

SEP candidate in Ohio responds to court ruling: “No opposition to two-party monopoly will be allowed”

1 September 2004

On August 27 the US Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit upheld a lower court decision denying ballot status to David Lawrence, Socialist Equality Party candidate for the US House of Representatives from the 1st Congressional District of Ohio, which includes most of Cincinnati. [See “Appeals court upholds discriminatory filing deadline: Ohio SEP candidate to conduct write-in campaign”]

Lawrence and supporters gathered the signatures of 2,660 voters from the district on nominating petitions to place his name on the ballot, far more than the required number. However, he collected the signatures after the arbitrary and prohibitively early filing date of March 1. The SEP candidate had only decided to run in mid-March.

When Lawrence attempted to submit the signatures on June 4, Ohio election authorities refused to accept them. Ten days later Lawrence and a 1st CD voter filed a lawsuit challenging the anti-democratic character of the filing deadline. The case rested heavily on a 1983 US Supreme Court decision, Anderson v. Celebrezze, which overturned an early filing deadline in Ohio for independent presidential candidates.

On August 18 Judge Susan Dlott in Cincinnati ruled against Lawrence, essentially ignoring the issues of due process and First Amendment rights of free speech and political expression raised by the lawsuit. Lawrence filed an appeal with the Court of Appeals August 19.

David Lawrence and the SEP will be conducting a write-in campaign in Ohio’s 1st CD. Lawrence submitted the following statement to the WSWs on the latest court ruling:

The ruling by the Sixth Circuit court of appeals sends a clear message to the working class electorate not only in Cincinnati, but across the nation: No opposition to

the two-party monopoly will be allowed.

The war in Iraq, the general escalation of US militarism internationally and rapidly deteriorating social conditions at home, as well as huge external and internal deficits, are creating explosive conditions. These conditions make it impossible for the ruling class even to consider allowing other pro-capitalist candidates (Ralph Nader), let alone a socialist alternative, the opportunity to appeal to the millions of disenfranchised workers.

The court’s argument that in fact we gained an unfair advantage by filing after the deadline is not only patently false, given the resources of the two major parties and the disparities in signature totals (the Democrats and Republicans only need to collect 50 signatures each), but genuinely unfair to the more than 2,500 workers who signed our petitions.

While petitioning I found general hostility in the population to the two major parties. Workers consistently spoke of the inability of either party to address the vast social needs of millions. There was an overwhelming consensus that all elected officials simply ruled on behalf of major political donors and giant transnational corporations.

Our campaign will not end today. A court decision does not mean the end of our struggle to build a working class party that represents an alternative to the capitalist parties.

David Lawrence



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