Grange Digest of Laws.

The decision of the Officers of the Assembly and any amended final ruling of the National President shall be forwarded to the State President/Master, who shall forward a copy to the removed or expelled member.

The second avenue of appeal that a removed or expelled member may choose is to have a formal trial under procedures outlined in Chapter 12 of the National Grange Digest of Laws. Any prohibitions on holding Grange office or ruling of expulsion shall remain in full force until the conclusion of the trial. The State President/Master shall be the complainant. The State President/Master may be joined by other members in good standing as co-complainants if they can reasonably be shown to be, or have been, at risk or their Grange was at significant risk from the conduct or statements of the removed or expelled member. The result of the Grange trial, including the appeal process therein, shall be the final decision on the controversy.

Betsy E. Huber

President