

Campaign teams for D'Artagnan Collier exceed signature goal in Detroit mayoral race

An SEP campaign team
6 May 2013

The campaign to put D'Artagnan Collier on the Detroit mayoral ballot continued this weekend as campaigners in various locations in the city, including Eastern Market and downtown, collected more than the goal of 1,000 signatures. This is twice the required 500 signatures to be placed on the ballot.

Collier and the campaign teams stressed that Detroit was a model for attacks on the working class across the country and internationally. The appointment of Emergency Manager Kevyn Orr to run the city is part of moves by the ruling class to impose the dictates of the banks and giant corporations, resorting to increasingly antidemocratic methods.

Workers in Detroit and the surrounding areas expressed alarm at the takeover of the city. Many who lived outside the city noted that the same measures could be taken elsewhere.

The campaign received strong support for its opposition to the City Council and the mayor, representing a corrupt political establishment that has overseen the decay of Detroit for more than three decades.

“The problems we are having go back to Coleman Young,” said Barbara. “They go all the way back. I speak my mind, and I say that this city has been run by blacks all these years, and all they are doing is lining their pockets. They are building \$100,000 condominiums down here, and who can afford to live in them?”

She then asked Collier, “How do we go about replacing this government?” Collier explained that as the wealth of society is generated by the working class, it must be the working class that controls how the wealth is used. He also spoke on the basic social rights of the working class—the right to a job, education, health care and a pension—which can be realized only

through a transformation of economic and social life.

“I agree,” responded Barbara. “We cannot depend on anybody in government, neither Republican nor Democrat. The government has always been run for people who already have money.”

A Detroit highway worker spoke to Collier about the conditions at Detroit Public Works. “They used to have thirty people working there, and now there are just twelve. Only in the past few months have they hired six new people. And they have a new tier for the new-hires. Their health care is just for the employee, not the entire family. They also have to pay 25 percent of the insurance cost, rather than just the copay.

“It’s upsetting because I’m worried about what they’ll do to myself and the older workers at DPW. I joined public service because of the stability of the job. I did landscaping, but that is so competitive for no gain against the big companies. In public service, you used to get a good, steady job with benefits and a good pension. Now that’s all being taken away. We get less and less. I would like to see equal work for equal pay at DPW and a renewed pay scale.”

Michelle works in the emergency room of Detroit Receiving Hospital, part of the Detroit Medical Center (DMC). She spoke about the cuts to health care in the city and nationally. “[Former DMC CEO and current mayoral candidate Mike] Duggan threw us under a bus,” she said. “He told us when he came in that workers wouldn’t be laid off for at least ten years. Right now they are laying off 300 to 800 people, including all the clerks. It’s happening a little at a time, but it will happen for everyone who will be hit July 1, at the end of the fiscal year.

“Duggan took all that money he’s saving from laying people off and is giving it to the rich. They are also reducing our vacation time and violating the eight-hour

workday. He talks about saving the DMC but never mentions the layoffs. And this isn't just the new-hires. I know people that have worked 18 or 30 years who are getting laid off.

“They also gave us a new benefit package. We used to be able to go to the emergency room for \$55. Now its \$125.” In fact, until recently, Detroit city workers could go the emergency room for free.

“The rich are trying to bring the rest of us—white and black—back to slavery.”



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