

More letters on effort to keep SEP off Wisconsin ballot

15 August 2012

We publish below a selection of letters in response to the effort 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. (Previous letters can be found [here](#).)

Earlier this month, the SEP submitted over 3,000 signatures from voters in Wisconsin to place White and Scherrer 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 emails 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, WI 53707-7984

To Wisconsin Government Accountability Board and David Buerger:

I am angered by your blatant attack on democratic rights with your present decision to prevent the Socialist Equality Party from placing their presidential and vice presidential candidates on your November ballot. As someone who was born and raised in Wisconsin (with many relatives still living there), I would like to think that this basic level of democracy (of petitioning to place candidates on the ballot) would be guaranteed, especially considering the recent court case, *Nader v. Dane County*.

I demand that you change your decision and do what is democratically and legally correct by placing Jerry White and Phyllis Scherrer on the ballot. People, especially young people and the working class, are disgusted and angry about the corruption, lack of transparency, and (basically) the games that are played by current politicians against the democratic rights that have been fought for and won through struggle in this country, including in Wisconsin. By signing the petitions, thousands of Wisconsin residents expressed their desire to have an alternative to the

Democrats and Republicans on the ballot. You, therefore, have the duty and responsibility to place the SEP on the ballot.

Jacquelyn P

New Carlisle, Indiana

13 August 2012

To GAB, D. Buerger, et al.,

Though I have little doubt that you will immediately disregard this and other letters you are receiving in protest of your decision to remove the Socialist Equality Party from the November ballot, I nevertheless feel that you should be admonished for your flagrantly anti-democratic actions.

I am 22 years old, and am sorry to say that I already have zero faith in the electoral process that I was raised and educated to trust. I have grown up in a period when faceless bureaucrats like yourselves have continuously tarnished the American electoral process and "little d" democracy in general. I was 10 years old when George Bush's first stolen election and Al Gore's polite curtsy put a sour taste in my mouth. Barely a decade later, a president elected on cynical, empty promises has legalized indefinite detention, established his right to murder anyone—American citizens included—without trial or warrant, and attacked peaceful protesters on the streets, among many other things.

How does this relate to you, the leading bureaucrats at the GAB, who are in this case most likely playing a game of quid pro quo with the party that provided you with employment? By stifling any opposition to the policies enumerated above, you are entrenching these anti-democratic trends as new staples of American life.

Though I am flattered that the Democratic Party fears the SEP enough to risk embarrassment by forcing our party off the ballot, I urge you to yield to *stare decisis* (*Nader v. Dane*, 2004) and readmit White/Scherrer on the ballot in 2012.

With democratic regards,

Eric L

Minneapolis, Minnesota

13 August 2012

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in response to your recent, and unlawful, removal of the Socialist Equality Party ticket consisting of presidential candidate Jerry White and vice presidential candidate Phyllis Scherrer. What has happened is a flagrant violation of the freedom of choice that Wisconsin voters wanted with the SEP ticket. As mentioned by the SEP campaign, they recorded over 3,200 signatures over eight days, which speaks volumes about the views of the citizens in Wisconsin.

To refuse the SEP ticket a right on the presidential ballot is the exact same as refusing to recognize the voices of the people who support third party candidates. To do this action in such a heated time in our country is downright unlawful and wrongful. The 2004 Wisconsin Supreme Court case, *Nader v Dane County*, shows that your reasoning for removing the

SEP and Green Party ticket is clearly against the law of the land. The Court stated on how residency requirement was not mandatory for independent candidates, therefore making your claims moot.

I strongly suggest placing back the candidates in order to respect the rights of the Wisconsin citizenry. I am certain if the same exact situation happened to one of the two major political candidates, a major media firestorm would have erupted that would have resulted in the error being corrected. As a student who is interested in the lives of citizens who have such little voice in this country today, I hope that this problem will be immediately corrected in order to give a message for future generations that their rights will not be violated. If not, then I fear that the Wisconsin ballot will be illegitimate in determining the true voice of Wisconsin voters.

Respectfully Submitted,
Brandon J
New York, New York
13 August 2012

To David Buerger and the members of the Government Accountability Board,

With respect to my and all others' basic democratic rights, and particularly as I have family living in Wisconsin, I am outraged at the attempt to prevent the Socialist Equality Party candidates for president and vice president of the United States, Jerry White and Phyllis Scherrer, from their earned and deserved ballot status in Wisconsin.

As a teacher of history in New York City, I have taught my high school students that "The Wisconsin Idea" was an admirable part of the Progressive Era of the twentieth century because it was grounded in the belief that the purpose of government is to serve the voters, and that efficient government is defined as the institutions being controlled by the voters rather than the wealthy corporations, which had consolidated their power in the Industrial Revolution. It was noteworthy that the democratic strain of American history, advancing through the revolutionary struggle for equality in the Civil War, was carried further through the Republican Party Progressives and then in the New Deal Democrats. In both cases, parties dominated by the interests of big business were responding to upsurges in the working class for its social rights to a decent life. It is evident that that aspect of American history has long faded away and the moribund two-party system asserts a death grip on the electoral system.

Instead, Wisconsin drew the attention of the world in 2011 because of the direct action by 100,000 people who found they were unable to obtain justice under a system dominated by a legislature of Republicans and Democrats. I believe that your actions are clearly erroneous, are against the spirit of laws governing voting rights, as well as previously having been determined as unconstitutional by using an ex post facto technicality of change for the residence of two of the electors' districts. It is one more example of how, especially since the presidential election of 2000, there is no constituency for democracy among those with power through their two-party system.

Your actions as they stand can only be interpreted as being motivated to preserve the monopoly status of parties representing an elite class that has no interest in allowing the mass of Americans, who are the working class, to have a voice and establish representation as it sees fit—in other words, a dictatorship of class. Justice demands that your decision be reversed, not only for the Socialist Equality Party, but for the Green and any other parties that are arbitrarily denied the right to present their candidates to the voters.

Sincerely,
Harvey L
13 August 2012

To Whom it May Concern;

I write as a native of Wisconsin to protest the refusal to recognize *any* of the 3,200 signatures gathered for the Socialist Equality Party's presidential and vice presidential candidates Jerry White and Phyllis Scherrer to be placed on this November's ballot. That these signatures were gathered in just eight days is a testament in itself to the wishes of the people of Wisconsin to have the candidates on the ballot. The denial of the SEP's petition on such a flimsy pretext as the redistricting of two electors (who themselves seemed unaware of this, and had recently voted in their assumed districts!) speaks to the decay of democracy in the state, and indeed, in this country as a whole. That there was no warning until the literal last minute, despite the signatures having been turned in four days before the deadline, is rotten.

That the Green Party (a party with which I have principled disagreements) also finds itself in the situation of being exempted from ballot status makes the message quite clear: There shall be no challenges to the status quo—the two major parties have a stone-cold lock on elections. Even if onerous conditions to get on the ballot are met—or, as in the case of the SEP, *exceeded*—there is no democracy to be had here.

Apparently, precedent likewise means nothing since the GAB is flagrantly disregarding the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruling in 2004's *Nader vs Dane* in its decision.

Ask yourself, which side of history do you really want to be on?

You should reconsider this course,

Christie S
Washington
13 August 2012

Dear Mr. Buerger and members of the GAB,

As a supporter of the right for alternative candidates to express their political ideas and be heard out on their merits, I demand ballot access be given to the candidates of the Socialist Equality Party. The fact that campaigners sought to gather 3,200 signatures, far above the needed 2,000, was in itself an attempt to cushion for the anti-democratic reaction which your office was sure to give. Now, after this sort of behavior, all can see they were not wrong in assuming so.

I find the sort of backroom finagling your board is engaging in to be a textbook expression of why voters and all citizens alike felt it necessary to take to the streets in their own massive protest last year. You are not proving this to be an exception, but an expression of the rule in Wisconsin and workers will not be fooled.

Nikolai
Fairfax, Virginia
13 August 2012

Dear Mr. Buerger,

I would like to express my concern with your decision to exclude the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) from the Wisconsin ballot in the coming presidential election. The SEP submitted over 3,200 valid signatures, well over the 2,000 required for ballot access. As I understand it, you have chosen to nullify these signatures based on what was essentially a clerical error due to confusion over redistricting which was implemented in the past few months. The stated objection is that two of the ten electors were listed under voting districts which were correct in the last election only a few months ago. Disregarding larger questions about the necessity of naming electors beforehand, the supreme court already settled the question of residency requirements for electors in 2004 in *Nader v. Dane*, affirming that such a residency requirement should not be

mandatory. Even if this was not the case, this is clearly a minor clerical error, caused by a redistricting process that apparently did not make serious efforts to notify residents whose districts had changed. I see no reason why this error cannot be corrected after the fact, and the signatures accepted. The two electors whose districts were incorrect on the petitions do in fact live in Wisconsin. I do not think a case can seriously be made to suggest that anyone who signed the petition were somehow misled, and would have changed their mind if the districts listed for two of the electors had been different.

The people of Wisconsin spoke loud and clear, providing more than enough signatures to place the SEP on the ballot. A minor clerical error should not be sufficient grounds to deny Wisconsinites the opportunity to vote in a democratic election for a party that at least 3,200 Wisconsinites would like to see on the SEP ballot. I see no grounds for denying of ballot access to the SEP.

A healthy democratic society should not unduly limit the choices available to the people, especially those choices that the people themselves demand. Please count the SEP's submitted signatures as valid and place them on the ballot. The people of Wisconsin deserve the democracy that we are told we live in.

Sincerely,

Evan S

Los Gatos, California

13 August 2012

The action taken to exclude the SEP candidates Jerry White and Phyllis Scherrer from the Wisconsin ballot in November is an attack on democracy.

I urge you to make the right decision on August 28th and put their names on the ballot.

Diana

12 August 2012



To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact