

LaRouche certified for matching funds

by Mel Klenetsky

The Federal Election Commission finally certified Lyndon H. LaRouche's presidential campaign for federal matching funds, after a three-month delay. The 5-1 vote by the FEC commissioners included a favorable vote by Democratic Commissioner Scott Thomas, who acknowledged, "The overall financial picture of the LaRouche Democratic Campaign shows that candidacy has substantial support from the American citizenry." The dissenting vote was Republican Commissioner Joan Aikens.

On the day of the FEC's decision, March 24, the California Steering Committee for LaRouche filed more than 60,000 signatures of registered California Democrats to place LaRouche on the June 7, 1988 California primary ballot. He was the only Democrat who would have had to go through the petitioning route. Once California's Secretary of State March Fong Yu learned of the FEC's decision, she automatically placed LaRouche's name on the ballot.

LaRouche campaign treasurer Edward Spannaus commented on the FEC decision. "The vote today, comes after three months of unjustified delay. The FEC was forced to recognize that candidate LaRouche indeed has substantial support from the American population. LaRouche matching funds submissions over the past four presidential election cycles have always been subjected to microscopic scrutiny, unlike any other campaigns. I trust that today's vote indicates that such unwarranted singling out of LaRouche's campaigns by the FEC is a thing of the past."

The FEC had sent letters to all contributors whose checks were made out to the initials "LDC," asking them to verify that their contribution was to the LaRouche Democratic Campaign. The response was so conclusive that the long-awaited matching funds were finally relinquished, though not without major costs to the campaign.

In California, LaRouche Democrats not only gathered more than 61,000 signatures, but they collected more than 500 signatures from each of 45 Congressional Districts throughout the state. Hundreds of thousands of Californians were organized to support LaRouche's White House bid and thousands of new Democrats were registered. Nonetheless, the delay on the matching funds prevented LaRouche from automatically being placed on the ballot in South Dakota, Maryland, Connecticut, North Carolina, Virginia, and in effect California, where the petitioning effort had to go forward, given the lateness of the FEC decision. In Maryland

and Virginia, LaRouche Democrats also petitioned. In Virginia, Democrats collected more than 22,000 signatures, and LaRouche again was the only Democrat to appear on the ballot through petitioning.

In Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, Wisconsin, Mississippi, New Mexico, Wisconsin, Alabama, and Idaho, the secretaries of state refused to place LaRouche on the ballot, offering little or no reason for their arbitrary decisions. In Alabama and Mississippi, LaRouche Democrats petitioned to put LaRouche on the ballot. In Florida there wasn't even a petitioning recourse. From the FEC to the decisions of these secretaries of state, the undemocratic pattern of activities toward the LaRouche Democrats, points out the weakness, not the strength, of the existing Democratic Party leadership.

'LaRouchites are something else'

In New York State, John Marino, the Democratic State Chairman, vowed that he would leave no stone unturned in preventing LaRouche from appearing on the April 19 primary ballot. Referring to the Democratic Party election process, Marino had said, "Open process is one thing, LaRouchites are something else." The *Village Voice* reported a meeting between Seth Harris, the head of the Gephardt campaign, and all the other Democratic presidential candidates, where an agreement was reached that none of the candidates would challenge each other, with the exception of LaRouche. On Feb. 25 LaRouche Democrats filed more than 23,000 signatures in New York and were promptly challenged. A general challenge was issued individually by Jerry Koenig, who just so happens to be the adviser to the New York State Assembly election committee. Yet, the support for LaRouche was so strong, as evidenced by signatures gathered, that Koenig was never even able to come up with the specifics of a challenge.

Earlier in the campaign, a similar thing happened in Illinois, where Illinois Democratic Party chairman Vince DeMuzio and his lawyer challenged LaRouche's petitions for filing *too many* signatures. As in New York, the press reported that all the other candidates met and conspired not to challenge each other's petitions, but to challenge LaRouche's. Of course, Illinois had seen the famous 1986 victory of Fairchild and Hart, two LaRouche Democrats who won in the primary, after which Democratic gubernatorial primary victor Adlai Stevenson withdrew from the ticket, refusing to run with the LaRouche Democrats. The Illinois Democrats have yet to recover.

More recently, a LaRouche Democrat, Claude Jones, was elected chairman of the Harris County Democrats in Texas. Harris County includes Houston and is the third-largest electoral district in the country. On cue, the Harris County Democratic Executive Committee is unconstitutionally attempting to strip Jones of his powers. While Jones is fighting the moves in the courts, these undemocratic actions further demonstrate a national pattern against LaRouche, whose growing influence has the leadership of the Democratic Party apoplectic.