

In latest attack on voting rights, Democrats attempt to remove Cornel West from Michigan ballot over notary technicality

Jacob Crosse
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On Friday, the Michigan Bureau of Elections moved to disqualify independent presidential candidate Dr. Cornel West and his running mate, Melina Abdullah, from appearing on the November presidential ballot over alleged issues with West's campaign paperwork.

Top Democrats are attempting to remove the West-Abdullah campaign from the ballot despite the fact that they submitted nearly 30,000 signatures, more than double the required minimum to appear on the ballot in the state of Michigan. In fact, none of these issues cited by the Bureau have anything to do with signature collection or otherwise submitting false, fraudulent or untrue information.

In a letter sent to the West campaign on August 16, Jonathan Brater, director of Elections at the Department of State, wrote the Department was "required by law to disqualify" West based on a "review of the Affidavit of Identity" the West campaign submitted to the department on June 17, 2024.

According to the letter, the West campaign did submit an affidavit of identity, which was notarized by Dana L. Manning "acting in the State of Colorado." However the Michigan Bureau of Elections claimed "the notarization attempt by Dana L. Manning" did not "conform with Colorado law in at least four respects."

Alleged issues in the affidavit include:

- the document containing "unfilled blanks,"
- the certificate allegedly "failed to identify what notarial act was being performed,"
- the certificate allegedly did not give the notary's "title of office"
- and the "notary public's stamp was on a separate sheet of paper and not included with the notary public's certificate."

After listing these minor issues, the letter from the State of Michigan warned the West campaign that it only had five days to dispute disqualification if they "have evidence to rebut the items listed above."

The disqualification of West and Abdullah is part of the nationwide, anti-democratic campaign spearheaded by the Democratic Party to prevent independent and third-party candidates from appearing on the ballot.

Friday's decision was the result of anti-democratic challenges initiated by high-level Democratic Party operatives, Rosa Holliday and Mark Brewer. Holliday is a former education and training coordinator for General Motors, a political science professor in Bay City, Michigan, and multi-decade Democratic Party campaigner/operative.

Brewer, who filed the challenge to West on behalf of Holliday, is a partner at the Michigan law firm Goodman Acker and was elected chair of the Michigan Democratic Party (MDP) in 1995. At the same time he was elected chair, he also became a member of the Democratic National Committee. He held both positions until 2013, according to a biography on his law firm's website.

While serving as MDP chair and on the DNC, Brewer was also the "President of the Association of State Democratic Chairs" from 2005-2009. In that position he "collaborated closely with DNC Chair Howard Dean" and was "instrumental in electing President Obama in 2008," according to the website.

Following Friday's ruling to block West, Brewer declared on his X account under the handle @MarkBrewerDems, "This is the correct decision: every candidate must follow the rules in order to appear on the Michigan ballot and Cornel West is no

exception.”

Writing on X, Socialist Equality Party presidential candidate Joseph Kishore condemned the anti-democratic action of the Democratic Party.

As the Socialist Equality Party’s candidate for president, I denounce the moves by the Democratic Party to keep Cornel West off the ballot in Michigan. Despite our well-documented political differences with West, the SEP supports the right of workers and youth to be able to vote for all third-party and independent candidates.

The removal of West from Michigan’s ballot over an alleged minor technical issue with notarization exposes as bogus the claims by the Democrats that they are running in this election to defend the democratic and voting rights of the population. In reality, the Democrats are working with the Republicans to block any challenge to their two-party domination in order to carry out their shared agenda of imperialist war abroad and a war on the working class at home.

The SEP campaign fights to defend the democratic rights of the working class by organizing a frontal assault on the wealth and privileges of the financial oligarchy. The wealth of the billionaires must be expropriated and the gigantic corporations must be transformed into publicly controlled utilities, as part of the socialist reorganization of economic life in the United States and throughout the world.

In addition to the challenge by Brewer and Holliday, Clear Choice Action, a political action committee created by Democratic-aligned billionaires and former Biden administration officials, also filed a complaint against the West campaign last month alleging that “several thousand” signatures on its Michigan petitions were “forged.” Last week, lawyers for Clear Choice successfully blocked right-wing anti-vaccine zealot Robert F. Kennedy Jr. from appearing on the New York ballot.

Reporting on the Clear Choice complaint against

West in Michigan last month, the *Detroit News* wrote that lawyers “with the Southfield-based firm Goodman Acker,” including “Mark Brewer,” worked “on the complaint for Clear Choice Action” which was signed by “Rosa Holliday.”



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