

The fight to put the SEP on the ballot continues as Illinois court denies challenge to relaxed ballot access rules

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On Sunday, the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Illinois denied an effort by the Illinois State Board of Elections to reverse temporarily relaxed ballot access requirements for third parties in the 2020 general election. In particular, the state sought to reestablish an earlier deadline for nominating petitions of June 22.

The court order issued Sunday found that the state of Illinois failed to show that an extended filing deadline would “irreparably harm” its ability to conduct an election on November 3, while third parties would suffer “clear harm” if the earlier deadline was reinstated.

The court did not throw out the state of Illinois’ motion, and it could later take effect depending on the outcome of the state’s appeal.

The earlier court ruling, made in April, found that disease risk and social distancing requirements presented a “nearly insurmountable hurdle” to the collection of the tens of thousands of in-person signatures.

That order also extended the ballot access petition filing deadline to July 20 and made a number of modifications to petitioning. New party and independent candidates have to submit 10 percent of the usual 25,000 signatures, and electronic signatures can be submitted.

The April court ruling initially pushed the petition filing deadline back to August 7. After a complaint from the state of Illinois, the deadline was moved up to July 20.

Even with the new procedures in place, obtaining ballot access is very difficult for independent candidates. There is no official online platform created by the state of Illinois Board of Elections to gather

signatures, and the legality of e-signatures is not widely publicized. Additionally, someone accessing an online petition form does not have the benefit of getting their questions answered about the process or the candidates as they would in person.

Supporters of the Socialist Equality Party are working to gather 5,000 signatures in an effort to place SEP candidates Joseph Kishore and Norissa Santa Cruz on the ballot in Illinois.

The Socialist Equality Party is challenging antidemocratic ballot access restrictions in other states as well. On June 18, the SEP presidential election campaign filed a lawsuit in Michigan challenging the state’s ballot access requirements, which still require physical signatures.

The lawsuit notes that gathering these signatures under conditions of the coronavirus pandemic is “literally impossible,” and maintaining the existing requirements violates the constitutional rights of the SEP and Michigan voters.

In Illinois, as in many other states, the Democratic Party has long operated as a political mafia, opposing ballot access efforts of independent candidates, especially those mounted by left-wing parties.

In 2004, SEP candidate Tom Mackaman successfully challenged an effort to keep him from appearing on the ballot as a candidate for state representative. State employees on the staff of the Illinois House of Representatives had been directly involved in compiling objections against his campaign’s petitions and oversaw the challenges to thousands of petition signatures in Champaign County.

Responding to the Illinois court decision, Kishore urged all Illinois residents to sign the petition to put the

Socialist Equality Party on the ballot.

“The court decision is welcome, but we require the support of all Illinois residents to sign our petition and circulate it as widely as possible,” Kishore said. “Even if you are not a resident of Illinois, you can help us by distributing our petition to family, friends and coworkers who live and vote in the state.

“This election is being held under extraordinary conditions,” Kishore said. “The coronavirus pandemic had killed 125,000 people in the United States. Tens of millions are unemployed, even as the billionaires are richer than ever. The ruling class has abandoned all pretense of seeking to stop the virus, which is expanding rapidly in workplaces throughout the country.

“Masses of workers and youth are moving to the left. There is growing support for socialism and hostility to capitalism. This sentiment, however, finds no expression within the existing political system. The so-called choice between the Democrats and the Republicans is in fact no choice at all. Both Trump and Biden are representatives of the financial oligarchy that rules America.

“Sign our petition and help put socialism on the ballot!”

Sign and circulate the SEP petition today.



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