

Notes from the campaign trail

## SEP establishes Ann Arbor election campaign committee for Michigan's 12th congressional district

Niles Niemuth  
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*Niles Niemuth is the Socialist Equality Party's candidate for Congress in Michigan's 12th Congressional District. To donate and get involved, visit [niles2018.com](http://niles2018.com).*

After turning in the thousands of signatures required to be on the November 6 ballot, the Socialist Equality Party's (SEP) campaign for Michigan's 12th district has begun to move into its next stage.

On Thursday evening the campaign team held its first election committee meeting in the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti area to discuss the current political situation, the significance of our campaign, and how we plan to reach the broadest layer of workers and youth throughout the district.

Students and workers explained what motivated them to get involved in the work of the SEP. Thea, a 17-year-old high school student from Ann Arbor, told us that she attended the meeting because: "I feel that there is a real opportunity for change right now. I think we are in a period of flux where many workers, and especially young people, want to fight."

Vanessa, a worker from England who lives in Ann Arbor, said she felt compelled to get involved after speaking to me at a rally last month in Ann Arbor against the attack on immigrants. She explained that she had been excited to meet socialists in America and agreed with the perspective we were putting forward on immigration.

At the meeting, Vanessa spoke about the devastating state of health care in America. She explained that the ruling class everywhere is attacking the social conditions of workers and drew striking parallels to the

situation facing workers in England. There, she explained: "The people fought very hard for us to have decent health care. But it is now under attack. The current government of Theresa May has tried to blame immigrants for destroying health care, which is a complete lie."

For Vanessa, like millions of workers around the world, health care is a very important issue. "The claim that there is no money is a lie. There is loads of money, which they spend on defense among other things. I am tired of watching them destroy the quality of life for workers."

Sam, a graduate student at University of Michigan, explained why he was drawn to participate in the election committee, and why the SEP is different from the Democratic Socialists of America and other pseudo-left organizations that promote illusions in the Democratic Party. "The SEP is explicitly anti-capitalist," Sam said. "With Bernie Sanders, he's just another New Dealer, just like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. He thinks we can just go back a hundred years, reproduce the supposed 'golden age of capitalism,' and it's going to somehow turn out to be different now, like the capitalists haven't figured out how to abate every single regulation. They've spent decades degrading all the New Deal regulations.

"We have to have a massive overhaul. We have to have a revolution. I support neighborhood committees, I support workplace councils, I want people to be talking about all these issues," he said.

Sam concluded by calling on workers to get involved with my campaign. "If you're a worker, you've been

exploited. I want people who have been victims of capitalism to get together and figure out a way to throw it out. We have to democratize everything.”

Priscilla, a recent graduate of University of Michigan, attended the meeting and commented afterward on her experience working with the campaign so far. “I really like the sheer enthusiasm of these meetings and the fact that people of all age groups are attracted to the meetings. It's very inspiring. I appreciate the political clarity which comes out of these meetings.

“I notice that the views of IYSSE and SEP members is very singular and united and on the same page, which I find very powerful. You don't have the model of the DSA of trying to gather as many people as possible without making any strong claims whatsoever. I am very excited for all of the potential of this campaign. I think exposure is really important, and I think a lot of young people would join this party if they knew it existed.”

Our newly formed election committee put together a busy schedule of campaign events for the next week that includes campaigning throughout the district for our first meeting series, “A Socialist for Congress: A meeting with Socialist Equality Party candidate, Niles Niemuth.” The campaign kick-off meeting series will be held at the following dates and locations:

#### **Ann Arbor**

Thursday, August 9th,  
6p.m., University of Michigan central campus  
1000 North University Ave. Building, Room 1528

#### **Brownstown Charter Township**

Thursday, August 23rd, 7p.m. Brownstown Community Center 21311 Telegraph Road, Hall C

#### **Dearborn**

*Details coming soon*

We will be intervening at an event in Ypsilanti with Senator Bernie Sanders this Sunday, which has been called to rally last-minute support for the Democratic Party primary candidate for governor of Michigan, Abdul El-Sayed.

Hailed as a “progressive” Democrat, El-Sayed is running as a status quo Democrat, championing empty promises of “Medicare for All.” For El-Sayed, this is a promise not of quality universal healthcare, but of a statewide healthcare system paid for by workers from their own paychecks, one which his website boasts will exempt a substantial number of businesses from

healthcare contributions.

Last week, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), also visited Southeast Michigan after her primary victory in New York's 14th congressional district last month over incumbent Congressman Joe Crowley. After becoming, virtually overnight, a leading spokesperson for the Democratic Party, Ocasio-Cortez was quickly deployed to intervene on behalf of Democrats in other state primary races.

That the Michigan primaries have now become a focus in mainstream politics is an indication of the growing fear that the decades of Democratic Party betrayals in the region could lead to a break with the Democratic Party by masses of workers. In this context, my campaign, calling for an independent movement of the working class in opposition to the Democrats and Republicans, becomes all the more significant.

We plan to attend the event to warn workers and students about the role of Sanders in giving a left cover to the pro-capitalist, pro-war policies of the Democratic Party. We will fight for a genuine socialist program for the working class.

I urge workers, youth and students in the 12th district and beyond to get involved in my campaign. If you live in the area, join us campaigning this weekend or in the coming weeks. You can get in touch with us by signing up at [Niles2018.com](http://Niles2018.com). If you don't live close, there are many more ways to get involved: donate to our campaign, follow me on Facebook and Twitter and share our campaign statements on social media.



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](http://wsws.org/contact)**