

SEP candidate certified for Detroit mayoral election

Jerry White
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The City of Detroit's Department of Elections has informed Socialist Equality Party candidate D'Artagnan Collier that his name will be placed on the ballot for the August 4 primary election for mayor of Detroit.

In a letter sent by Daniel Baxter, the Director of Elections, Collier was informed that he had submitted a sufficient number of signatures on nominating petitions to qualify for ballot status. The SEP turned in over 1,100 signatures, nearly twice as many as the 583 required by May 12.

The Elections Department, which reviewed the nominating petitions, concluded that the SEP had well over the required number of valid signatures to place Collier on the ballot.

Collier, a long-time member of the Socialist Equality Party and its predecessor the Workers League, is a city worker and the son of a Chrysler worker. He is running to provide a political alternative to the two parties of big business and advance a socialist program to guarantee decent-paying jobs, housing, health care and education to all.

During the several weeks of petitioning, SEP members and supporters reached thousands of auto workers, teachers, city workers, college students and unemployed workers throughout the economically devastated city.

Over the course of the campaign there was a noticeable increase in interest for a socialist alternative as disillusionment grew in the Obama administration. Over the past month, as the White House continued to hand over unlimited public assets to Wall Street, the Democratic president pushed Chrysler into bankruptcy and pressed ahead with its plans for massive cuts in jobs, wages and benefits at General Motors. Moreover, the candidate of "change," escalated the US war in

Afghanistan and Pakistan, and continued the Bush administration's attack on democratic rights.

During this time, the city held a special election to elect a mayor to finish out the term of former Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, who was forced to resign last September on obstruction of justice charges. So widespread is the alienation from the Democratic Party political establishment that the contest between interim mayor Kenneth Cockrel, Jr., and businessman David Bing failed to bring more than 15 percent of the eligible voters to the polls.

Bing, who won a narrow victory, immediately pledged to cut the budget, slash city services and attack the jobs and living standards of public employees. At the same time he appointed a team of corporate executives to outline a plan for greater tax and deregulation incentives for big business.

After receiving notification that he will be placed on the ballot, Collier told the *World Socialist Web Site*, "I want to thank all of those who signed our petitions and those who fought to put me on the ballot to give the working class a voice in the mayoral elections. This is a major accomplishment and a credit to workers, who despite all the efforts to discourage them and exclude them from political life, decided to put a socialist candidate on the ballot.

"It is a measure of the disgust that workers feel for the Democratic Party that almost 90 percent of eligible voters abstained from last week's special election. No matter which Democrat you vote for you get the same agenda: pro-business policies for the corporations and banks, and wage and social service cuts for the working class.

"Mayor Bing, like President Obama, is a representative of the corporate and financial elite. The economic recovery they seek is a recovery of profits on

Wall Street and corporate America. They intend to achieve this by waging a war against whatever remains of the gains workers have won over decades of struggle.

“I have lived my entire life in Detroit and watched as the corporations and Democratic politicians oversaw its devastation. The city’s abandoned factories, distressed neighborhoods and nation-leading unemployment rate are an indictment of the capitalist system and symbolic of the deindustrialization carried out by America’s financial elite, as it increasingly turned to speculation to enrich itself.

“The impoverishment of Detroit is also indictment of the United Auto Workers, which has its national headquarters here. Its reactionary policies of economic nationalism, labor-management ‘partnership’ and support for the Democrats have brought auto workers to a dead end. It is time workers broke with the UAW and built new organizations to revive the powerful traditions of class struggle and socialism, which auto workers were once identified with.

“It is a lie to claim there is no money to meet the needs of the people. The question is: will the wealth produced by the working class be used to guarantee a decent life for all or will it continue to be used to enrich Wall Street bankers and corporate CEOs?

“The global economic crisis that threatens the jobs and livelihoods of hundreds of millions underscores the pressing need for the independent intervention of the working class on the basis of its own program. Over the coming months, our campaign will provide a political voice for workers in Detroit, throughout the United States and internationally.

“I am the only working class, socialist candidate in the mayoral elections. I insist that the auto industry and the banks be taken out of the hands of the billionaire investors and put under the democratic control of working people. Instead of bailing out Wall Street, I insist that billions be poured into rebuilding Detroit and providing decent-paying jobs, health care, housing and education for all.

“I urge you to actively support my campaign. Attend our meetings, and write in to my campaign to express your concerns and interests. Above all, I urge you to study the history and program of the SEP and to make the decision to join and build it as the mass revolutionary party of the working class.”

To contact the SEP and become involved in its Detroit mayoral campaign, click here.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact