

Dec. 2008-Jan. 2009 — Vol. 2, #6

## *Socialist Showings in the 2008 Elections*

The Socialist Party is a political party, and in addition to the grassroots activist campaigns that are the focus of much of our energy, we regularly run candidates for elected office at all levels of government. In the historic 2008 elections, there were over a dozen Socialist candidates for offices ranging from Borough Council to President of the United States.

The Socialist Party's 2008 presidential ticket of Brian Moore and Stewart Alexander was on the ballot in eight states and qualified to receive write-in votes in 22 others, making it one of only seven tickets to pass the 270-electoral-vote threshold. As of 21 Nov., 7,610 votes had been counted for Moore and Alexander, with many write-in votes missing or uncounted. The final vote total is likely to be the second-largest since 1952, trailing only those received by our 2004 ticket of Walt Brown and Mal Herbert.

On the local level, Dwain Reynolds's campaign for Michigan State Board of Education received the most votes, nearly 95,000, 10,000 more votes than any Socialist or Green candidate for the office had ever received before. Also in Michigan, Matt Erard received 2,200 votes for State Representative, the highest vote total of any minor party candidate running for the Michigan State House, and the highest vote percentage (4.6%) of any minor party candidate running for any office in the state.

The Socialist Party's highest vote percentage came in Rhode Island, where Jon Osborne received 21.6% of the vote for State Senate. More results are available at [www.vote-socialist.org](http://www.vote-socialist.org).

*The Socialist Party of Massachusetts is the Massachusetts chapter of the Socialist Party USA, a democratic socialist, feminist, anti-racist party, that strives to establish a radical democracy that places people's lives under their own control.*

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SP Massachusetts Bulletin

## *First Night Against the War*

If you're heading to Boston for First Night celebrations, be sure to join the Socialist Party and the Stop the Wars Coalition for our fourth annual "First Night Against the Wars" Peace Fair, which will be held in Copley Square from 1-7 PM, Wednesday, 31 Dec.

We'll provide our antiwar message to thousands of First Night revelers and distributing food, stickers, literature, and enthusiasm for a new year campaigning against the wars.

Call 617/230-9382, email [info@stopthewars.org](mailto:info@stopthewars.org), or visit [www.stopthewars.org](http://www.stopthewars.org) for more information.

## *"Our Love Is Worth Fighting For"*

*A Socialist Party Statement on Recent Anti-Gay Referendums*

The recent passage of anti-gay referendums in relation to equal marriage rights, adoption, and related areas points out the ongoing power of the anti-gay religious right. This is a time for all of us: gay, straight, white, people of color, young, old, religious, non religious, men, women to take a stand in support of equal rights for all peoples, in this case: LGBT (Lesbian/Gay/Bi/Trans) people. As socialists we call for economic democracy, grassroots politics, and emancipatory liberation. As feminists we oppose patriarchal systems that attempt to enforce artificially one type of gender expression or sexual identity. As anti-racists we oppose white supremacy and its divide and conquer tactics that attempts to split up the unity of the working class. We call for the repeal of all anti-LGBT laws and statutes and call for the rights of minorities to not be up to recall by a sometimes misled majority. We will work with groups working to overturn these anti-gay decisions and call for unity of all the oppressed in our shared vision of a just society, which we believe will be fulfilled by moving towards a socialist society. A society where people will be in cooperation with each other through their direct participation and able to benefit from the fruit of their labor to the benefit of themselves and all in society.

## *Victories for the Labor Movement*

Recent weeks have seen a series of remarkable successes for the labor movement, including victories in long-standing campaigns in which Socialists have been active for years.

The worker occupation of the Republic Windows and Doors factory in Chicago by **UE** (United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America) Local 1110 made headlines across the country. A desperate action reminiscent of old-fashioned sit-down strikes, the occupation achieved victory in less than a week, with workers receiving severance pay and benefits owed to them. Sit-down strikes were pioneered by the radical anticapitalist Industrial Workers of the World, and used to great effect by militant unions before being outlawed in the 1930s. Following the successful occupation, UE announced the establishment of a “Window of Opportunity Fund” dedicated to reopening the plant.

The **CIW** (Coalition of Immokalee Workers), an organization of farmworkers centered in southern Florida, reached another milestone in its campaign for farmworker justice, through an agreement with Subway, the nation's largest fast-food buyer of Florida tomatoes. The Campaign for Fair Food, which calls for improved working conditions and wages for farmworkers, was initiated in 2001 with a four-year boycott of Taco Bell. Following Taco Bell's 2005 capitulation, McDonald's (2007), Burger King (2008), and now Subway were targeted in turn. The Socialist Party has worked closely with the CIW for years, and continues to be deeply involved with the Campaign for Fair Food.

An even longer struggle also achieved victory in a vote to unionize with **UFCW** (United Food and Commercial Workers) at Smithfield Packing in Tar Heel, North Carolina, the world's largest meatpacking plant. The vote followed an earlier election in 1997 that was marred by employers firing, threatening, and physically attacking union supporters. This union-busting led to a decade-long “Justice at Smithfield” campaign in which the Socialist Party was active.

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Due to pervasive intimidation and threats against union organizers, the Smithfield election had to be conducted under court supervision.

The fifteen-year struggle for unionization at the plant dramatically illustrates how difficult it is for unions to operate under the current National Labor Relations institutional framework, and highlights the need for progressive reforms to that system. A first step will be enactment of the Employee Free Choice Act, which among other reforms will allow workers to unionize by signing cards, providing less opportunity for employer coercion or intimidation.

## *Check out The Socialist WebZine*

The Socialist Party recently launched *The Socialist WebZine*, an electronic edition of the SP's magazine, *The Socialist*. Check it out at [SocialistWebZine.blogspot.com](http://SocialistWebZine.blogspot.com)!

The regularly-updated WebZine features arguments, analysis, and perspectives from socialists engaged in the creation of a vibrant democratic socialist movement for the 21st century. It seeks to represent the diverse views of the Socialist Party's membership, as well as the points which allow for unity in action.

Unlike these bulletins, the WebZine features lots of pictures, videos, and other multimedia. Enjoy!

## *Western Mass. Local Meetings*

The meetings of the Tom Mooney (western Massachusetts) Local of the Socialist Party are our highest decision-making bodies, and also provide opportunities for socialists to get together, catch up, and discuss current news and events.

We have held regular local meetings throughout the Pioneer Valley region. Visit [www.sp-usa.org/mass](http://www.sp-usa.org/mass) or contact us for more information about upcoming meetings and events.