

Letters to election board demand ballot status for Illinois SEP candidate

5 September 2006

On Thursday, August 31, the Illinois State Board of Elections (SBE) in Chicago voted to postpone a decision on granting ballot status to Joe Parnarauskis, the Socialist Equality Party's candidate for State Senate in Illinois' 52nd Legislative District. The board's 5-3 vote puts off a decision as to whether Parnarauskis can be certified for ballot status until at least September 7, when the board reconvenes.

The board's vote to postpone the decision came as the result of the intractable opposition of the four Democratic Party members on the eight-person board, who repeatedly blocked attempts to certify Parnarauskis as a candidate throughout the day-long proceedings. Their actions culminate a two-month-long campaign by the Democrats to bar the SEP candidate from the November ballot.

Earlier in the week, the hearing examiner appointed by the SBE to review the legal challenge by the Democratic Party to the SEP's nominating petitions issued a recommendation that Parnarauskis be placed on the ballot. Examiner David Herman stated that the SEP had collected 3,229 signatures, well over the required 2,985. He rejected as well the Democrats' efforts to disqualify 44 full petition sheets on the grounds of a technicality—that the petitions indicated that Parnarauskis was running for “State Senator” instead of “State Senator—52nd Legislative District.”

The Democrats' efforts have aroused widespread opposition, as demonstrated by the letters that continue to be sent to the Illinois State Board of Elections demanding that Joe Parnarauskis be certified as a candidate. Interest in the case and anger at the undemocratic attempt to deny the SEP ballot access reveal the broad support the Socialist Equality Party campaign has been able to garner.

The local media has concerned itself with the case. An August 31 editorial in the *Champaign-Urbana News-Gazette* called on the SBE to grant ballot status to both Parnarauskis and the Green Party's candidate for governor, Rich Whitney. On the day following the SBE meeting, the *News-Gazette* morning edition's lead article reported that the SEP candidate was “the subject of fierce debate at the State Board of the Elections on Thursday.”

The article noted that Michael Frerichs, the Democrat Party candidate in the 52nd District, has refused to disassociate himself from the party's undemocratic practices: “Frerichs said

he was not directly involved in the petition challenge, but he declined to denounce his party's tactics.” Frerichs' claims of noninvolvement were contradicted by one of the Democratic Party objectors, attorney Gregory Lietz, who told a WSWS reporter in early August that he was involved only because he was “a friend of Mike Frerichs.”

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 immediately reaffirm Joe Parnarauskis' right to appear on the ballot. Emails can be sent to the Illinois State Board of Elections at 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!

Below we post the most recent letters of protest to the SBE.

To whom it may concern:

Recently, an Illinois State Board of Elections hearing examiner indicated that 3,229 signatures were obtained to place the name of Joe Parnarauskis on the ballot for the Illinois state Senate. As only 2,985 signatures were needed to place Mr. Parnarauskis' name on the ballot, there is no decision to be made with regard to his candidacy. Yet, despite this, the elections board had the arrogance to delay the decision until their next meeting on 7 September. This is a transparent attempt to bar Joe Parnarauskis from the candidacy status that he otherwise deserves.

Do we really need the decision of such an ‘august’ group of four Democrats and four Republicans to certify a candidate who has already secured the requisite number of signatures. Certainly not! Mr. Parnarauskis' name should be placed on the ballot as a simple consequence of his having obtained the proper number of signatures. There should be no other considerations.

But, of course, there are other considerations. During a time when official government lying has reached almost unprecedented proportions and when our democratic rights are under constant attack, it should come as no surprise that the undemocratic exclusion of third party candidates would also be attempted. Given what has happened to the earnings of ordinary

working people, it is not surprising that attempts will be made to exclude candidates who represent their interests.

Accordingly, I demand that Joe Parnarauskis' name be placed on the ballot immediately.

Sincerely,

Jacob Rosenberg

2 September 2006

To the Illinois State Board of Elections,

It appears as if the "Board" has become paralyzed by the fact that the SEP has satisfied the extensive maze of legal paperwork and signature requirements to run a candidate. The SEP has also refuted the bad-faith challenges by the Democratic Party. The Democratic Party's cowardice is exemplified by their obstructionist tactics to deny Joe Parnarauskis ballot access at its latest hearing. No open public debate on political issues with the electorate can be tolerated with any opposition parties. What a pathetic organization of whimpering bureaucrats—this Democratic Party or perhaps better labeled, the "Undemocrats."

When the Election Board reconvenes, this intolerable blockade of the SEP candidacy must be ended with unanimous approval for ballot access.

Sincerely,

Anthony Bellissimo

Buffalo, New York

2 September 2006

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this to request that the Illinois Elections Board include the SEP Candidate Joe Parnarauskis on the ballot for the forthcoming election.

The tactics used by the Democratic Party in Illinois are a flagrant abuse of the democratic procedure which the USA supposedly espouses and I am writing this email to condemn the crooked tactics used by this party so far as well as to urge the placing on the SEP candidate on the ballot.

Yours faithfully,

Tony Williams

Professor/area Head of Film Studies, Department of English

Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Carbondale, Illinois

27 August 2006

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To the Illinois State Board of Elections

It is most unfortunate that once again, I find it necessary to write demanding that the basic tenets of democracy be upheld, and that Joe Parnarauskis, Socialist Equality Party candidate for state Senate from Illinois' 52nd Legislative District, be placed on the ballot for the November 7 elections.

As a layman, with only the most basic understanding of the law, there currently appears to be an overall flouting and disregard of the basic tenets of the justice system in the US.

One would have thought that the ruling in the case of Socialist Equality Party candidate Tom Mackaman, during the

2004 US presidential elections, would have set some sort of precedent, ensuring that similar groundless accusations would no longer be able to be made in an attempt to preclude third parties from obtaining ballot status.

To my understanding, the only way that the Democrats should be able to contest the placing on the electoral ballot of a third party candidate is to provide hard evidence supporting their objections.

What this disgraceful fiasco demonstrates is the norms of democracy stood on their head. Instead of presumption of innocence until proven guilty, the burden of proof now lies with the defendant having to prove their innocence.

This is evident in each and every instance where the Democrats have challenged the candidature of third parties. They have only needed to make an accusation as to the validity of signatures obtained by third party candidates, whereby it is then incumbent upon the third party to spend valuable time and funds in verifying them.

There can be no doubt as to the illegitimacy of this process. Surely it is incumbent upon the Democrats to provide proof of every single one of their objections before any legal proceedings can be initiated, not vice-versa.

David Herman, the hearing examiner appointed by the Illinois State Board of Elections, has confirmed that the SEP has submitted at least 3,229 valid signatures—well above the 2,985 required under state election laws.

Upon this finding alone, I ask for an end to this disgraceful fiasco, and that the democratic rights of US citizens who signed the SEP petition, and those of Joe Parnarauskis, Socialist Equality Party candidate, are upheld, and that his ballot status is approved without further delay.

David Dieni

Melbourne, Australia

3 September 2006

Dear Sir or Madam:

I demand that Joe Parnarauskis appear on the ballot, for I do believe we live in a democracy.

Stan Moore PhD MD

4 September 2006



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact