

# Illinois SEP candidate issues statement on eve of ballot status ruling

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Joe Parnarauskis, Socialist Equality Party candidate for state Senate from Illinois' 52nd Legislative District, issued a statement Wednesday morning that was sent to local media outlets.

Parnarauskis's statement discussed the forthcoming Illinois State Board of Elections ruling on whether he will be placed on the ballot for the November election as the candidate of the SEP. The ruling is to be announced at the board's meeting Thursday, August 31.

The state Democratic Party has challenged the nominating petitions submitted by Parnarauskis last June in an attempt to bar the SEP candidate from appearing on the ballot.

The text of Parnarauskis's statement is as follows:

"Tomorrow, the Illinois State Board of Elections will issue its ruling on the attempt by the state Democratic Party to prevent my name from appearing on the ballot in the November election.

"My campaign has fulfilled all of the requirements set forth by state election laws for ballot status as a new party candidate. Last June, I submitted nominating petitions with the names of 4,990 voters in the district, well above the 2,985-signature requirement.

"Since then, I and my supporters have been forced to wage a legal and political struggle against an unprincipled and anti-democratic effort by Illinois Democratic Party officials to keep me off of the ballot.

"Without any basis in fact, Democratic Party operatives initially challenged nearly 2,500 signatures on my nominating petitions. After a protracted and detailed review by state election officials, the hearing examiner for the State Board of Elections concluded that at least 3,229 of the signatures on my petitions were those of duly registered voters in the district—a total that exceeds the requirement by 244.

"The response of the Democratic officials was to demand that 44 petition sheets be thrown out on the

grounds of a trivial technicality, so as to bring my signature total down below the requirement for ballot status. They claimed that because these sheets identified the office as 'State Senate,' instead of 'State Senate, 52nd District,' I was guilty of deceiving the signers.

"This was entirely cynical, since the petitions in another place identified the office as 'State Senate, 52nd District,' and the petition drive was conducted entirely within the borders of the district, which includes Champaign, Urbana and Danville, in east central Illinois.

"On Monday, August 28, the hearing examiner for the Board of Elections rejected this challenge and recommended to the board that I be placed on the ballot. He noted that the Democratic Party challengers failed to present a single affidavit from a voter who signed one of the contested petitions in which he or she claimed to have been deceived.

"On Tuesday, a source close to the attorneys representing the Democratic Party informed our attorney, Andrew Spiegel, that should the Board of Elections decide to place me on the ballot at Thursday's meeting, the Democrats will appeal the board's ruling in the courts.

"On August 24, Michael Frerichs, the Democratic candidate for state Senate from the 52nd District, sent a letter to his Republican opponent, Judy Myers, proposing that they hold a series of debates in advance of Election Day. She replied in a publicly released letter, urging that I be included in any public debates. Frerichs was subsequently quoted on the *Daily Illini* web site as saying, 'Every candidate that is on the ballot is welcome to participate.'

"On August 27, I sent Mr. Frerichs a letter pointing out the obvious contradiction between his avowed support for 'open debate' and the campaign being waged by his party to bar me from the ballot. I called on him to publicly urge state Democratic Party officials to cease their effort to

keep me off the ballot. I have as of yet received no reply from Mr. Frerichs.

“The facts demonstrate one uncontestable truth: the Democratic Party has contempt for democratic principles, for my rights, the rights of the thousands of registered voters who expressed their wish to have me on the ballot by signing my petitions, and the rights of all voters in the district, who, under the laws of the state, should have the option to vote for me in November.

“My experience is not an aberration. It exemplifies the obstacles—legal, administrative, political—that are placed in the way of independent and third-party candidates in the United States. The very fact that I and my party are obliged to spend so much of our limited time, manpower and resources to meet signature requirements that are in themselves arbitrarily and undemocratically high, and then fight an entrenched political machine backed by vast financial resources from its corporate sponsors simply to participate in a election is an indictment of what passes for democracy in America today.

“Two trends are evident. The population is growing increasingly disillusioned with both of the major parties, which are complicit in an illegal war in Iraq, the implementation of police state-type measures that contravene constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties, and social policies that exclusively benefit the rich and produce ever greater levels of inequality. This alienation is reflected in declining voter participation in elections, opinion polls that report low approval ratings for both the president and Congress, and rising numbers of voters who refuse to affiliate with either of the major parties.

“The other trend is ever-more brazen obstacles thrown up to frustrate and block those individuals and parties that seek to present an alternative to the two-party system. These obstacles are employed with especial vigor against left-wing and socialist parties.

“A large majority of the American people are opposed to the war in Iraq. But both major parties support the war, and seek to marginalize and suppress opposition to it. Every effort is made by the two parties and the agencies they run to block candidates like myself, who call for an end to the war and the immediate withdrawal of American troops, from getting on the ballot.

“The United States has intervened in other countries—Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine, to name a few—to declare elections invalid and encourage the overthrow of governments for alleged violations of democratic procedures no worse than what goes on today across the USA.

“Evidently, it is the intention of the Democratic Party to use every means, fair or foul, to tie up my campaign in the courts as long as possible, and thereby either keep me off the ballot or make it impossible to conduct an effective campaign.

“I want to say two things about this. First, I and my party have no intention of backing down. We are committed to democratic rights and the principle that the people should decide, not bureaucrats, highly paid lawyers and political machines. We intend to use all means at our disposal, and to rally the maximum public support, to get on the ballot in November.

“Second, the Democrats, by their actions, are vindicating the contention of the Socialist Equality Party that the democratic rights and social interests of the broad mass of working people cannot be secured or defended through either of the two parties of the US ruling elite. Democracy, equality, an end to wars, poverty and repression—these can be fought for only through a break with the Democratic and Republican parties and the building of a mass independent, socialist movement of the working class.

“I and my party are participating in the elections to set forth the political and programmatic basis for the building of this new political movement.”

*The Socialist Equality Party calls on all its supporters and all those who defend democratic rights to continue to flood the offices of the Illinois State Board of Elections with letters demanding that it place Joe Parnarauskis on the ballot. E-mails can be sent to the Illinois State Board of Elections at [webmaster@elections.state.il.us](mailto:webmaster@elections.state.il.us). Please send copies of all messages to the WSWS.*

*The SEP and the World Socialist Web Site also call on all supporters and readers to donate to the SEP election fund to defray the costs of the fight against this antidemocratic process. Make a donation today!*



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](http://wsws.org/contact)**