

The SEP vote in the 2012 elections

Our reporter

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The Socialist Equality Party's candidates for president and vice president, Jerry White and Phyllis Scherrer, received 1,130 votes in Wisconsin, Louisiana and Colorado, the three states where they were on the ballot. State and local officials have not yet counted the number of write-in votes for the SEP candidates throughout the rest of the United States.

Given the enormous pressure exerted on workers and young people to vote for one of the two big business parties, casting a ballot for the SEP candidates was a class-conscious decision.

Those who voted for the SEP voted for a working class and socialist alternative to the two capitalist parties and their policies of austerity and war. In doing so, they withstood the "lesser-of-two evils" argument long peddled by the trade unions and the liberal and "left" organizations to prevent workers from breaking with the Democratic Party and developing a politically independent movement of the working class.

In Wisconsin, the SEP candidates received 601 votes, mostly in the Madison and Milwaukee areas. In Louisiana, 356 voters cast their ballots for White and Scherrer, and 173 did so in Colorado. In all three states, the SEP has only recently begun to develop an important political presence, and the votes represent a significant statement of support.

The SEP sought ballot access in these three states because requirements were somewhat less onerous. In many states, tens of thousands of signatures must be gathered to get on the ballot.

Officials in New York say write-in totals will not be available until December. In Michigan, officials in Wayne and Oakland counties—the state's most populous counties—did not list the totals for write-in candidates separately, although there were over 6,000 write-in votes cast for presidential and vice presidential candidates. Officials informed the SEP that the number of write-in ballots for White and Scherrer would be

available next week after local election boards were canvassed.

Write-in votes in other states will be known in the coming weeks. Many states do not count write-in votes, and it is impossible to determine the accuracy of those that do report votes.

The intense nine-month campaign represented a major advance in the struggle for a socialist perspective in the US. It was possible only thanks to the active participation of supporters throughout the country.

From the outset, White and Scherrer explained that the central purpose of their election campaign was the fight to build a leadership in preparation for the coming struggles of the working class. The SEP candidates told the working class the truth—under conditions in which both Obama and Romney were concealing their real agenda from the American people. The fight to defend the most basic social rights, they insisted, required the political independence of the working class from both parties of Wall Street and Corporate America.

Launching its campaign on February 13, the SEP said, "The SEP campaign will provide a voice to all those who are ignored by this political system. Ours will not be a conventional campaign, but one aimed at uniting the struggles of the working class and politically organizing them to carry out the revolutionary transformation of society."

The success of the campaign can be measured by the growing influence of the Socialist Equality Party among workers and young people.

The campaign intersected with the initial expression of growing working class resistance. The SEP emerged as the only genuine leadership of working class struggles, including locked out Cooper Tire workers in Findlay, Ohio; striking Caterpillar workers in Joliet, Illinois; locked-out Con Edison utility workers and Chicago teachers; and students engaged in the months-long strike against tuition hikes in Quebec, Canada.

Over two hundred articles and statements from the candidates were posted on the *World Socialist Web Site* during the course of the campaign.

The SEP candidates addressed over 60 public meetings in the US, Canada, Europe and Asia. White and Scherrer issued more than 50 statements outlining the independent standpoint of the working class on unfolding events: from the killing of Trayvon Martin, US massacres in Afghanistan, and Obama's "kill list," to the issues confronting auto workers, public school teachers and the victims of Hurricane Sandy.

As the SEP warned, now that the American ruling class has gotten the election out of the way, it is rapidly moving to implement deeply unpopular austerity measures and launch new wars. This will inevitably provoke massive social opposition, which will pit the working class against the Obama administration and all of its apologists, including the upper middle class "left" whose obsession with race and identity politics reveals their deep hostility to the working class.

For the most advanced workers and young people, the critical experiences of the SEP's 2012 election campaign and the political history and program our party fights for will prove indispensable for the building of a new revolutionary leadership that will guide these coming class battles.

The SEP urges all those who supported and were active in the campaign to join the SEP. For more information, click here.



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