

Letters denounce effort to keep SEP candidates off Wisconsin ballot

13 August 2012

We publish below a selection of letters in response to efforts by the state of Wisconsin to prevent the Socialist Equality Party's presidential and vice presidential candidates, Jerry White and Phyllis Scherrer, from appearing on the November ballot.

Earlier this month, the SEP submitted over 3,000 signatures from voters in Wisconsin to have White and Scherrer placed on the ballot, far more than the required 2,000 signatures. However, on August 7, Wisconsin Government Accountability Board (GAB) elections specialist David Buerger informed the SEP that none of these signatures were valid. The reason he gave was that two of the ten electors on the petitions were listed in the wrong congressional district—due to the recent redistricting of the state.

The decision by Buerger is a blatant violation of the democratic rights of voters in Wisconsin and an attempt to maintain the political stranglehold of the Democratic and Republican parties. Buerger has made a similar decision in relation to the Green Party candidates for president and vice president. This is despite a Wisconsin Supreme Court decision declaring that the district residency requirement for electors is not mandatory. (See, "Oppose the anti-democratic attempt to keep SEP candidates off the Wisconsin ballot!")

The GAB will meet on August 28 to make a final determination on the ballot status of White and Scherrer.

The *World Socialist Web Site* calls on readers and supporters to send letters of protest to Buerger and the Wisconsin GAB.

Send all e-mails to:

Government Accountability Board: gab@wi.gov

David Buerger: david.buerger@wi.gov

Please send copies to: 2012@socialequality.com

Letters can be mailed to:

Wisconsin Government Accountability Board

P.O. Box 7984

Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7984

Dear Members of the Government Accountability Board,

I am a resident of Rice Lake, Wisconsin and live in the 7th Congressional District—at least I did before reorganization of the districts, and I am pretty sure my district has not changed. I urge you to allow Jerry White and Phyllis Scherrer to remain on the Wisconsin Presidential Ballot for 2012 in the spirit of the law.

Whether the electors of two districts are actually residing in the districts for which they are electors is irrelevant. What is relevant is that over 3,000 signatures were gathered. Those who signed the roster petitioning that these Socialist Equality Party candidates be placed on the ballot had no interest if the electors resided in the correct district. This information will not influence anyone to sign or not sign the petition. Not allowing the signatures to stand violates the constitutional rights of the petitioners to see on the ballot those they petition to be placed on the ballot. The laws requiring electors to be placed on the petitions, in my opinion, are unconstitutional and thus anti-democratic. In the past I have signed

petitions, and I could care less who the electors are. It has no bearing on my propensity to sign or not sign the petition.

This archaic law is another attempt to keep independent and parties other than the Democratic and Republican Parties off the ballot and limit free choice for elected offices. This issue was once settled by the Wisconsin Supreme Court in *Nader vs. Dane County* in 2004, where this same elector issue surfaced and Mr. Nader was placed on the ballot.

I urge you to place Mr. White and Ms. Scherrer on the Wisconsin Presidential ballot for 2012.

Sincerely,

Kenneth S.

Rice Lake, Wisconsin

11 August 2012

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to express my displeasure with the actions recently taken by the Wisconsin Government Accountability Board to disqualify the presidential and vice-presidential candidates of the Socialist Equality Party from ballot access in the state of Wisconsin. The board's refusal to place the candidates on the ballot represents the worst sort of bureaucratic arbitrariness, directly interfering with the democratic process. The issue of electors who must reside in precisely defined districts is both obscure and archaic, it should be obvious to the board that the true substance of the ballot access requirement is the signatures from Wisconsin's citizens supporting the SEP's campaign. The board all but acknowledges this in its letter to the SEP, claiming that in its view zero of the signatures are valid. It is no exaggeration to say that this flies in the face of not only logic, but also honesty. Dedicated members and supporters of the SEP have campaigned in Wisconsin to provide a meaningful alternative to the Democratic and Republican parties, the 3000+ signatures they gathered in the course of a few days demonstrate tangibly that the people of Wisconsin want such an alternative, regardless of the Accountability Board's fiat.

In light of the fact that Wisconsin is set to be one of the key battleground states in November's presidential election, the actions of the board cannot but be viewed in the most political terms—abetting the established parties against their challengers. If the members of the board feel any loyalty to the principles of the democracy and the democratic rights of the people of Wisconsin, they will reconsider their decision.

Sincerely,

Julian Q.

California

12 August 2012

Gentlemen,

Drip, drip, drip. The sound of the corrosive acid of anti-democratic actions on the fabric of our hard-won democratic rights. The effort to bar the Socialist Equality Party from the ballot on a doubtful technicality is shameful and not in the tradition of the best aspects of this country. As a

US Army veteran I did not serve to see democratic ideals eroded by such government behavior.

Do democracy a favor and place the SEP on the ballot.

