

Democrats and Republicans unite to block RFK Jr., Jill Stein and other third parties from Illinois ballot

Jacob Crosse
3 July 2024

This past Monday in Illinois, Republican and Democratic Party-linked operatives filed last-minute objectors' petitions with the Illinois State Board of Elections in an attempt to block third party and independent candidates from appearing on the presidential ballot this November. If the challenges are successful, some 9.1 million registered voters in Illinois will only have the "choice" of voting for embattled, war-mongering President Joe Biden or fascistic would-be dictator Donald Trump for US president this November.

The joint objections underscore that neither the Democratic nor Republican Party want to give workers and youth disgusted with unending war, inequality and the political domination of the financial oligarchy any choice this November. The ongoing bipartisan assault on the right of third party and independent candidates to appear on the ballot exemplifies the disdain the two big business parties have for the democratic rights of the entire population.

The challenge against far-right independent presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Green Party nominee for president Dr. Jill Stein was filed by operatives with Clear Choice Action. The Biden-aligned group has already filed numerous challenges against third parties in multiple states, including against Cornel West in North Carolina and RFK Jr. in New York. (The West campaign did not file a petition to appear on the ballot in Illinois.)

In its objection filed in New York last month, Clear Choice alleged that some 102,000 out of the more than 146,000 signatures submitted by the Kennedy campaign were invalid. New York state law requires independent and third party candidates to submit

45,000 signatures.

In its Illinois challenge against RFK Jr., Clear Choice is seeking to strike almost 66,487 signatures out of the 85,509 signatures the campaign submitted to the secretary of state, leaving the RFK Jr. campaign with only 19,022 valid signatures. In order to achieve ballot access in the state, presidential candidates this year are required to gather and submit a minimum of 25,000 signatures from registered voters.

In their Illinois objectors' petition, operatives for Clear Choice alleged that thousands of signatures submitted by the Kennedy campaign were forged, incomplete or otherwise incorrect. The group alleged that the campaign itself had found that more than 22 percent of the signatures gathered were invalid.

The petition also claims that Kennedy put as his residence a home in Katonah, New York, when he actually lives in Los Angeles, California.

The Illinois State Board of Elections will hold a hearing on July 9 at which representatives from Clear Choice and the Kennedy campaign will present their evidence. After that, the board will give a full report on its findings on August 23.

In challenging the Stein petition, Clear Choice lawyers claimed the petition only included 9,000 valid signatures, well below the 25,000 threshold. The objection also targeted Green Party vice presidential candidate Samson Kpadenou.

In an email to this reporter, Jason Call, campaign manager for Stein, wrote:

Democrats stated back in March they intended to hamper us from getting on the ballot

wherever and however they can. They have filed a challenge in Illinois where we submitted signatures on June 24th. We submitted signatures in Indiana on July 1 and in Washington today, July 3. We expect they will file similar injunctions in those states, and in any of the couple dozen remaining states where we expect to submit petitions.

We will meet these challenges as our resources will allow, but the challenges will cost us financially, even if we are successful.

Seeking to circumvent the costly and burdensome petitioning process, on Wednesday, the Kennedy campaign announced it had struck a deal with the Colorado Libertarian Party to appear on its ballot line, supplanting Chase Oliver as the nominee of the party.

Appealing to rapacious business interests, in an interview with the *Denver Post*, Hannah Goodman, chair of the Libertarian Party of Colorado, said Kennedy took the group's "liberty pledge" prior to accepting the nomination. The *Post* noted Kennedy had worked to embrace the party's principles related to "economic privatization."

While Democratic-aligned groups are seeking to block any left-wing or independent challenge to the Democratic nominee, Republican operatives are likewise filing objections to block right-wing challengers to their candidates. The same day Clear Choice operatives targeted RFK Jr. and Stein, a paid Republican staffer filed objectors' petitions against ultra-right Constitution Party candidate Randall Terry and Chase Oliver of the Libertarian Party.

The *Chicago Tribune* reported that the challenges against Terry and Oliver were filed by Jeff Fielder. The *Tribune* noted that Fielder "has been a paid staffer for the Chicago Republican Party."

This reporter reached out to the Kennedy and West campaigns for comment on the Democratic and Republican Party's gang-up on third parties. As of this writing, none have responded.

In a statement issued last month, Socialist Equality Party candidate for US president, Joseph Kishore, denounced efforts to keep Jill Stein and other third party candidates off the ballot. Kishore wrote that the "defense of democratic rights is impossible without

addressing the root cause of dictatorship: the concentration of staggering sums of money in the hands of a small fraction of the population."

The campaign of Kishore and his running mate Jerry White is currently gathering signatures to appear on the ballot in several states, including Michigan.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact