

Workers, young people denounce undemocratic efforts to keep Socialist Equality Party off the ballot in Michigan

Our reporters
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The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) election campaign of Joseph Kishore for US president and Norissa Santa Cruz for vice president is drawing increasing support from within the working class and progressive layers of the middle class.

The SEP campaign is taking measures to get on the ballot in a number of key states so that workers can cast a vote for socialist candidates that oppose inequality, war and dictatorship.

The SEP is challenging undemocratic 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 collecting physical signatures.

In response, the state has argued that the SEP should have been collecting signatures throughout the pandemic, which would have both violated the law and endangered public health and safety. Attorneys for the SEP candidates filed a reply to the state on Monday, June 29.

Supporters of the SEP in Illinois are working to gather 5,000 signatures through an online petition to place our candidates on the ballot.

Steven Brust is a prominent fantasy and science fiction writer who has authored 31 books. He is perhaps best known for his series of novels about the assassin Vlad Taltos, one of a group of humans living on a world called Dragaera. Steve lives in Minneapolis, where the police murder of George Floyd was carried out on May 25.

He said, "I support the Socialist Equality Party and its candidates Kishore and Santa Cruz because doing so provides an opportunity to make clear to people that there simply is no way forward without a break from the Democrats and the Republicans, without an independent movement of the working class and the oppressed, relying on no one but themselves, and with a revolutionary

socialist perspective."

Commenting on the wave of mass, multiracial protests following the police murder of Floyd, Steve said, "While the killing of Mr. Floyd was tragic, the response has been inspirational—the protests have pulled together the outrage across racial lines, reaching broader and broader sections of people all over the world. As Democratic Party politicians and their lackeys try to confine the problem to a purely racial one, it only highlights their fear of the forces opposed to this brutal murder. They have no solution. After all, they have nominated for president a man notorious for supporting racist policies and working with white supremacists. It is obvious no solution can come from this morally and politically bankrupt organization.

"Underlying the racism of the Minneapolis police is what always underlies racism—the fear of class unity, the fear of all of the oppressed and exploited working together against our common enemies. More and more people are now realizing that those 'common enemies' include both of the capitalist parties. The time is ripe, over-ripe, for breaking the political yoke they've tried to tie us to."

Daniel Howard, an SEP supporter from Flint, Michigan—whose population of 100,000 people, including 9,000 children, suffered lead poisoning for 18 months before the lies of the state were exposed—voiced support for the SEP campaign.

"It is essential that members of the working class, who make up the vast majority of Michigan's residents, have the opportunity to vote for candidates and a party that represents most fully their interests."

Daniel added, "As a resident of Flint living with the consequences of the Flint water crisis, I know that the two major parties act as one to bolster and benefit the ruling

class, and that the limits on democracy they impose permit the ruling class to run roughshod over the rest of us.

“Their attempt now to limit democracy by forcing the SEP to collect tens of thousands of petition signatures to place the party on the 2020 ballot—signatures impossible to gather due to the Covid-19 pandemic—is another clear signal that the ruling class does not hold the interests of the working class in any regard. It suggests that the ruling class is terrified of real electoral competition, and beyond that it suggests that the ruling class is terrified of giving any voice to the SEP, the only political party that seeks to unify workers internationally under a socialist platform.”

Anthony, a construction worker from Jackson, Michigan, stated, “The SEP should be on the ballot. I think it’s ridiculous that they make it so hard to get on the ballot.”

Regarding the state of Michigan’s argument that SEP campaigners should be collecting signatures in person, Anthony said, “We just had the highest single-day record for cases in the US today [June 27] since the pandemic began. They want people to go out there and ask people to sign things in person, with all that risk? What kind of logic is that? It’s asinine.”

Anthony spoke on the need for the working class to have its own party and its own voice in the elections, commenting, “Every election we hear the same thing, ‘pick the lesser of two evils.’ And the working class, they get nothing out of it, every time, they always get kicked to the curb. There’s no real working class representation, in the government, let alone the elections. The working class should have its own party.”

Anthony noted the hypocrisy and duplicity of both big business parties on the issue of police violence, saying, “The Democrats go and ‘take a knee’ for racial injustice, and the Republicans say there is none. Both of them are doing nothing about it. They put up a toothless police reform bill, or tell police not to put people in chokeholds, or whatever. It means nothing. Both parties are still arming the police, heavily. If you get Biden or if you get Trump, they’re just going to keep giving the police more money—it’s not going to change anything.”

He also denounced the criminal actions of both parties in enforcing the back-to-work campaign amid the pandemic: “It’s just insanity. Just keep the profit line going—that’s what the rich are saying. They don’t care about human life and how many people are going to die from this.”

Anthony supported the unique, international character

of the SEP campaign, stating, “The working class is an international entity itself, not a national sect. It makes up men and women all over the world. Socialism is a movement based on the opinions and perspectives and interests of working class people, all over the world, and not just in the US.”

Alex, a history doctoral student from Wayne State University, denounced the thoroughly undemocratic mandate that supporters of the SEP must petition during a major health crisis.

He said, “The quarantine measures that were necessary for delaying the spread of this virus have disrupted many of the networks and physical spaces that political organizations use to connect with individuals. These physical connections are particularly important for smaller political organizations that have less reach than the Democratic or Republican parties. As such, this extraordinary situation wreaks disproportionate harm on smaller political parties. Given this context, it would be most appropriate to amend existing ballot requirements so as to allow alternate political parties to express an alternative vision to the political duopoly of the Republican and Democratic parties.

“For the sake of upholding democratic values, it is of utmost importance that a plurality of voices can express themselves in the public sphere. By denying the Socialist Equality Party representation on the basis of previous ballot requirements would be grievously inconsiderate of the social crisis that COVID-19 has placed on the state of Michigan and would do serious harm to the rights of self-expression and representation of the people.”

Sign up for the SEP election campaign at socialism2020.org.



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