Respectfully,

Warren D.

US Army 1966-68

Nashville, Tennessee

11 August 2012

It has come to my attention that when the Socialist Equality Party submitted over 3000 signatures on a petition to be added to the 2012 Wisconsin ballot for the election this November, the GAB denied the petition, citing that two of the ten electors listed did not live in the district they were to represent. As you have been made aware, the discrepancy is due to the confusion surrounding the recent redistricting. You have also been made aware that the Wisconsin Supreme Court decision in 2004, *Nader v. Dane*, established that elector residency was *not* mandatory. Your rejection of the petition therefore violates that precedent. I am calling on you to correct your mistake, and approve the SEP's petition immediately.

Robert J.

Madison, Wisconsin

11 August 2012

To the members of the Wisconsin Government Accountability Board,

It is with the utmost disappointment that I write to you today upon hearing of your decision to bar the candidates of the Socialist Equality Party, Jerry White and Phyllis Scherrer, from the ballot in your state. Such a move is the highest form of anti-democratic demonstration possible, preventing people from voting for whom they wish. At the same time, the SEP abides by all legal and technical qualifications of a political party, even within the monopolistic political culture of the Democratic and Republican parties nationally. The SEP is an organized political party that abides by all the qualifications required of it. All that is left is for the state of Wisconsin to abide by the will of its people, as demonstrated by the abundant petitioners. What is left to you are two options: you can overturn your decision and align yourself with the people who are supposed to serve, or else you can stick with your present course and remain the assassins of democracy in Wisconsin. But be cautious, for the latter decision will be tolerated neither by your own constituents nor by the members of the rest of the states, such as myself, nor by those struggling for political justice the world over. To struggle so hard to not only crush political opponents, but even prevent them from being eligible in the first place, despite popular support, is not only unconscionable, but also intolerable. I, and the rest of the world that cares about the well-being of the people themselves, not just the economic and political elites, and those who wish to see democracy thrive, will watch for your ultimate decision. Do the right thing, allow the progress of history, and remove your ban on the electoral eligibility of the SEP in the state of Wisconsin.

Sincerely from a voting and active citizen,

Nicholas S

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

11 August 2012

To Mr. David Buerger and whomever it may also concern at the Wisconsin Government Accountability Board,

I'm writing to express my disgust over the recent move to exclude presidential/VP candidates Jerry White and Phyllis Scherrer of the Socialist Equality Party from Wisconsin's ballot this November.

I personally travelled from my home in Michigan (where the ballot petition requirement is an even more restrictive barrier: 10,000 signatures!) to Milwaukee and Madison this July to help these two

candidates collect signatures on their ballot petitions. We were met by widespread support from working people, young people and students who were seeking an alternative to the domination of the two establishment parties, the Democrats and Republicans. The proof of this is that our small team was able to collect over 3,200 signatures in just over one week.

Your disqualification of these signatures is based on a technicality that has nothing to do with safeguarding the democratic process, and, in fact, past attempts to exclude candidates based on the residency requirements of their electors has been overturned by the Wisconsin Supreme Court (2004 *Nader vs. Dane County*). So there is even a recent legal precedent for placing them on the ballot!

The move is obviously political. Democratic and Republican candidates appear automatically on the ballot. The wealthy ruling class of Wisconsin, the US, and the world depend upon the political exclusion of all but the most ardent defenders of the capitalist system of exploitation to insure the continued defense of their wealth and privileges in the face of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. These two parties have shown over and over again that they will pursue war abroad, reduce wages and benefits of workers at home, and respond with police violence, imprisonment and torture to any opposition by the working class and youth. Your attempt to exclude a party, which is working toward an alternative to this oppression, reveals the corrupt and undemocratic nature of the American electoral process.

I urge you to abandon your shameful bureaucratic defense of the two parties of big-business and to place Jerry White and Phyllis Scherrer of the Socialist Equality Party on the ballot this November, to provide a real option for the working class and youth.

By the way: Some of the signatories of our petition are themselves Democrats or Republicans who told us that they nonetheless recognize the importance of defending the democratic right of our party to participate in the election on equal footing.

Zac

Ann Arbor, Michigan

11 August 2012

To the Government Accountability Board & David Buerger,

This is total lunacy by your bureaucracy to keep the SEP off the electoral ballot on a pretext that has already been decided by the Supreme Court of Wisconsin in 2004.

You really are pulling out all stops from keeping an alternative for the working class to the never-ending austerity measures being offered up by the Democrats and Republicans.

This shows where the tops in your department stands in the defense of democratic rights. I urge you to reconsider your decision, but I won't hold my breath.

Julian H.

Australia

11 August 2012

Wisconsin Government Accountability Board and Mr. David Buerger,

The petty, small-minded, anti-democratic, and unprincipled denial of the will of 3,200 Wisconsin voters—a denial made even more outrageous by its rationalization in a manner directly contrary to Wisconsin case law, has revealed the true nature of the GAB and its occupants.

Instead of enabling democratic process, you are implacably hostile to it. Instead of channeling the will of the people, you act to oppose any expression of working class politics and to provide an obscurantist gloss on top of it.

I demand, as a citizen of the United States, as an occasional visitor to Wisconsin, and as a defender of democratic rights for all people—that the Wisconsin GAB reverse its preposterous decision and allow the clear process of the law and democratic principles to prevail.

Put the Socialist Equality Party and its candidates, Jerry White and Phyllis Scherrer, on the Wisconsin presidential ballot in November.

Don B.
Ithaca, New York
11 August 2012

To the Government Accountability Board of Wisconsin,

I was appalled when I heard your decision to deny Jerry White and Phyllis Scherrer their right to run for office. What it demonstrates, above all, is your utter contempt and hostility for the masses, most notably your working class citizens. Your subordination to the two parties of big business, the Democrats and Republicans, is a stark reminder to the people of Wisconsin, and indeed the national and international community, that US governing bodies from the federal to the state and even local level are completely beholden to the most parasitic people on earth; the super rich and the financial aristocracy. Shame on you!

You uphold your nauseating decision based on a bureaucratic technicality and deny the rights of at least 3,200 citizens to have an alternative, and genuinely progressive political orientation on the ballot. It's contemptible!

Enough is enough, put White and Scherrer on the ballot!

Ryan N
Kentucky
11 August 2012

Dear Wisconsin Government Accountability Board,

Your decision to exclude the Socialist Equality Party from the presidential ballot in Wisconsin is a flagrant violation of the democratic rights of the people of your state. I have learned that you are claiming that, because two of the ten presidential electors whose signatures were submitted were listed in the wrong congressional district, the petition for ballot status must be rejected. You even know why these two individuals believed they reside in the 3rd and 5th districts. Did the redistricting have any other purpose besides confusing the voters of your state and making "third party" candidates impossible? Even if it did, it is your office that failed to make it clear to the residents of Wisconsin in what district they now reside.

The fact that the state Supreme Court already ruled on this same issue when the Democrats tried to exclude Nader from the ballot in 2004 demonstrates the utter frivolousness of your justification. According to you, the 3,200 signatures of actual Wisconsin residents gathered by party supporters are invalidated as well. These people and their wishes don't count at all according to you. Is a more offhand and disdainful attitude to the real wishes of the people of your state even possible?

I live in South Carolina, a state that, on paper, is even less democratic than yours. Ten thousand signatures are required for presidential ballot status and no write in candidates for the presidency are permitted. As a supporter of the Socialist Equality Party, I have no vote at all. But evidently the numerical difference between 10,000 and 2,000 is utterly meaningless anyway, since you never had any intention of paying attention to the wishes of the voters in your state in the first place.

You may believe that no one will notice that you are trampling on the rights the people of Wisconsin, but thanks to the Internet it has already been widely noted and condemned. I stand with all of the other supporters of the right of the people to decide on their own candidates, and I demand that you put the Socialist Equality on the ballot. The 10 electors and the 3,200 signers of the nominating petition oppose the stranglehold of the Democratic and Republican parties over politics in the United States, and you are legally obligated to submit to their will regardless of who is pulling your strings behind the scenes.

Sincerely,
Rosa S.

South Carolina
11 August 2012

Mr. David Buerger,

In the strongest possible terms I condemn your wholly antidemocratic and biased decision to exclude the Socialist Equality Party's presidential and vice-presidential candidates from the Wisconsin ballot for the 2012 elections.

The desire of more than 3,200 voters in Wisconsin to place Jerry White and Phyllis Scherrer on the ballot by placing their signatures on a petition is, at its most basic, a cellular level of democracy. This flouting of considerations of the right of ordinary people to be heard, of democracy and fairness, is simply a continuation of the decision of the Supreme Court in 2000 to hand the election to George Bush by rejecting a recount of the ballots in Florida.

Such hubris exposes the extent to which the official political structure has become an impediment to the ability of workers, young people—pretty much the mass of society—to express their interests through either the Democratic or Republican Party. The attraction of the Socialist Equality Party to workers and youth stands in inverse ratio to the accelerating, and much deserved, scorn felt by them toward the traditional two parties. The SEP's ability to gather considerable support in an eight-day period, more than sufficient to be placed on the ballot, bears witness to this attraction.

This is what actually lies behind your high-handed machination to exclude the SEP from a place on the ballot.

I demand that you respect the democratic wishes of the Wisconsin voters, and democracy itself, and immediately place Jerry White and Phyllis Scherrer on the ballot.

Hector C.
Portland, Oregon
11 August 2012



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact