

More letters denounce effort to bar SEP candidates from Ohio ballot

22 September 2004

The following are some of the many letters sent in recent days to the office of Ohio Secretary of State Kenneth Blackwell protesting the efforts of Ohio authorities to bar the SEP's presidential and vice-presidential candidates from the Ohio ballot. The SEP collected and submitted the signatures of close to 8,000 signatures of Ohio residents who supported the candidacy of Bill Van Auken and Jim Lawrence. However, the Ohio secretary of state's office disqualified nearly 4,200 signatures on the SEP petitions. A preliminary examination conducted by the SEP over several days showed that at least 1,230 of these disqualified signatures were indeed valid, demonstrating the thoroughly undemocratic and dishonest methods utilized by Ohio election officials in their attempt to disenfranchise voters.

The SEP calls on all readers of the WSW and all supporters of democratic rights to add their names to those demanding that the Ohio Secretary of State's office place Bill Van Auken and Jim Lawrence on the statewide ballot. Send e-mail messages of protest to:

Kenneth Blackwell Ohio Secretary of State election@sos.state.oh.us

Please send copies to editor@wsws.org

Dear Mr. Blackwell,

As an American citizen I find the decision of your state to disqualify the signatures of several American registered voters from a petition to add the Socialist Equality Party's candidates to the presidential ballot because of trivial technicalities an outrage. I find such actions by election officials that attempt to block third party candidates from a ballot, and the decision of a federal judge to defend such actions, prejudiced, unconstitutional and blatantly criminal. I only hope that some day such men will pay for their treachery.

Sincerely yours,

John R. Russey

Missouri registered voter

19 September 2004

Thou shalt not steal

An empty feat

When it's so lucrative to cheat.

Arthur Hugh Clough, The Latest Decalogue

Dear Secretary Blackwell:

The schoolyard attempt to ban the SEP from contesting the US presidential election is proof that the Democrat Party (at least) regards it as an electoral threat. That is all the more reason for supporting its candidates' right to stand. If it threatens a major party, it can hardly be dismissed as insignificant.

On the other hand, there is only one useful term to describe the rigging of an election.

Allow the democratic process to work!

Yours Sincerely

Robert Verdon

Canberra, Australia

19 September 2004

Dear Mr. Blackwell:

Sir, I respect you for your accomplishments and for your service statewide and internationally. However,

the decision to deny Van Auken and Lawrence is unjust. Through this decision you are ignoring the voices of thousands of people that support the SEP candidates. Perhaps you do not understand that neither the Democratic nor the Republican Party represent the working class majority, and it is our human right to seek someone that will. You have not only wrongly disqualified thousands of signatures due to trivial technicalities, but have ignored the evidence that the candidates have submitted. Mr. Blackwell, it is not too late to do what's right; every step that this country takes to strengthen the two-party system is a step away from democracy.

I thank you for your time,

Sincerely,

Adrian Aguirre

19 September 2004

Dear Mr. Blackwell,

If I understand the Democratic and Republican parties correctly, freedom of choice is what separates our way of living from countries that rule in an anti-democratic fashion. Freedom of choice is what makes America great. If we are to be consistent, and not just pay lip service to that ideal, then we must allow others with a different point of view to be heard. We must allow them a venue to be heard at all times, not just some of the time. If we do not allow them to be heard, then we disenfranchise all of America by choosing who gets to be heard, and who doesn't. This is the denial of choice. This is the denial of freedom.

Please allow the SEP candidates to appear on the November 2 ballot in your state of Ohio. Just as Baskin-Robbins is not Baskin-Robbins with only vanilla and chocolate offerings, the United States of America is not truly the land of the free and the home of the brave if it allows only two points of view to choose from this November 2.

Sincerely,

Joel E. Tolliver

19 September 2004

Dear Mr. Blackwell:

I am writing to you to protest in the strongest manner the ruling by the Ohio Secretary of State's office that the Socialist Equality Party did not have enough legitimate signatures of registered voters to place its presidential and vice-presidential candidates, Bill Van Auken and Jim Lawrence, on the Ohio ballot in November.

The mass disqualification of signatures on the SEP's nominating petitions for spurious reasons represents an insulting attack on the rights of all registered voters. Attention to minutiae such as missing letters in addresses or the efforts by signatories to write legibly (in itself a graceful act to your office) is a political mugging predicated on the assumption that

it can be pulled off.

That is, your office has assumed that the voting population is inert and inactive, not to say stupid. Your office's actions are filled with contempt for the Ohio citizenry. You, not they, as the law intends, are attempting to decide who can run for office.

You are politically accountable for this act. Should you persist, the sovereign people will dismiss your party, not to say your careers, from serious consideration in governance.

Please put the SEP on the ballot immediately, as thousands of Ohioans intended.

Sincerely,

AI

Brooklyn, New York

19 September 2004

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Dear Mr. Blackwell,

I wish to express my deep concern over the removal of the SEP candidates Bill Van Auken and Jim Lawrence from the November 2 national election ballot in Ohio.

As I am not a US citizen I do not know whether you are an elected or unelected official or, indeed, the scope and the extent of your authority. Whatever your status and authority might be, though, you make it more than evident that you prefer to ignore obvious fact in favour of legalistic quibble. Does this conform with the remit of your office—secretary of state—which, I assume, is to ensure that, in the final analysis, all aspects of political life in the state of Ohio are being conducted according to the principles of the US Constitution? I don't think so. This is, in my opinion, an attack on democracy itself, an everyday occurrence in so many countries around the world that is now creeping insidiously into the mainstream political life of your country as well.

Mr. Blackwell!

This is your day!

This is your chance!

Do something while you can!

Chris Rigas

19 September 2004

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Dear Mr. Blackwell:

It has come to my attention that Bill Van Auken has been denied the right to be on the ballot in the November presidential election. The methods used to disqualify him from the ballot are meant to prevent election fraud; they are intended to allow major parties to influence elections by keeping people and parties off the ballot who go through the correct processes to be on the ballot. To deny people the choice of who they can elect or can not elect is un-democratic in nature. To deny choices is to in effect say that we Americans as a whole cannot be trusted to elect our own representatives and leaders.

While I do understand that that many people in the country find this election year to be more critical than other years, I cannot stress enough how important it is that our state and all those in our country show support for democracy by not unjustly disqualifying candidates from our ballot.

Please put Van Auken on the ballot.

Sincerely,

Peter Lunn

Bowling Green, Ohio

19 September 2004

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Mr. Blackwell,

I am absolutely disgusted by the way you and your offices are trying to sabotage the democratic rights of the Socialist Equality Party (US) and of thousands of US citizens in Ohio who signed the petition of the SEP presidential ticket. It's a shame for American democracy.

I wonder whether you and your party will feel in the position to raise any arguments of democratic procedure and standards if the Republicans try to again steal the presidential election.

Regards,

Helmut Arens

Germany

19 September 2004

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I wish to strongly protest against the methods of the American courts, which are seeking to handicap the Socialist Equality Party from participating in the American presidential elections. In my opinion, the measures undertaken by the court clearly demonstrate the fear on the part of the authorities of a party that defends the interests of ordinary working people and firmly opposes the Iraq war. The authorities are fearful that the Socialist Equality Party could win and undermine the monopoly of the Republican and Democrat parties. An increase in support for the Socialist Equality Party would endanger the existing American two-party system and therefore the existing basis of power in the US.

With democratic greetings,

Hanne Levien

19 September 2004

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Dear Mr. Blackwell:

I will be watching with keen interest to see how officials of the state of Ohio rule on the presidential ballot status of SEP candidates Bill Van Auken and Jim Lawrence.

Will the state of Ohio continue to willfully and in bad faith attempt to prevent the citizens of Ohio from being able to choose a party and platform that represents their views? Or, will the state of Ohio cynically pretend, along with a majority of the rest of the political and media establishment, that the entire political spectrum in the US consists of two pro-war, big-business-representing, anti-working-class parties?

I, along with many others around the world, will be watching with keen interest to see whether one of the major industrial states in the US will uphold fundamental democratic and electoral rights, or if it will ultimately insist on seeking to deprive Ohio citizens the ability to choose an alternative to pre-emptive war abroad and assaults on democratic rights at home.

Dan Klinger

Roeland Park, Kansas

19 September 2004



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact