

WSWS readers condemn denial of ballot status to SEP candidate in Ohio

25 August 2004

We are publishing below a selection of letters to the WSWS opposing the decision by Ohio federal judge Susan J. Dlott to deny ballot status to Socialist Equality Party congressional candidate David Lawrence. [See “Judge rejects ballot lawsuit of SEP congressional candidate in Ohio”].

The SEP urges all supporters of democratic rights, in the United States and throughout the world, to condemn this antidemocratic ruling. Send letters and messages of protest to the WSWS at editor@wsws.org

On behalf of SEP supporters in Illinois, I condemn Judge Dlott’s decision. The “logic” underlying her ruling amounts to nothing but a crude attempt to justify the monopoly of the two official parties on political life in the US.

The court system is trying to do to David Lawrence in Ohio what the Democratic Party tried to do my candidacy in Illinois—prevent the emergence of a political alternative to imperialist war and the destruction of living standards in the US. However, as we learned in Illinois, with the support of SEP members and sympathizers worldwide, our political perspective will find a way forward in Ohio and will ultimately prevail because it is based on the most pressing needs confronting millions of workers.

Fraternally,

Tom Mackaman

SEP candidate for state representative, District 103, Illinois

24 August 2004

Judge Susan J. Dlott has argued that she must uphold undemocratic ballot access laws in the interest of “stability.” I’m willing to bet that Saddam Hussein used the same principle at one time or another in order to justify his own repressive measures. The song is always the same, although it is played at different volumes.

It is notable that Dlott views the two major parties, which are backed by millions of dollars of corporate money as well as by the corporate-controlled media, as the poor victims at the hands of third parties who are seeking an unfair “substantial advantage.” The same theme was utilized in order to justify the Iraq invasion: although the United States

government spends more money on its armed forces than the next 10 countries combined, the two major parties portrayed themselves as the poor victims who faced a mortal threat from the nation that it trounced in a 30-day war in 1991 and then bombed at will for over a decade.

The United States government kills tens of thousands of innocent human beings in the Middle East in the name of “democracy,” while discouraging third party candidates from exercising their Constitutional right to engage in fair and open political debate at home. People around the world should not tolerate what is happening in Ohio or in Iraq.

RG

19 August 2004

Dear Editor:

As the author of a four-volume history on independent and third-party politics in the United States, I am writing to strongly encourage David Lawrence and the Socialist Equality Party to appeal US District Court Judge Susan J. Dlott’s recent ruling in the lawsuit against Ohio’s early and discriminatory filing deadline for independent and third-party congressional candidates. I have also made a small contribution on your web site to assist in the party’s appeal in the case.

How Judge Dlott could have completely ignored the compelling historical examples cited by ballot access expert Richard Winger in rendering her decision is almost beyond comprehension.

Unfortunately, however, the ruling by Judge Dlott, a Clinton appointee, should hardly come as a surprise. As Ralph Nader can attest, the hostility (and dirty tricks) displayed by the Democrats this year against any left-leaning challengers to the entrenched two-party system is unparalleled in American history.

Third-party advocates of all political stripes should be worried about this belligerent and unprecedented behavior on the part of one of the country’s two major parties.

With best wishes.

Darcy G. Richardson

Author of *Others: Third-Party Politics From the Nation’s Founding to the Rise & Fall of the Greenback-Labor Party*

(2004)

21 August 2004

To the honorable courts of Ohio,

I am an independent voter and support fair elections. I am not associated with WSWs. But the barriers I have seen placed on third parties this election cycle give me great concern that Democracy is not the objective of our government. Ohio's terms and conditions to gain ballot access are unreasonable toward third parties. Substantial reasons have been given. It is time for the honorable courts of Ohio to not be spineless and establish equity. If you are the protectors of Democracy, then prove it in this case.

LG

Tucson, Arizona

20 August 2004

To the Editorial Board of the Socialist Equality Party and any interested parties:

I have read the editorial board's article, "Judge rejects ballot lawsuit of SEP congressional candidate in Ohio," of August 19.

I am in agreement with the spirit of the article, and I support David Lawrence as a candidate and potentially elected official in the US House of Representatives.

I would like to introduce a few points addressing Judge Dlott's decision in Lawrence v. Blackwell:

1. The overall procedure at stake is about how candidates are to be validated so that the electorate may subsequently elect certain validated candidates to respective public offices.

In determining the correct practice of this validation procedure one must implicitly assign a judgment of whether all prospective candidates can be considered to operate within relatively parallel constraints, or whether there are such differences among the environments that the prospective candidates operate in that they must be judged to be different environments.

If it is the case that all prospective candidates can be said to be up against negligibly different obstacles, then the filing date for petition signatures could be decided on an arbitrary basis, in respect to the prospective candidates, as long as it was the same date for all of them.

Fortunately, no one is making such a claim. All of those scrutinizing the particulars of the lawsuit realize, in varying contexts, that not all prospective candidates face the same obstacles in their bids for ballot status. The specific context(s) in which each observer recognizes unevenness inescapably illustrates that particular person's outlook on the validation procedure as a whole.

2. From the voter's point of view it is desirable to have as much time as possible to review validated candidates so as to reach a concrete preference by the time the day of the vote

arrives. The best interests of the voter would best be served with as great a period of time as possible for weighing the strengths and weaknesses of validated, final candidates.

3. I must emphasize the pivotal importance of meaning resulting from my use of the term "final candidate" above. As conditions currently exist in Ohio's First Congressional District, the Democratic and Republican parties enjoy a biased advantage due to their not having to determine their final candidates until March 2 (for 2004), which should be thought of as the starting-gate-opening moment for the race.

For an independent prospective candidate the stage of the primaries does not apply, and therefore he or she begins immediately at the starting gate, additionally coping with the added burden of having to secure enough petition signatures to be considered ballot-worthy. Thus, in the same period of time as when the Republican or Democratic candidate is securely campaigning, the independent prospective candidate is managing the twin responsibilities of signature-gathering and campaigning simultaneously, and with no guarantee of candidacy viability.

My points above clearly outline what can only be correctly termed a gross double standard of policy that is in effect for prospective candidacies for the US House of Representatives from Ohio's First Congressional District. The most agile imagination would be unable to provide a reasonable explanation for such discrepancies of procedure in what is supposed to be a fair and democratic process of election.

It is for these reasons that I fully support the Socialist Equality Party's decision to appeal the district court's decision and hopefully find a just decision at the appeals level.

CK

Chicago

19 August 2004



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact