

Socialist candidate John Christopher Burton placed on ballot in California recall election

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John Christopher Burton, a civil rights attorney and socialist from southern California, was placed on the ballot Monday for the October 7 recall election. Burton is a supporter of the Socialist Equality Party, which has endorsed his campaign.

The October 7 recall election allows each voter to cast two ballots. The first ballot will decide whether Governor Gray Davis should be recalled. Burton and the Socialist Equality Party have called for a “no” vote on this question, opposing the recall campaign as an anti-democratic maneuver aimed at overturning the results of an election for governor held only nine months ago. The recall initiative was financed by Republican Congressman Darrell Issa, a right-wing politician and multi-millionaire businessman.

Burton has made clear that his opposition to the recall in no way signifies political support for Davis or the Democratic Party. He is calling for Californians to vote for him on the second ballot, rather than supporting any of the politicians of the Democratic or Republican parties, in order to express support for a socialist program to resolve the economic crisis in California in the interests of working people.

Burton outlined the principled basis on which he is running in the candidate’s statement he filed along with his nominating petitions. He declared in that statement: “I oppose all measures that propose to solve this crisis by placing new burdens on working people and small business owners.”

Burton explained his opposition to the recall, and went on to say: “But if the recall is successful, California’s working people need an alternative to the pro-big business policies of the candidates associated with the Democratic Party. To obtain the resources necessary to guarantee full employment, provide universal health coverage, expand educational services

and eradicate poverty, I advocate the transformation of large corporations and banks into publicly owned and democratically controlled utilities. The diversion of resources to finance aggressive wars must be stopped. The satisfaction of human needs, not the amassing of corporate profit, must be the basis of California’s economy.” (See Candidate’s statement of John Christopher Burton).

Burton’s name will appear on the ballot under the designation “independent,” and not as a candidate of the Socialist Equality Party, because California law does not provide for the recognition of new parties in a recall election. Candidates must run as either independents or members of parties currently holding ballot status. Those parties are the Democrats, Republicans, Greens, Peace and Freedom Party, Reform Party, American Independent Party and Libertarian Party. The candidates of state-recognized parties will have their party listed on the ballot alongside their name.

Nearly 200 candidates have filed petitions bearing at least 65 signatures and paid the fee of \$3,500 required to achieve ballot status. Approximately one third of those running identified themselves as Democrats, a third as Republicans, and a third as independents or third-party members.

As of this writing, Burton was one of 96 candidates certified by California election authorities for the October 7 ballot. An additional 99 are still under review. The Secretary of State’s office is expected to complete the review process and announce a final list of candidates by Wednesday, August 13.

The Secretary of State’s office certified 110 signatures filed on behalf of Burton’s candidacy, according to the most recent posting on its web site. Signatures supporting Burton’s candidacy were filed in

seven California counties: Los Angeles, San Diego and Orange in southern California, and San Francisco, Alameda, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz in northern California. Burton's campaign has already received messages of support from socialists and readers of the *World Socialist Web Site* in several other counties in California.

The position of the candidates on the October 7 ballot is being rotated by assembly district, based on the result of an alphabet lottery that was conducted Monday afternoon. The letter "B" was drawn tenth, meaning that in the 10th, 36th and 62nd Assembly Districts candidates with that initial will appear at the head of the ballot. In the 11th, 37th and 63rd districts those candidates will revert to the bottom of ballot, and so on throughout the alphabet.

Burton's name will appear immediately before that of the California lieutenant governor, Cruz Bustamante, the Democrat who has the support of most of the party officialdom in the October 7 vote. Because the letter "S" was 11th in the draw, Burton will appear on the ballot ahead of Republicans Arnold Schwarzenegger and William Simon, except in the three districts where candidates with the initial "S" will be at the top of the ballot.

This procedure is a departure from the usual protocol in US elections, in which the candidates of the Democratic and Republican parties are put at the top of the ballot, and those of rival parties and independent candidates are placed further down.



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