

# SEP candidate in Michigan to be certified for November ballot

Our reporter  
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The Bureau of Elections on Friday informed the Socialist Equality Party that there were no challenges to the qualifying petitions of Jerome White, the SEP candidate for US Congress in Michigan's 12th District. This means that White will be officially certified as a candidate for the November elections at the next meeting of the State Board of Canvassers in mid-August.

On July 19, the SEP submitted petitions bearing the names of 5,045 voters to the Secretary of State's office in Lansing, Michigan. This was well over the 3,000 signatures required to place an independent candidate on the ballot for US Congress in the district, which covers the working class suburbs north of Detroit. The deadline for challenges was 5 p.m., Thursday, July 27.

Due to Michigan's restrictive ballot-access laws, Jerome White will appear on the ballot as a candidate "With No Party Affiliation." To run candidates under the party's name in 2006, the SEP would have had to collect a minimum of 31,776 signatures in order to establish a "new political party" in the state. By comparison, congressional candidates from the Democratic or Republican parties only need to submit 1,000 signatures.

White is challenging US Representative Sander Levin, a 12-term Democratic incumbent with close connections to Detroit's Big Three automakers and the United Auto Workers union bureaucracy. While expressing initial reservations over the invasion of Iraq, Levin has voted to continue to fund the criminal war and opposed setting any date for the withdrawal of US troops from the Middle Eastern country.

Like SEP candidates in New York, California and elsewhere, White is fighting for working people to reject the pro-big-business and pro-war policies of the Democrats and Republicans and to build a political

movement based on the international unity of workers and a socialist alternative to the profit system.

Despite the many obstacles thrown in the path of third-party candidates, the SEP won a powerful response from workers, students and young people in cities like Warren, Hazel Park, Southfield and Ferndale, where there is a broad opposition to the war and the attacks on jobs and living standards, and a growing disgust with the Democrats' cowardly complicity with the Bush administration. Thousands of working people signed the SEP petitions in order to find a way to express their aspirations and interests, which are routinely ignored by the two big-business parties.

The 12th Congressional District typifies the social crisis that afflicts the US as a whole. It is home to the GM Tech Center, a large Chrysler factory and scores of supplier plants. Workers and their families—who have long been described by politicians and the news media as "middle class" workers—are being hard hit by the downsizing of the auto industry, demands for wage and benefit cuts, and the rising cost of living. Earlier this year Ford, GM and auto parts giant Delphi announced 85,000 job cuts in North America and the United Auto Workers bureaucracy announced its willingness to collaborate with the auto bosses to impose further contract concessions in upcoming negotiations.

A recent article in the *Detroit Free Press* noted that charities in Macomb County are being overwhelmed by the soaring demand for basic needs like clothing, food and shelter, particularly by younger and once financially stable people, asking for help for the first time. At United Way for Southeastern Michigan, calls to its 2-1-1 help line reached 6,700 last month—double the number of calls received in June 2005. "This isn't just an urban/suburban thing," said United Way President and Chief Executive Officer Michael

Brennan, who introduced the group's new promotional campaign to the media Tuesday. "This is a regional problem."

The Salvation Army reports a similar situation, with this year's demand for food services up 50 percent, compared with 16 percent over each of the past two years. Russ Russell, director of development for the group's Eastern Michigan Division, said, "180,000 more people have come to us this year than they did last year by this time... It's like...having the entire population of Flint coming to our doorstep for help at one time."

The Democratic Party, which has long dominated the politics of the Detroit Metropolitan area, has done nothing to alleviate these conditions. On the contrary, it has offered policies in Michigan that differ in no substantial sense from the Bush administration's national policy of tax cuts for big business, deregulation, cuts in social spending and other measures that have boosted the profits of the wealthy at the expense of working people.

After the announcement that he had qualified for the ballot, SEP candidate Jerome White said, "I want to thank all those who fought to place the SEP on the ballot in Michigan. We had to overcome many obstacles thrown in the way of parties that oppose the two-party monopoly, and in particular socialists who seek to provide a political voice to the millions of working people who are disenfranchised within a political system that subordinates every aspect of life to the profit needs of America's wealthy elite.

"Placing the SEP on the ballot in Michigan is a major achievement for the working class that will put the party in a strong position to advance a socialist alternative to the escalating war in the Middle East and the war being waged by corporate America against working people at home."

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