

Letters to Champaign county clerk

Worldwide opposition to Democrats' attempt to bar SEP candidate from Illinois ballot

29 July 2004

The following are some of the most recent 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 attempt 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.

To Mr. Mark Shelden, County Clerk:

As an American citizen, a lawyer, and a supporter of the Socialist Equality Party, I am writing to once again register my strong opposition to the apparently illegal and clearly antidemocratic obstructionist acts engaged in by the Democratic Party to keep Tom Mackaman off the ballot in the Illinois 103rd Congressional District. These frivolous and bad-faith challenges to petition signatures have all the hallmarks of willful obstruction of the electoral process, and of unlawful denial of voting rights and the right to stand for election.

These actions should be repudiated by your office, Mr. Mackaman should be permitted on the ballot, and an appropriate investigation of criminal and civil wrongdoing by Democratic Party functionaries and employees should be initiated immediately. The most fundamental of democratic rights is at stake.

Yours sincerely,

John J. Tobin, attorney at law
Member of the Massachusetts Bar
24 July 2004

Dear Sir or Madam,

I was shocked to learn of the apparently shameless bad faith of Democrat objections to SEP nominations.

However, the attorney representing the Democrats claimed she was not prepared to argue against the county clerk's findings of fact because her clients had not yet had time to analyze all the evidence. The lawyer asked to review the voter registration cards of the hundreds of voters whose names the Democrats had objected to. This amounted to an admission of the bad-faith character of the whole enterprise: after all, if they have only now begun to look at the facts, what was the basis of their original objections?

In the UK there are plenty of smaller parties—and indeed not so small. Since the UK Independence Party appeared, England as well as Scotland

and Wales has had four sizeable parties. Should not objectors have to make good their objections as soon as they are lodged? Indeed, is there not a case for depriving major parties of the corporate right to object to other parties' nominations—even if done “by the book”? After all, there are plenty of individual members who can do this on their parties' behalf.

B.R. Cosin

24 July 2004

To Champaign County Clerk, Mark Shelden:

I strongly urge you to do the lawful thing and throw out the Democratic Party's challenge to the petitions filed by Socialist Equality Party (SEP) candidate for state representative for the 103rd district, Tom Mackaman, and other third-party candidates. This attempt to keep legitimate challengers off the ballots in November is antidemocratic and must not be sanctioned by your office.

As you know, Illinois Democratic Party officials have filed an objection to the qualifying petitions submitted by Mackaman supporters, which total 2,003 signatures (significantly more than the 1,325 required to get on the ballot). As you are also undoubtedly aware, discussion at the July 6 hearing made clear the bad faith exhibited by the Democratic Party in this matter, since the preliminary examination of challenged signatures showed that a clear majority were valid. This bad faith was underscored by the fact that Geraldine Parr, the Democrat who challenged the petition for Mackaman, didn't even attend the hearing to support her claim!

Also, recent revelations— that the Democratic Party's challenge to Mackaman's petition involved legislative aides Liz Brown and Brendan Hostetler, who appear to have been engaged in this partisan political activity during working hours—is deeply disturbing and unlawful. Are citizens' taxes being used to deprive citizens of the state of Illinois their right to run for office if they do not support one of the two major parties?

The eyes of the nation are on Illinois right now since Democratic and Republican party operatives in the state have filed objections to ballot status petitions for some two dozen independent and third-party candidates thus far this election season! I urge you to do the lawful thing and support the democratic process.

Place Tom Mackaman on the ballot!

Sincerely,

Sara Burke

Co-editor, *Gloves Off* <http://www.glovesoff.org>

24 July 2004

Dear Sir,

I have read recently of the disturbing news that the Democratic Party has attempted to prevent the Socialist Equality Party and its candidate Mr. Tom Mackaman from contesting in the forthcoming elections for Illinois. Also, I have seen from reports that Democrats have no proof in justifying their allegations against the signatures supporting Mr. Mackaman's candidacy. To me, this act is a gross violation of the democratic rights of

the SEP, Mr. Mackaman and the voters of Illinois.

