

More letters protest Democratic Party efforts to bar SEP candidate from Illinois ballot

17 July 2006

Below we post more letters from WSWs readers protesting the Illinois Democratic Party's effort to exclude Socialist Equality Party state Senate candidate Joe Parnarauskis from the ballot. On July 3, the Illinois Democrats filed an objection to Parnarauskis's nominating petitions, challenging the validity of more than half of the 4,991 signatures submitted by the SEP to the State Board of Elections.

On July 11, a preliminary hearing on the Democrats' challenge was held by the Illinois Board of Elections—a body made up of four Democrats and four Republicans. At this hearing an attorney representing the SEP filed a Motion to Strike a Dismiss, calling on the board to throw out the Democrats' bad-faith objections to the SEP's nominating petitions. (See "Attorney for SEP candidate calls on Illinois election board to throw out Democrats' ballot challenge")

The Democrats are employing the same antidemocratic methods as in their unsuccessful bid to bar SEP state legislative candidate Tom Mackaman from the ballot in 2004. They have one aim—to exclude as many signatures as possible, using whatever technical discrepancies they can find or invent. A preliminary examination of the Democrats' objections has already revealed that they are seeking to disqualify legally registered voters whose signatures and addresses on petition sheets clearly match the information on their voter registration cards.

In addition to the SEP, the Illinois Democrats are challenging the entire statewide slate of the Illinois Green Party, including its gubernatorial candidate Rich Whitney.

The Socialist Equality Party intends to wage an aggressive legal and political fight to place Joe Parnarauskis on the Illinois ballot. We call on all of our supporters and all readers of the World Socialist Web Site to continue to send letters of protest to the State Board of Elections at webmaster@elections.state.il.us

This fight will require a considerable expenditure of funds. We appeal to all of our readers and supporters, and all those who defend democratic rights, to send contributions to the SEP election fund.

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to protest the treatment of Socialist Equality Party (US) candidate Joe Parnarauskis in his attempt to gain ballot status in the 52nd district for State Senate elections in Illinois. The challenges against over half the signatures on the petitions gathered by the campaign have been launched by the Democratic Party, not in the interests of democracy as they claim, but to prevent a third party candidate from attaining a position on the ballot. The actions of the Democrats in the campaign against Tom Mackaman in 2004 provide an example of the previous behaviour of this party.

The Democrats intend to initiate a legal campaign which will drain the SEP of valuable resources, something which it can ill afford, unlike the Democrats. I urge the election board not to allow these frivolous accusations from the Democratic Party to hinder the SEP's campaign and to allow the name of Joe Parnarauskis to appear on the ballot in the November elections.

Sincerely,
Jordan Smith
United Kingdom
11 July 2006

The "Democrats" are once again exposing themselves as a thoroughly corrupt and antidemocratic political organization, much like they did in the 2004 Tom Mackaman SEP campaign, or, for that matter, to every third party that they claim is out to "steal" votes that are in no way legitimately theirs.

As a circulator for the Parnarauskis campaign, I will wholeheartedly vouch for each signature that I obtained. My fellow circulators and I spent months collecting them, and made sure to ask each individual if he or she was registered in either Champaign or Vermilion counties. As a matter of fact, there were quite a number of people who were eager to sign for a candidate who was genuinely antiwar and considered human needs before private profit, yet they were unable to give me their signature because they were registered in a county that wasn't in the 52nd State Senate District in Illinois. Rest assured, however, that nobody who stopped to listen walked away without hearing about both the antidemocratic nature of the ballot access laws in this

country and the two big-business parties that uphold them!

The official political monopoly enjoyed by both the Democrats and Republicans in this country is anything but stable. This is confirmed by the utter desperation behind both parties' attempts to retain that stranglehold over political life whenever an election rolls around. We are again seeing this year the nature of "democracy" in the state of Illinois: the "free choice" to vote for whomever the Democrats or Republicans "graciously" allow the voter to see!

KK

10 July 2006

To whom it may concern,

The right to express one's views through the political process—by standing in an election, if you so desire—and to be able to vote for that candidate whose views, you believe, are most similar to your own convictions, must be regarded as among the principal building-blocks of a genuinely democratic society. Without according its citizens a real chance both to formally support (through the voting process) and also to run as candidates of political parties which espouse a message which fundamentally contrasts with the viewpoints held in common by the economic, political and media elite of a given nation, a society can rightly be called many things—dictatorial, authoritarian, etc. though surely not "democratic."

Moving from the abstract to the concrete, it is clear that, for the second election in a row in your state, individuals undeniably linked to high-ranking Democratic Party politicians have sought to deny candidates of both the Green Party and the Socialist Equality Party the right to appear on the ballot in the upcoming November elections, this being a right that they earned at great expense in time and money to themselves through the collection of a more-than-sufficient number of signatures. In 2004, Democratic Party functionaries whose links to speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives were beyond dispute went to court for the purpose of challenging the validity of thousands of signatures which had been collected by individuals supporting independent presidential candidate Ralph Nader, the Libertarian Party, the Green Party and the Socialist Equality Party.

I, along with many other ordinary people profoundly concerned about this transparently antidemocratic campaign launched by the so-called "Democratic Party," decided to voice my outrage via the sending of letters to the Champaign County Clerk, in this way demanding that Tom Mackaman, the candidate of the Socialist Equality Party for the Illinois State Legislature be allowed to take his rightful place on the ballot in November. We, ordinary workers, students and progressive-minded middle-class people gained a small but

symbolically important victory when it became completely apparent to all involved that the Democratic Party functionaries from Illinois were completely incapable of substantiating their claims that thousands of the signatures collected on behalf of Socialist Equality Party candidate Tom Mackaman were invalid. Yet, unfortunately, the individuals involved in this dirty, undemocratic "tricks" campaign launched against the Socialist Equality Party and those citizens who decided to put its candidate on the ballot were never punished for their misdeeds.

Fast forward to 2006. People working on behalf of Joe Parnaruskis, the Socialist Equality Party's candidate for State Senate in Illinois have collected a number of signatures far above the threshold which one must meet in order to appear on the ballot in the November elections. Those individuals who undertook the yeoman's task of talking to people about Mr. Parnaruskis's candidacy were sure to ask those inclined to sign the petitions necessary to put him on the ballot if they were registered voters eligible to vote in the 52nd legislative district...

In conclusion, I demand that you firmly reject the baseless claims of the Democratic Party that the number of legitimate signatures collected by the supporters of Mr. Parnaruskis was under the threshold legally required to place him on the ballot; you should likewise reject the attempts of the Democratic Party to prevent the candidates of the Green Party from appearing on the ballot. Finally, you should grant legal fees to both the Socialist Equality Party and the Green Party to compensate them for the costs that they have had to incur in combating the unfounded, undemocratic and rather sinister political attacks launched against them by the Democratic Party's local hatchet-men.

Sincerely,

Ari Weinstein

10 July 2006

Dear agent of the Illinois Board of Elections,

I am writing to voice my vehement opposition to the frivolous objections by the Democratic Party to the valid third party petitions submitted. These objections are unfounded and should be immediately dismissed.

Very sincerely,

Michael Marach

Chicago, Illinois

15 July 2006



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact