

Socialist candidate pledges to continue campaign

John Christopher Burton responds to court ruling delaying California recall vote

16 September 2003

Below is the text of a press release issued September 15 by John Christopher Burton in response to a ruling by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals delaying the date of the special California gubernatorial recall election from October 7, 2003 to March 2, 2004. Burton, a civil rights lawyer in Pasadena, is running as an independent candidate in the recall election. A supporter of the Socialist Equality Party, Burton has been endorsed by the SEP. For an analysis of the Ninth Circuit Court's ruling, see "Federal appeals court postpones California recall election until March" [16 September 2003].

I welcome today's ruling by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The obsolete punch-card ballots which were to be used in six of the state's most heavily working class counties threatened to disenfranchise 40,000 voters entitled to cast their ballots in the upcoming recall election. The brief postponement of the election until March will protect the fundamental democratic right of all voters to have their votes counted.

This ruling does not alter the character of the recall drive. I remain opposed to this attempt by right-wing forces to bypass normal democratic procedures and overturn the results of last November's election. I therefore reiterate my call for Californians to vote "no" on the recall of Governor Gray Davis.

Although I oppose the recall, I am giving no political support to Davis, Cruz Bustamante or any of the candidates associated with the two big business parties. Whether or not the election is postponed until March, the fundamental political issues underlying the crisis in California will remain. The quagmire in Iraq and the squandering of vital resources to support the colonial-style occupation will only worsen. The impact of the

war and the regressive social policies pursued by the Bush administration, with the support of the Democrats, will take an even greater toll on jobs, living standards and basic social services such as education and health care. Bush's call for additional extra-constitutional powers makes clear that the assault on democratic rights will intensify.

While clearly the court decision is legally correct, the circumstances underlying it underscore the increasingly fragile state of democracy in America. Social polarization has advanced to the point where the very mechanism upon which democracy rests, the election process, is breaking down. As demonstrated by the Clinton impeachment, Bush's theft of the presidential election and the recall drive itself, a substantial section of the ruling elite will not accept the results of elections which lead to an outcome with which they disagree. Under such conditions, the working class cannot depend on courts to defend democratic rights.

Regardless of when the election is held, I will continue my campaign to present an independent socialist alternative—one that places human needs above corporate profits and the accumulation of personal wealth. I will continue to call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all US troops from Afghanistan, Iraq and the entire Middle East. I urge working people, students and professionals to study my election program, (at www.socialequality.com), vote for me and seriously consider joining the Socialist Equality Party.

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Socialist Equality Party visit:



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