

# More letters oppose Democrats' attempt to bar SEP candidate from Illinois ballot

19 July 2004

*The following letters were sent to 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.*

*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 anti-democratic methods of Kerry and the Democrats to add their voices of protest against the attempt to exclude anti-war 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.*

Dear Mr. Shelden,

It is with deep concern that I write to you in the matter of the candidacy of Mr. Tom Mackaman of the SEP. If the reports that I have read of the matter are near the truth, it appears that cynical and undemocratic methods are being employed to disenfranchise third-party candidates. In addition, it appears that this desperate intervention may well be criminal.

I urge you to reject these scurrilous attempts to undermine democracy. In microcosm, this sordid performance by the so-called Democrats reflects the general debasement of American political life. Mr. Shelden, if this is allowed to continue unchallenged, the consequences will be grave, and not just for America. In my own country, we have just had a crucial federal election in which only 60% of the electorate voted. This was the lowest percentage in decades, and can only speak to the alienation of voters who, rightly or wrongly, perceive they have no real choices. It is my understanding that American voters are also giving up in record numbers. This can only mean that tens of millions of Americans feel they have no voice vis-à-vis the Democrat/Republican two-party system. It is clear that any threat to either of these two parties is a direct threat to powerful vested interests. In this light, it becomes perfectly clear why third-party candidates must be squashed in Illinois, and indeed, across your entire nation.

It is my hope that the Office of the Champaign County Clerk will be guided in its decision-making by the wisdom of your founding fathers, as enshrined in your Constitution. As never before, these shining principles are under sustained attack.

I have confidence, Mr. Shelden, that for the sake of democracy, you will do the right thing. The whole world is watching.

Yours respectfully,

Michael P. FitzGerald  
Carleton Place, Ontario  
16 July 2004

To whom it may concern:

Discovering the details of the suppression of the legality of signatures of voters supporting the Socialist Equality Party candidate for the state

legislature in the Illinois 103rd District, Tom Mackaman, was truly surprising. Blocking him from the electoral process when the criteria have been met to ensure his participation is both irresponsible and illegal. Under your watch, the electoral system is being neutered and rendered ineffective. By not allowing candidates to be on the ballot who have clearly met the criteria is irresponsible, repressive and in its very nature, discriminatory.

The two-party system has destroyed what the founding fathers of this country had in mind when they allowed people to be involved in the electoral process. Your office, which seeks to suppress new ideas and voices that do not agree with mainstream politics, has attempted to suppress, stifle and undermine candidates' rights to run for elected office.

As George W. Bush is considering the possibility of postponing elections, it seems that the government in the Champaign-Urbana area thinks it is not only possible but desirable to manipulate the electoral process. It seems to me that the office of county clerk has no intentions of upholding the rule of law and is more than happy to maintain the standard two-party system even if alternative candidates have earned their rights as American citizens to be placed on the ballot. As long as you allow this malicious suppression of legality, true democracy will not have a place in the electoral process. I might add that the electoral process is one of the necessary tenets of democracy. Voices of dissent are legitimate voices, and the denial of Tom Mackaman runs counter to everything America stands for. Place Tom Mackaman on the ballot and you will not be viewed as suppressors of liberty and freedom, but upholders of it.

Thank you for your time.

Brad Garding  
Laramie, Wyoming  
July 17, 2004  
Dear Sir,

It is disappointing to hear, especially in these days of cynical exaltations of "democratically elected" presidents and the elevation of the United States political system to the supreme international example, that a legitimate candidate, who has gone through the required process to be represented on the ballot in your district, should be objected to unabatedly by a party that decries such actions ad infinitum when used against them. Mr. Mackaman has obviously gone through the requisite functions to appear on the ballot, and I implore you to uphold his legal right to run for office.

Sincerely,  
Quillon Arkenstone  
Honolulu, Hawaii  
16 July 2004  
Dear Sir,

I am sure you are aware of the dirty tricks that the Democratic Party is using to keep Mr. Mackaman off the ballot in your county. I think this is low-down and dirty and shows that the democrats are no better than the republicans. If they have to stoop to this vulgar level in order to not have competition, that tells the world that there is no difference between the

two parties. The Democratic Party can only hope to win by trying to scam itself as the lesser of two evils than the Republican Party, of which there is no such thing. Now, the world knows it and I am ashamed of the party for which I have voted.

I implore you to see through their ignorances and scumbag attitudes and do the right thing. Please uphold justice rather than being the conduit of its demise. Place Mr. Mackaman in the ballot where he rightfully belongs and let the voters decide.

Thank you,  
Z. Granberry  
Texas  
16 July 2004

Dear Sir,

I had been awaiting with much interest, the attempts of SEP to field a socialist alternative in the 2004 US presidential elections.

Thus I feel much dismay at how the democrat party apparatus has swung into action with its big arm muscle power in order to deprive the people of a legitimate choice. It is ludicrous how a contesting party can act as the judge in canceling the candidature of another one. The corruption is further highlighted by the active participants of state office holders in this anti-democratic effort.

I would request you to do your bit in getting justice to prevail and allowing for the SEP to field its candidate.

Thanks and regards to you.  
Arnab Roy  
India  
16 July 2004

To the County Clerk:

It is my belief that Champaign County board member Ralph Langenheim should be dismissed from his position after his behavior during the checking of signatures on the petition of Socialist Equality Party candidate Tom Mackaman for ballot status in the 103rd District. It is bad enough that the Democrats in Champaign County are attempting to disenfranchise the voters who signed the petition of the Socialist Equality Party. But the contempt shown by Mr. Langenheim and the petition-checkers for the candidate himself, (stated openly by one when he commented that he had no problem helping to keep the communists off the ballot) and the objection to the signatures of people actually present—including Mr. Mackaman himself—who could confirm that they had signed the petition, goes beyond all decency and reveals something dark and smarmy within the Democratic Party.

I remind the Democrats of Champaign County that the nation and the world are watching this very carefully. All of you who continue to urge voters to “hold their noses” and vote for the Democrats are not winning any hearts and minds by your undemocratic acts, contemptible behavior and essential dishonesty. I urge you, if you have any remaining belief in real democracy, to overturn the objection to Tom Mackman’s petition and place his name on the ballot in Illinois.

C. Zaremba  
San Francisco  
16 July 2004

Again I write as I see more and more evidence that the State of Illinois is upholding a policy that, in the past, would have prevented Mr. A. Lincoln from becoming president. If Illinois is afraid of holding a democratic election, then stop the posturing and admit what you truly are. A dictatorial club that has no vacancies.

This is the sort of thing that resulted in my fleeing the USA so that I could be in a country that is a democracy, where people are allowed to vote for candidates whom they believe represent them.

David King  
New Zealand  
16 July 2004

Dear Sir or Madam,

I have been continuing to follow the news of the Democratic Party’s foul attempts to keep third parties off the ballot in Illinois. I cannot understand a situation where no reason must be given for an objection to a petition signature, beyond a smirk or a chuckle, making it possible for 611 deliberate lies to be told, without any consequences.

The Democratic checkers were following written guidelines that instructed them to object in every instance, regardless of whether evidence existed to the contrary. Enough is enough, since Tom Mackaman’s own signature was disputed, as was the signature of one of the petition checkers. These actions amount to arrogant displays of bad faith, which the Democratic Party is rubbing in the electorate’s face.

One of the obstructionists reportedly said that he has no problem “helping to keep the communists off the ballot.” In using the word “Communist” to denote undemocratic, bureaucratic, and dishonest methods of rule, he accurately describes his own conduct.

When pressed to defend the Democratic Party’s antics, County Board member and Democrat Ralph Langenheim reportedly said, “I don’t have to tell you why. I have my orders.” Bureaucrats in “Communist” regimes throughout the world gleefully give the exact same justification for their actions.

I urge you to reject this attempt to violate democratic rights in Illinois! The conduct of the Democratic Party throughout this episode is illustration enough of why it is imperative that you allow third-party candidates to participate in the democratic process.

Sincerely,  
Ron Golaszewski  
16 July 2004

Dear Mr. Shelden,

I am most concerned that democracy is being interfered with in your election system. I am writing to you again as a follow up to my previous e-mail. I am reading daily reports on the SEP’s web site, which are very disturbing to read. Here in Britain, we have many parties contesting national elections. None of the smaller ones seem to have any of this nonsense going on. From the reports, it seems the Democratic Party is trying any tactic to keep the SEP, and others, off the ballot. What kind of elections are taking place in your state and probably across the United States? The Democrats seem awfully keen to silence the SEP. They do not seem to think that the American voters are in any need of free speech and “liberty and justice for all.” If the Democrat position is so good, then the voters will vote for it. It follows that the SEP are saying things that the working class want to hear. That’s why they are scared. Mr. Shelden, this seems to be in conflict now with the United States constitution. It is your duty to ensure that liberty is upheld. The SEP must be placed on the ballot. The voters are the final judge in any election. Democracy must be upheld, in the USA, and around the world. Undemocratic practices are the sort of thing the American people sought to rid themselves of in 1776.

Many thanks for your time in reading this e-mail,  
Best regards from Trevor James Dargue, Britain.  
16 July 2004

To whom it may concern,

I refer you to the article I recently read in the WSWS:  
<http://wsws.org/articles/2004/jul2004/illi-j13.shtml>

If what it describes is true then I would like to register my complaint regarding the blatant trampling of the democratic rights of the Illinois electorate by the Democratic Party, whose very name has been given in my mind, after reading this article, a rather Orwellian flavour.

Although I am not a US citizen, I think I do have the moral right to complain on this matter given that the US government has itself made it its business to “spread freedom and democracy” outside its borders. If there are such blatant infringements within the US then frankly I think it makes a mockery of America’s pretensions for “spreading freedom and

democracy.” If anything, it reveals the more sinister aims behind such spin, which is, in my opinion, the propping up of Corporate America both inside and outside the US. This is just as much the Democratic Party’s aim as it is the Republican Party’s aim. The only difference between the two is the methods used to achieve and maintain this. Hence, dirty tricks such as those in Illinois reflect the Democrats’ determination to keep individuals with an alternative manifesto, such as the SEP candidate, off the ballot.

I would kindly appreciate your response on this matter.

Yours faithfully,

John Rigas

London

16 July 2004



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](http://wsws.org/contact)**