

Statements, letters demand ballot status for Illinois SEP candidate

26 August 2006

Below we post statements and letters directed to the Illinois State Board of Elections protesting the continuing effort by the Democratic Party to keep Socialist Equality Party state senatorial candidate Joe Parnarauskis off the November 2006 ballot.

The protests come from professors at the University of Illinois, SEP petition signers in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, and WSWs readers.

On June 26 the SEP campaign submitted petitions collected in the 52nd Legislative District of Illinois for Parnarauskis bearing nearly 5,000 signatures. Following a bad-faith challenge by the Illinois Democrats July 3, state board of elections' officials examined the signatures and determined that considerably more than the required number of 2,985 were valid.

Despite this, the Democratic Party is persisting in its thoroughly anti-democratic attempt to prevent the SEP from appearing on the ballot.

The Socialist Equality Party calls on its supporters and all those who defend democratic rights to flood the offices of the Illinois State Board of Elections with letters of protest demanding that it place SEP candidate Joe Parnarauskis on the ballot. Emails can be sent to the Illinois State Board of Elections at webmaster@elections.state.il.us.

I write in strong support of Joe Parnarauskis's right to appear on the ballot for State Senate in the 52nd District. Through painstaking efforts, Parnarauskis and his supporters gathered nearly 5,000 signatures to put his name on the ballot—far more than the 2,985 required by the restrictive Illinois state. There is every reason to believe that the current scrutiny of these petitions is part of a broader effort to keep third party candidates off the ballot, something that is clearly at odds with the state's democratic traditions.

As a lifelong registered Democrat, I am deeply troubled by that party's self-interested efforts to keep not only Parnarauskis, but all third party candidates out of the election. The fact that the Democrats are clearly afraid to run against these candidates makes me wonder why they don't have a bit more confidence in their own slate. I would like to see them put much more of their efforts and resources into debating the issues and contesting the election openly with whatever candidates have qualified to run.

Unlike most of two main party candidates, Mr. Parnarauskis is not a career politician but rather a working person, a well respected nurse in our community. He and his party do not have the resources or time that the Democratic Party has mobilized to deny them their spot on the ballot. Instead, they rely upon the Illinois State Board of Elections to safeguard the democratic process. I anxiously await the board's decision on this case, and I urge you to reject this frivolous and partisan effort on the part of the Democrats. Certify Parnarauskis as a duly nominated candidate for the state senate.

Many thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

James R. Barrett,

Professor of History,

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

24 August, 2006

Dear Sir/Madam:

I was shocked to learn that this man gathered over 5,000 signatures on a petition to run for the state senate in the Illinois 52nd district and is being denied a place on the ballot. Unless I am misinformed, it appears that your colleagues on the elections board are trying to keep a third party candidate from coming before the electorate.

I am not a member of Mr. Parnarauskis's party, but I am deeply concerned that a state elections board—commissioned to oversee our elections process—would act in such an apparently arbitrary and undemocratic manner. I hope you will reconsider.

Frederick E. Hoxie

Swanlund Professor

Department of History

University of Illinois

I am writing in strong support of the access of the Socialist Equality Party and the Green Party to places on Illinois ballots. Endless procedural challenges compromise the ability of these parties to conduct a campaign raising substantive issues that the major parties both ignore. To keep them off of the ballot altogether would be especially undemocratic.

Sincerely,

David Roediger

Professor of History

University of Illinois

I would like to vehemently protest the attempt to disqualify my signature on the nominating petition for Socialist Equality Party candidate Joe Parnarauskis. The information I provided on the petition matches that in the voter registration rolls and this attempt is a violation of my own personal rights as a citizen and the rights of the community to make our own choices on the ballot.

Anna Kurhajec

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to ask that that the State Board of Elections place Joe Parnarauskis, who is running for the Socialist Equality Party, on the ballot for State Senate in Illinois' 52nd District. Parnarauskis and his supporters gathered nearly 5,000 signatures to put his name on the ballot—far more than the 2,985 required by Illinois state law.

Given that they have met the bar, there would appear to be no good reason to keep them off the ballot. Let voters decide whom they want to vote for in the coming election.

Please make sure this message gets to those in charge at the State Board of Elections.

Antoinette Burton

Urbana, Illinois

To the State Board of Elections,

As a voter and active volunteer in electoral politics, I feel a personal offense to this orchestrated attack that is currently going on in Illinois. My signature along with thousands of other legal, registered voters are being objected to in an unjustified attempt at taking away our right to *real*

democracy in this country.

The fact that numerous signatures of well-known community members and activists have been objected to shows that the challengers have not made any real effort at objecting to invalid signatures. They are simply trying to bleed the SEP and the Illinois Green Party of money and time in order to keep them out of the race as long as possible.

Susan Rogers

Champaign-Urbana, Illinois

Dear State Board of Elections and all concerned with the attacks on civil rights and the democratic process:

I have been informed that my signature on a petition for more choice in the upcoming state election in Illinois is being challenged by the Democratic Party. I believe that not only should the Socialist Equality Party be allowed to appear on the upcoming ballot as a state candidate for Illinois, but so should the Green Party and all parties challenging the two-party stranglehold on the electoral process.

I do not understand how or why my signature is being challenged, especially since I am a student at the University of Illinois and have been a resident of the state for nearly a year, residing at the same residence. In addition, I am a veteran of the United States Marine Corps and after having given up five years of my life and having served after 9/11, it is an insult to all concerned citizens and an attack on fairness and due process that my right to sign a petition would be questioned.

In fact, it is the policies of both major parties that are to blame for the tragedy of 9/11 and for the immoral and unjust wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Now more than ever, we need a left alternative and more choice in the electoral process.

I will never vote for the Democratic Party again in my life after this violation of my rights. I urge all concerned people to voice your protest and stand in solidarity with Joe Parnarauskis and the Green Party's right to appear on the upcoming ballot in Illinois.

Martin Smith, USMC, ret.

Put SEP candidate Joe Parnarauskis on the ballot, defend democratic rights

To the Illinois State Board of Elections,

I want to express my strenuous objection to the attempts of the Democratic Party to prevent Socialist Equality Party candidate Joe Parnarauskis from being placed on the ballot for the 52nd District.

The machinations of the Democratic Party through its lawyers are a brazen attempt to deny the democratic rights firstly of all those who have signed the petition in his support and ultimately of every citizen of the United States of America.

The Board should, without delay, confirm his candidacy.

Yours sincerely,

TJ

Sydney, Australia

20 August, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

I am greatly concerned to hear that the Illinois Democratic Party still perseveres in its attempts to bar Joe Parnarauskis and the Socialist Equality Party from the ballot. In addition to their claim that 44 of the SEP's petitioning sheets should be rendered invalid because they referenced Mr. Parnarauskis as a candidate for "State Senate" vs. "State Senate—52nd District," it might also interest them to know that some of his volunteers might possibly have had their shoes untied while gathering signatures.

The Socialist Equality Party has overcome tremendous obstacles to gather the signatures they have. Consider that they are a nascent political party with no access to traditional forms of broadcast media, limited human and financial resources, limited access to public areas to gather signatures, and within the areas they are allowed to petition in, a large percentage of people who aren't allowed to sign anyway.

The signatures have been gathered and defended against a Democratic Party apparatus which will spare no expense in not only barring Mr. Parnarauskis from the ballot, but in so doing, disenfranchise the thousands who signed to support his candidacy. Now it becomes abundantly clear why the party does not seriously pursue allegations of vote suppression even when its own political fortunes are at stake. The risk of exposing its own dirty tactics would be too great.

What the Democratic Party and its political enablers fail to realize though, is that they are servants of the people, and in point of fact, are in the people's employ. The people of Illinois have stated that they wish to see Joe Parnarauskis on the ballot. I would not then deign to ask you to grant him ballot access on the August 31st deadline. At this point it is merely a question of whether you are attentive to your duty or not.

Sincerely,

Dan Conway

Northridge, California

20 August, 2006

Dear Illinois State Board of Elections,

All over the world there are thousands of people who have been following the Illinois elections very closely. Rest assured that every action taken, every little movement made by the Illinois State Board of Elections is under the scrutiny of an international arena. The pathetic attempts by the Democrats to keep third party candidates off of the ballot lay bare the true nature of democracy in America: there is none.

These actions being taken against third party candidates are petty and vacuous. These objections are based on political intentions. The Democrats, who want political hegemony of the two party system, are borderline thugs and bullies.

There is tragic irony in what's going on: a third party wants on the ballot. So thus, their fate in regards to ballot status is determined by a board made up of members of the two major political parties who don't want anyone else in the political playpen. Reading the obstreperous bombast of the Democrats in defense of anti-democratic measures being taken against Mr. Parnarauskis makes me irate.

There's no plausible reason why the SEP candidate for state senator in the 52nd district should not be on the ballot. He has more than enough petition signatures. Anyone who isn't looking through a skewed lens would see that the objections are baseless; the Democrats are grasping at straws. If you care at all about the democratic process, then Joe Parnarauskis will be placed on the ballot.

Yours respectfully,

Phillip Gioan

Mercer, Pennsylvania

19 August, 2006



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact