

California: SEP candidate to participate in Spanish-language radio program

Our reporter
5 August 2006

John Burton, the Socialist Equality Party candidate for US Congress in California's 29th Congressional District, will be participating in a program on the Spanish-language station KTNQ, AM 1020, on Saturday night, August 5. The broadcast, which begins at 9:30 p.m. Pacific Time, is hosted by Alan Diamante, a prominent immigration and civil rights attorney in Los Angeles.

The radio program is oriented toward providing legal advice to Los Angeles's substantial Hispanic population. According to the US census, 46.5 percent of the population of Los Angeles County, which includes the 29th District, is Hispanic. About one third of the county's 10 million people were born outside the United States.

In campaigning to place Burton on the ballot, SEP petitioners have received strong support from immigrant workers, many of whom are unable to sign because they are not US citizens. In addition to immigrants from Mexico and Central and South America, the district has sizable populations from Armenia, Iran, Turkey, China, Vietnam, Lebanon and other countries. The SEP is calling for full rights for all immigrants—all workers should have the right to participate in the political process, regardless of their country of origin. In Los Angeles, as well as in other parts of the US, a very large portion of the population is disenfranchised because they are not US citizens.

The SEP has connected the call for full rights for immigrants to a socialist perspective. The rights and interests of workers of all nationalities can be advanced only through the reorganization of the economy to meet social needs—including quality jobs, housing and social programs for everyone—rather than private profit.

The two-party establishment has been divided between two reactionary positions. On the one hand, a

section of the Republican Party has argued for an “enforcement only” approach that would criminalize undocumented immigrants and beef up repression and border enforcement. On the other hand, the Bush administration, backed by some Republicans and the Democrats, is calling for combining repressive measures with a “guest worker” program to ensure that immigrants continue to be a ready supply of cheap labor for big business.

The SEP's position also stands in sharp contrast to the position of the Green Party. Green Party candidates, including its candidate in the 29th Congressional District Bill Paparian, defend the nation-state system and restraints on immigration. The Green Party candidate for president in 2000, Ralph Nader, took a hostile attitude toward undocumented immigrants, blaming them for driving down the wages of American workers. These positions flow from the Green Party's nationalist orientation and its defense of the capitalist system.

Throughout its campaign, the SEP has fought against these conceptions, calling on workers of all nationalities—in the United States and throughout the world—to unite on the basis of their common class interests. Residents of the district have responded strongly to this appeal, and campaigners have collected over 10,000 signatures to place Burton on the ballot. This figure already surpasses the 8,842 signatures required by the state of California by August 11. However, the SEP is aiming to gather at least 2,000 more signatures in the remaining week of petitioning to secure a buffer against any challenges from the Democratic and Republican parties.

We encourage all readers of the WSWWS in the area to listen to the radio broadcast and to participate in the final week of petitioning.

To contact the SEP campaign in California, click here.

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