

Socialist Equality Party candidates submit 20,000 signatures to appear on Michigan presidential ballot

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The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) candidates in the 2024 US presidential elections, Joseph Kishore and Jerry White, announced Thursday that their campaign had submitted “far in excess” of the required signatures to appear on the ballot in Michigan.

The ballot access laws for third-party candidates are different in every state, compounding the difficulty of running a nationwide campaign. For Michigan, the socialist campaign was required to gather at least 100 signatures from a majority of the state’s 13 congressional districts and at least 12,000 total. A campaign manager for Kishore/White told this reporter that the campaign exceeded that total in at least 11 congressional districts, and as a whole the campaign submitted 20,000 signatures.

Presidential candidate Kishore stated in a video accompanying a press release that the gathering of the signatures was a “tremendous achievement” that “would not have been possible without the self-sacrifice and dedication of SEP supporters from throughout the state and indeed across the country.”

Vice presidential candidate Jerry White said:

In the course of this campaign, we spoke with hundreds of thousands of people. There is enormous opposition to the genocide in Gaza, the escalating global war, extreme levels of social inequality and the turn of the ruling class toward dictatorship and fascism...

As we turned these petitions in, the Republican National Convention was being held, a festival of fascistic reaction. In the aftermath of the attempted assassination of

Trump, the line from the Democrats and Biden, dripping in blood from the genocide in Gaza, is “unity”—which means the unity of the ruling class in war abroad and war on the working class at home.

Explaining the purpose of the SEP campaign, Kishore stated that it “gives expression to the interests of the working class, in the US and throughout the world.

He continued:

We are developing within the working class an understanding that our interests cannot be realized except through the fight against capitalism—that is, the taking of power by the working class, the expropriation of the rich, and the creation of a society free of war and exploitation, a society based on equality.

Michigan is considered a “must win” state by both the Republican and Democratic campaigns. It is the third most populous state in the Midwest, with over 10 million people and 15 Electoral College votes. President Joe Biden won the state in 2020 by roughly 155,000 votes, while Donald Trump was able to best Hillary Clinton in the state in 2016 by some 11,000 votes.

In addition to the automotive industry, which still employs over 1.1 million workers in Michigan, tens of thousands of workers in the state labor at technology companies such as Google, and in the healthcare

industry, including at major facilities at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, the Detroit Medical Center and Henry Ford Health System in Detroit, and Corewell Health, a recently merged system that covers the entire state.

As of this writing, Kishore and White of the SEP would join Jill Stein of the Green Party and right-wing anti-vaccine zealot Robert F. Kennedy Jr. on the ballot in Michigan. The campaign for Dr. Cornel West is still awaiting certification by the state, according to its campaign website.

In a bid to block the emergence of an independent, left-wing movement in the working class to the capitalist two-party system, both the Democrats and Republicans have used the courts, the legislature and election boards to deny ballot access. Just this week, Democrats on the North Carolina State Election Board voted to block West from appearing on the ballot despite the fact that his campaign submitted over 3,200 verified signatures above the minimum requirement.

According to the SEP campaign manager, a majority of the signatures were collected in populous Wayne County, home to Detroit, with over 1.7 million residents. The Kishore/White campaign was warmly received throughout the county, including in Dearborn, which is home to the largest Muslim population in the US per capita.

In Dearborn and throughout the state, there is mass outrage over the unwavering support of Biden and the Democratic Party for the genocide in Gaza, which a recent *Lancet* study estimated has claimed the lives of over 186,000 people. Petitioners for Kishore/White regularly campaigned outside halal grocery stores, mosques and community events, where they explained that the fight against Zionism requires a break from both the Democratic and Republican parties and a fight against the capitalist system which they both defend.

While over 11,000 signatures were gathered in Wayne County alone, the campaign also garnered over 6,000 signatures total in the other three counties of the greater Detroit-Ann Arbor metropolitan area--Oakland, Macomb and Washtenaw. Over 650 people signed the petition each in Genesee County, home to Flint, and Kent County, where Grand Rapids is located. Triple-digit signature totals were also gathered in Ottawa,

Kalamazoo, Ingham and St. Clair counties. In total, the campaign gathered signatures in 74 of Michigan's 83 counties.

The widespread and broad support for the socialist campaign in Michigan refutes notions advanced by demoralized middle-class elements that workers and students in the United States are hopelessly backward and incapable of entertaining the possibility of a socialist perspective.

Less than two years ago, some 5,000 autoworkers voted for socialist Will Lehman for president of the UAW, including many in Michigan. This was an expression of growing opposition in the working class to the UAW apparatus and support for an internationalist and socialist perspective.

The SEP is continuing to gather signatures in other states where it is fighting to get on the ballot.



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