



This document will be sent out via US Mail and email to every Grange in California. Unfortunately, weather has closed the National Grange Headquarter and that process will be executed as soon as business gets back to usual.



NATIONAL GRANGE

OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY

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American Values. Hometown Roots.

March 5, 2015

Brothers and Sisters,

There has been a lot of legal action in California over the past several months. If you have any questions about what is happening, please review the documents that the re-organized California State Grange has placed on their website and draw your own conclusions.

The current legal battle may be described by some with inflammatory or graphic language, but the situation is pretty-straightforward.

The National Grange can issue charters to members who want to start State Granges. It is our obligation to monitor Grange activity across the country to make sure it lives up to the standards we all believe in. If a State Grange falters for any reason, that Charter can be revoked, and the National Grange can help members in that state reorganize their State Grange. In fact, on January 15, 2015 Judge Brown stated in his ruling, "Luttrell was required by the organization's rules to monitor McFarland's conduct as Master of the State Grange."

These have been our rules for over 140 years. We rarely have had to invoke them, but when we do it is with the upmost seriousness and thought and within the procedure as described in the Digest.

For good cause, the Charter of the California State Grange was suspended in September 2012 and then revoked in April 2013 as required by the rules of the Grange. No Charter or legal status of a Community or Pomona Grange was affected and no California Grange memberships were negatively impacted by those actions. In November of 2013, eight Californians placed their name on a letter of disaffiliation, removing themselves from the Grange organization. These individuals have every right to leave our organization, they do not, however, speak for the entire California State Grange. That is why in July of 2014, representatives of California Granges, assembled with the National Master, requested reorganization of the California State Grange. This reorganization was completed with new leadership elected by Californians.

And to be clear, no other Grange members in California have had their membership in the Grange affected by the letter of disaffiliation or the action to reorganize the State Grange.

The individuals who voluntarily left the Grange, in fact any Grange member across the country, cannot take Grange property with them if they choose to leave. And that is what has happened here. If you choose to leave an organization, you cannot take with you the property that thousands of people have donated over the last hundred plus years.

That is the law in California and in the Digest of the National Grange and also makes common sense. The California State Grange accumulated property, assets and good will long before Mr. McFarland joined it, and he needs to give it back. The property belongs to the Grange and not to anyone who chooses to disaffiliate with the organization. Unfortunately we have to engage in a legal battle just to enforce these common sense rules.

As National Master, Ed Luttrell stated in his declaration to the court: "... the National Grange does not hold title to the property of the lower levels of The Grange. Such property generally has

been accumulated by Grange members over long periods of time; the individual members change as the years go by, as some individuals pass away or withdraw from their Grange while other individuals join and become new members. The rules set forth in the Digest of Laws ensure that Grange property will always be retained and used for the general purposes of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, regardless of any changes in membership. Accordingly, a State Grange (or any other Grange) holds title to and is the steward of its property, and is entitled to full use of that property so long as the Digest of Laws is observed and obeyed.”

Mr. McFarland and those who chose to disaffiliate with the Grange originally claimed that there were conflicts between state and/or federal law and Grange rules. There are no such conflicts. In any event, Mr. McFarland never requested a ruling from the appropriate Grange authority, nor did he ever submit a resolution to change our rules to address any supposed conflicts. He and several other then-members of the California State Grange’s Executive Committee simply claimed that they were not subject to the rules of the Grange. They left taking Grange property, donations accumulated over many years and our good name with them.

The current legal matter is very simple, but also a very important test of the American principle that organizations can have meaningful and binding rules. The National Grange seeks only to enforce that principle and see that the Grange property taken by Mr. McFarland and his allies is returned to the Californians now running your re-organized California State Grange. If we get your property back, this can all go away, it is their choice.

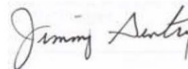
There is no effort or intention by the National Grange to take property in California. Our only aim is to get California property back and give it to the Californians who are chartered to use it. It is our duty to ensure that those members are good stewards of Grange property, not act like it’s their personal property. It will be their obligation to keep the property in good care and make sure it can be handed down to our children and theirs. We believe they will.

If you have any questions concerning these issues, please contact any of us.

Fraternally Yours,



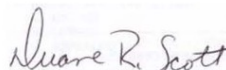
Edward L. Luttrell, Master



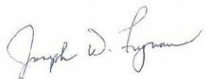
Jimmy Gentry, Overseer



F. Philip Prelli, Executive Committee Chair



Duane R. Scott, Executive Committee Secretary



Joseph W. Fryman, Executive Committee



Leroy Watson, Executive Committee