

Letters from around the world denounce Democrats' effort to bar SEP candidate from Illinois ballot

3 July 2004

The following letters were sent to the Mark Shelden, the County Clerk in Champaign, Illinois, to protest the efforts of the state and local Democratic Party to exclude the Socialist Equality Party and its state legislative candidate, Thomas Mackaman, from the ballot in the November elections. [See "Democrats move to keep SEP candidate off Illinois ballot" and "Stop the Democratic Party's attack on third-party campaigns! Place SEP candidate Tom Mackaman on the ballot in Illinois!"]

The effort to exclude the SEP from the ballot is part of a nationwide effort by the Democrats to stifle any campaign that opposes the bipartisan policies of militarism and the attack on the democratic rights and living standards of working people. We urge all those who oppose the war and who are angered by the pro-war politics and antidemocratic methods of Kerry and the Democrats to add their voices of protest against the attempt to exclude antiwar candidates from the November election. Send emails of protest to Champaign County Clerk Mark Shelden's office at: mail@champaigncountyclerk.com

Please send copies to the World Socialist Web Site at editor@wsws.org

Mr. Mark Shelden,

I was appalled to hear of the Democratic Party's attack on the candidacy of Tom Mackaman, and especially their focus on technicalities affecting all parties' petitions (e.g., signatures containing some printed rather than cursive letters).

I hope to hear that Champaign County's Election Board decides not disenfranchise would-be third party voters by taking away from them the chance to vote for someone who truly represents their positions.

Brendan Lalor, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities & Philosophy,
University of Central Oklahoma

Edmond, Oklahoma

2 July 2004

To Mark Shelden, the Champaign County Clerk:

I am writing to demand that the Champaign County Election Board reject the attempt to keep Thomas Mackaman, candidate of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP), off the ballot. This is clearly an illegal but most of all undemocratic attempt to deny the democratic right of the citizenry to choose their candidate.

It is especially a political attempt to deny a debate and choice for people on the issues, most of all on the war against Iraq. Therefore this is not a local issue but one of concern to all people. The SEP had almost 700 signatures above the 1,344 required. A just and ethical decision on your part is essential to the political health of society. I teach history and government in a New York City high school and feel all of us have a stake in your decision. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Harvey Lichtman

New York City teacher

2 July 2004

Dear Mr. Shelden:

I read an article stating that the Democratic Party is trying to block the candidate from the Socialist Equality Party, Thomas Mackaman, from the ballot in November. He is running for 103rd District of the Illinois House of Representatives. I object to this partisan bickering, and do not appreciate the efforts of the Democrats and Republicans to block all third party candidates. If this country is truly a democracy, then why should we be limited to voting for only two parties? Please reject their efforts, so voters can have a true choice in November.

Sincerely,

Amira Boctor

2 July 2004

* * *

I realise that you have rules and procedures to follow to enable a democratic election that is representative of the people. However, the fact that you are allowing one party to object to another party being listed on the ballot is similar to Bush saying that torture isn't used in the USA (without saying that torture is used by Americans in other countries).

David G. King

New Zealand

2 July 2004

Dear Sir/Madam:

One of the greatest historical rights won by mankind in the course of long struggle is the free exercise of political expression without any hindrance. The right of any person or organization to stand for election is one of the most fundamental rights.

For too long the Democratic and Republican parties in the US have monopolized elections by passing laws inimical to third party candidates, especially those which are opposed to the political status quo. The attack on SEP candidate Tom Mackaman's ballot status in Illinois is another example of an attempt by the Democratic Party to the free exercise of the right to stand for election by a small party. This goes to show how insecure the establishment parties of the corporate elite feel.

The tactic used by Democratic Party is threadbare and should be seen for what it is: a transparent attempt at stifling any opposition to the Iraq war and other attacks on democratic rights. I, as a concerned citizen of the United States, demand that you reject this crude attempt by the Democratic Party to block the candidacy of SEP candidate Tom Mackaman.

Sincerely,

Murali Kumbale

2 July 2004

I fully support the right of third parties to stand in the US elections despite the undemocratic and devious machinations of the so-called

Democratic Party. There's a misnomer—the so-called Democratic Party where democracy has long departed. The Democratic Party is hostile to social equality and social justice for workers.

I demand the Champaign County Election Board reject the efforts of the Democratic Party to keep the SEP candidate off the ballot.

John Christian

Australia

2 July 2004

Mark Shelden,

Democrats and Republicans have no idea how to live in peace. Let's try the SEP.

Miha Jensterle

Slovenia

2 July 2004

Dear Sir,

As a staunch supporter of electoral democracy, I believe that the people should have the right to choose the candidate for State Assembly whom they feel best suits their political ideas. It appears, however, that the Democratic Party is attempting to interfere with this right by filing a protest against the 1,021 of the 2,032 signatures collected by Thomas Mackaman, the candidate of the Socialist Equality Party for the 103d District. The SEP is an independent, socialist party that represents working class interests throughout the country. Its supporters reject the war in Iraq and oppose encroachments upon democratic rights at home.

I urge you to reject the effort by the Chair of the Democratic Party of Champaign County to effectively bar any political choice outside of the two so-called "major parties," the Democrats and the Republicans. Allowing the exclusion of independent third parties from the electoral process runs counter to the democratic principles upon which this country was founded.

Thank you sincerely for your time and consideration.

Signed,

Andrew Kessler Moore

2 July 2004

I urge you to reject and refuse the Democratic Party's attempts to keep SEP state representative candidate Tom Mackaman off the November ballot.

The Democratic Party's objections to the SEP petition for ballot status have no merit whatsoever and should be considered nothing more than an undemocratic attempt to silence yet another voice outside the two major political parties. This is an attempt to throw away the voices of more than two thousand citizens who supported and signed the SEP's petition. It is an attempt at limiting and even silencing important political discussion in this election.

The Democratic Party's attack on the SEP and all "third party" campaigns must be stopped.

Once again I urge you to reject the Democrats' objections to the petition for Tom Mackaman.

Sincerely,

Hiram Lee

2 July 2004

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this to voice my condolences over the death of democracy in Illinois. The Democratic Party apparently believes that they cannot face any challenge from the left, and therefore feel it is their duty to usurp the democratic rights of over 2,000 voters in Illinois, and, incidentally, countless thousands of others around the nation by issuing knee-jerk objections to any third party or independent candidacies.

You have the power to overrule these antidemocratic objections in your state, and I sincerely hope that you will do so and perhaps, from your actions, we can reclaim some of the democratic heritage that has been cast aside in recent years in this country.

If you choose to uphold the objections to the petitions signatures filed by Thomas Mackaman, know full well that you are taking an active part in the continuing erosion of our democratic rights. You should also consider who will stand up for your democratic rights when all opposition has been eliminated. Remember Florida 2000?

Sincerely,

Herman Rogers Jr.

Las Vegas, Nevada

1 July 2004

Mark Sheldon

Champaign County Clerk

Dear Sir,

Having read of Thomas Mackaman in his campaign for the 103rd District, I have to condemn the politically biased and undemocratic methods of the local Democratic Party's efforts to prevent his obtaining ballot status. The Socialist Equality Party and its candidates nationwide are the only political movement challenging the validity of the war in Iraq in this election—that opposition by itself should, in a democratic society, guarantee their ballot presence.

Sincerely,

Hector Perez

Portland, Oregon

2 July 2004

Dear Mark Shelden,

I am writing in support of Thomas Mackaman of the Socialist Equality Party's right to appear on the Illinois November general election ballot as a candidate for the 103rd District State Representative. In a short period of time he has managed to gather 2,032 signatures, well above the requirement of 1,344. Geraldine Parr's assertion that 1,021 of the gathered signatures are invalid should be carefully scrutinized. Attempts to withhold ballot access to third parties in Illinois have been successful thanks in large part to restrictive statewide election laws, some of the most difficult in the nation. To deny him access due to spurious charges would be a clear violation of his civil rights and a gross insult to the democratic process. I encourage you to consider the matter thoughtfully and fairly, and overturn all objections to his petitions. I will be following the matter closely.

Sincerely,

Andrew S. Jackson

Carlinville, Illinois

2 July 2004

Dear Mark Shelden,

I am writing from Belgium in order to raise my strong objection regarding the undemocratic nature of the campaign strategy advanced by the Democratic Party, using your office as a gateway.

For the coming elections, Socialist Equality Party candidate Thomas Mackaman has petitioned for ballot status in Illinois and collected well over the number of signatures required for your office.

As part of their campaign clearly designed to prevent independent voices from being heard during the election campaign, Democrat Party officials have now filed an objection to the petition. They do not even seem to care to cover their sinister intent by arranging this objection just hours before the expiry in order to leave no room for review.

The Socialist Equality Party represents the only independent alternative to defend the interests of the ordinary people in this election, in Illinois, in the USA and internationally. It would be equal to a political public beheading if your office denies access to ballot for SEP on the basis of any bureaucratic assault.

Therefore, as a person that is affected by the policies of the US administration, I demand that you keep the SEP candidate on the ballot while denying any credibility to the efforts of the Democratic Party.

Best regards,

Kerem Kaya

1 July 2004

Dear Mr. Shelden, Champaign County Clerk:

I have just read the article below which details an absurd challenge to Thomas Mackaman's standing for ballot status as a state representative candidate from Illinois' 103rd District.

The Mackaman campaign has gathered over half-again as many signatures as is required by law for him to appear on the ballot.

I hope that you, as County Clerk, will deem the prospective candidate to have fulfilled the legal requirement for ballot status, and will officially designate him as a candidate. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Chris Kaihatsu

Chicago

1 July 2004

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you to intervene to stop the Democratic Party from trying to keep the Socialist Equality Party (US) from being placed on the ballot. The reasons for their complaint will be presented to the court soon. I am not a US citizen, however this is a matter of democracy, which should apply in all countries including my own. It is hardly a shining example to the rest of the world to allow undemocratic practises to continue in the USA, whilst lecturing so-called third world countries and dictatorships about being democratic. Respectfully, I ask you not to allow the Democratic Party to subvert democracy and trust you will uphold fairness.

Many thanks for your time in reading this letter.

Regards from,

Trevor James Dargue

1 July 2004

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to express my concern that democratic rights are under attack in Illinois. The Democratic and Republican parties have no right to impede other candidates from gaining ballot status, because these same parties wage war in the name of democracy elsewhere in the world.

No justification can be given for an effective two-party monopoly, apart from the sordid motivation to limit the free discussion that should take place before voters cast their ballots. An effective two-party system is not far removed from an effective one-party system.

If the challenges to the third party petitions prove to be frivolous, I would hope that some consequence results, at the very least a public statement of reprimand from the Champaign County Election Board.

Sincerely,

Ron Golaszewski

1 July 2004

I would like to express my opposition to the attempts by Geraldine Parr to undermine the attempts of the Socialist Equality Party candidate Tom Mackaman to gain access to the ballot in Illinois. I urge you to grant the SEP its democratic right to take part in the election, and to cease in your antidemocratic attacks on third parties.

Sincerely,

Paul Enman

2 July 2004

To the county clerk:

I am disgusted with the tactics of the Democratic Party in their unceasing effort to stifle any political discussion of substance. I urge you to reject the petition of the Democratic Party that would deny SEP candidate Tom Mackaman ballot status in the race for the HOR 103rd District. All the requirements for ballot status were met, and the United States is supposed to be a democracy where discussion from all perspectives is encouraged, not censored. The SEP represents the working masses who have no political voice in either the Democratic or

Republican Party. The fact that these organizations seek to muffle any alternative to the two-party system speaks volumes about their bankruptcy. The SEP demands an immediate withdrawal of all troops from Iraq and Afghanistan, which is echoed by 40 percent of the electorate as of today. The number will only get bigger as this quagmire worsens. The mess at home is nearly as bad as far as wages, housing, healthcare and education are concerned. The political discussion of these issues from Bush/Kerry is pabulum. Allowing third parties ballot status is critical to raising the level of discussion and action on important issues that affect everybody. Please reject this spineless bureaucratic nonsense.

Eric Meeker, DDS

2 July 2004



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact