

Why I support the SEP campaign: A letter from a public school teacher

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This letter was sent to the World Socialist Web Site by a public school teacher in Michigan, calling on teachers and fellow workers to support the SEP election campaign. For more information and to get involved, visit socialequality.com

In this 2012 general election, I am giving my support to the Socialist Equality Party candidates for president and vice president, Jerry White and Phyllis Scherrer.

As a public school teacher in Michigan since 1996, I have watched both the Republicans and the Democrats work to hollow-out and dismantle the public school system. In affluent times, and in lean times, the two-party system in America has cynically won votes by castigating public schools, blaming them as the scapegoats for the failures of our society.

In 2008, Barack Obama used the great hope and optimism of many public educators to win election, but Obama and his secretary of education, Arne Duncan, have continued a policy of rapid privatization, and the trickery of the Race to the Top policies which fall completely short of any significant change.

Whether the claim is so-called school reform, or economic crisis, the demand is always the same: cut funds for public institutions, close schools, and hand over public school resources to for-profit, private companies. Charter schools, the most conspicuous profiteers in education, are not alone. Third-party employers are being hired by public school boards to provide custodial, secretarial, transportation, and food services. Elected officials are handing over students and schools to businesses concerned most with profits. Although students should be learning in interconnected, productive communities, many are attending corporate schools that have been annexed for the profit motive.

The staggering increases in poverty and the refusal of our elected officials to sufficiently invest in education

can only lead to a wave of students ill-prepared for the challenges ahead. The problems will not be fixed by the myths of school choice and charter schools. Where is the much-needed jobs program that might fill our schools with a spirited corps of trained teachers? Where are the federal dollars to rebuild our crumbling and over-crowded classrooms? And when will new books and resources flood our schools as thoroughly as the torrent of empty campaign promises that fill our airwaves every two years?

I look forward to following the SEP in this election cycle, and giving my support to Jerry White and Phyllis Scherrer.

Sincerely,

Steve

A Michigan public school teacher



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