As a citizen of Sri Lanka, I myself have witnessed many attacks on basic democratic rights, including voting rights. I believe that alone qualifies me to raise my voice against such attempts.

Therefore I appeal to you to dismiss the Democratic Party's challenge against Mr. Mackaman's candidacy and place him on the ballot.

Regards,
Parakrama Kuruppu
Colombo, Sri Lanka
26 July 2004

I condemn the malicious attempt of the Democratic Party to keep Tom Mackaman, a candidate of the Socialist Equality Party for a seat in the 103rd District of the Illinois House of Representatives, off the ballot.

The attempt to block the SEP candidate is especially reprehensible in the light of the fact that the SEP is a party that stands against repression at home and aggression abroad by the US government.

I note that the county clerk, Mark Sheldon, has found that the valid signatures obtained by Mackaman to support his candidature are well in excess of the required number to secure for him a place in the ballot. In the process it has been proved that the vast majority of objections to the candidature of Tom Mackaman raised by the Democratic Party are invalid and its act is in bad faith. I request the Champaign County Electoral Board to throw out the objections of the Democratic Party and ratify the conclusion by the county clerk and ensure that his name be placed on the ballot.

C. Hewa Manage, attorney at law
Supreme Court of Sri Lanka
26 July 2004
Mark Sheldon, County Clerk:

I am sending this note to strongly support the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) worldwide protest against the Democratic Party attack on the third party campaigns and allow Tom Mackaman, the SEP candidate, the right to be on the ballot as a candidate for public office.

The attempt at blocking the SEP candidate is not only a part of a desperate attempt to block views expressed against the US war in Iraq, but in general suppressing the right of the people to freedom of expression.

I totally agree with the SEP that all who have regard for democratic rights of the workers, students, intellectuals and other oppressed masses, should condemn this.

This attack on democratic rights is in totally opposition to the democratic ideals, what the founding forefathers of USA promoted.

Prof. M. G.A. Cooray
Department of History and International Relations,
University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
27 July 2004

Dear Champaign County Electoral Board,

I am writing to protest the efforts of the Democratic Party to exclude Socialist Equality Party candidate Thomas Mackaman from the ballot in the Illinois State Rep. 103rd District race in November. The dirty tricks efforts of the Democratic Party show that they are anything but "democratic." Please reject this underhanded attempt to subvert democracy in Illinois. Place Tom Mackaman on the ballot.

Thank you.
Sincerely,
Ken McCravy
Macomb, Illinois
26 July 2004
Dear Mr. Sheldon,

I see the effort by Illinois Democratic Party officials to keep Socialist Equality Party candidate Mr. Tom Mackaman off the ballot as a deliberate attempt to prevent a Third Voice in the United States of America.

If Mr. Mackaman is deprived of his right to be a candidate, we will have

to think that the constitutionally established democracy is now denied in USA.

We are keenly watching what your decision will be.

Prasanna Withanage, filmmaker
Sri Lanka.
27 July 2004

Dear Mr. Sheldon:

As an Australian concerned about the fate of democracy in the United States, a country we and many other nations looked toward in the 19th century when fashioning our own democracy, I call for the Democratic challenge to be thrown out and for the Socialist Equality Party's candidate, Mr. Tom Mackaman, to be placed on the ballot in Illinois. Any campaign to prevent "minor" parties and individuals from contesting elections cannot be regarded as democratic. I sympathize with Mr. Mackaman's political position, but even if I did not, the principle I have alluded to would still hold. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,
Robert Verdon
Canberra, Australia
27 July 2004
Mr. Sheldon,

I oppose your decision to exclude the SEP from the coming ballot. I urge you to reject 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 a socialist voice outside the two major political parties. This is an attempt to throw away the voices of more than 2,000 citizens who supported and signed the SEP's petition. It is an attempt at limiting and even silencing important political discussion in this election.

Stop the Democratic Party's attack on the SEP and all "third party" campaigns.

Sincerely,
N.B.Rathen
Germany
28 July 2004



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact