

SEP candidate Joe Parnarauskis demands Democrats halt drive to bar him from Illinois ballot

2 September 2006

Joe Parnarauskis, the candidate of the Socialist Equality Party for state Senate from Illinois' 52nd Legislative District, issued a statement Friday denouncing the efforts of the Democratic Party to bar him from the ballot in the November midterm election and demanding that he be given ballot status.

The previous day, the legal deadline for the Illinois State Board of Elections to certify candidates, the four Democratic members of the eight-person board (the other four are Republicans) repeatedly voted against Parnarauskis' certification, despite the recommendation of the board's own hearing examiner that the Democrats' challenge to the SEP candidate's nominating petitions be rejected and Parnarauskis be placed on the ballot. (See: Illinois election board delays ruling on ballot status for SEP candidate.)

As a result of the Democrats' obstructionist tactics, the board eventually decided to certify all of the other third party and independent candidates, while putting off a decision on Parnarauskis' ballot status until its next meeting, to be held Thursday, September 7 in Chicago.

Below is Parnarauskis' statement.

"The actions of the Democratic Party members of the State Board of Elections to delay certification of my ballot status are an illegal, last-ditch effort to flout the will of the residents of the 52nd District and bar me from the November ballot.

"The Socialist Equality Party submitted more than enough valid signatures to qualify me for ballot status. The election board's own hearing examiner documented this fact, following an exhaustive investigation into the objections to my nominating petitions lodged by Democratic Party operatives.

"The Champaign News-Gazette has protested the

Democrats' actions and has called for me to be placed on the ballot, as has the Republican candidate for state Senate from the 52nd District, Judy Myers.

"Scores of letters and emails have been sent by individuals to the election board expressing shock and outrage over the Democrats' tactics and demanding a halt to their undemocratic operation.

"There is no legitimate basis for denying me ballot status. It is high time for the Democrats to stop their obstructionist tactics. Democratic Party officials and their legal hucksters should step aside and allow the election to go forward.

"The voters of the 52nd district have the right to an election in which they can hear all of the candidates debate the fundamental issues that affect working people—democratic rights, jobs, education, health care, social programs and, of course, the war in Iraq.

"As an independent candidate representing the Socialist Equality Party, I am fighting for the immediate withdrawal of all US troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. I call for the reversal of the police-state measures enacted by Bush, with the support of congressional Democrats, such as the Patriot Act, the creation of the Homeland Security Department, military tribunals, government spying on the American people, Guantánamo, torture, and kidnappings. I advocate policies to raise working class living standards, halt the plundering of the social wealth by the financial elite, and establish social equality.

"To provide secure and decent-paying jobs, health care for all, quality schools and guaranteed pensions, I support a fundamental restructuring of the economy along socialist and democratic lines. The economy should be organized in a manner that serves the needs of humanity. The needs of society as a whole must take

precedence over the insatiable drive for corporate profits and the endless enrichment of the super-rich elite. Jobs, education, medical care and a secure retirement should be seen as basic human rights.

“I am hereby launching my fall campaign. I fully expect to be on the ballot in November and I expect to be included in all public debates of the candidates for the state Senate seat.

“I will bring my message of social equality, genuine democracy and peace to as wide an audience as possible and let the voters decide—which, whether the Democratic Party likes it or not, is what elections are supposed to be about.

“I issue this appeal to all those who value democratic rights, to all workers, students and young people who oppose militarism, repression and inequality: Take a stand against the politics of entrenched corporate power. Take a stand in defense of democratic rights. Flood the Illinois State Board of Elections with emails and letters demanding that I be placed on the November ballot.

“Join my campaign and support the fight of the Socialist Equality Party to build a new political movement independent of the two-party oligarchy—a movement of, by and for the working people.”



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