

SEP candidate Bill Van Auken rejects appearance on CNN's Glenn Beck Program

4 November 2006

The following is a letter sent November 2 to CNN's Glenn Beck Program by the Socialist Equality Party candidate for US Senate from New York, Bill Van Auken, rejecting an invitation to appear on a broadcast slated for November 6, the eve of the mid-term elections.

I hereby decline the invitation to appear on CNN's Glenn Beck Program. When this invitation was first extended, I agreed to consider it despite the extreme right-wing views espoused by Mr. Beck. I have no qualms about defending my party's program and perspective against such a shallow and retrograde political outlook.

I have now learned, however, that the proposed interview is part of a series being done on the Beck program dealing with third-party candidates with the aim of making a mockery of anyone who dares to challenge the monopoly over political power exercised by the two corporate-controlled parties, the Democrats and Republicans.

It is clear that my granting you an interview will serve neither to provide even a minimal forum for the views of my party nor to encourage any genuine political discussion.

Time Warner, the parent company of CNN, refused to allow me and other third-party candidates to participate in the debate it sponsored last month between incumbent Democratic Senator Hillary Clinton and her Republican challenger John Spencer.

The corporation, itself a major contributor to Clinton's campaign, adopted the position that any candidate who failed to raise more than half a million dollars in campaign contributions was not "serious" and therefore not entitled to fight for his views in a public debate.

This is an undemocratic and extra-legal criterion that serves to effectively lock out all those except the

candidates who enjoy the support of corporate donors like Time Warner itself.

Having excluded me from the debate, while failing to even inform viewers that other candidates besides those deemed fit by Time Warner were on the ballot, you now want to use the Beck show to turn my campaign into a joke.

With an estimated 650,000 Iraqis and nearly 3,000 American soldiers having been killed in an illegal war supported by both major parties, US politics today is hardly a joking matter. CNN itself played a shameful role in promoting this war and now seeks to denigrate and ridicule those who oppose it.

I am a candidate for the US Senate from New York because 25,000 of this state's voters signed nominating petitions to give me the right to run for election, and I will not betray their trust. They sought to place my name on the ballot because they, like millions of others in this country, want an immediate end to the war in Iraq. They want a halt to the attacks on democratic rights and they want to reverse the unceasing growth of social inequality. They are seeking a political alternative, and the entire thrust of your so-called humor is an attempt to convince them that such an alternative is impossible.

I will not help you do that and have no intention of participating in anything that detracts from the seriousness of the political issues that confront the people of New York and the country as a whole.

Sincerely yours,

Bill Van Auken

Socialist Equality Party candidate for US Senate

November 2, 2006



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact