

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS OF AMERICA

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July 26, 2006

News From DSA

A Report from DSA's National Office

DSA ENDORSES LAMONT

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News From DSA

is now published in a new format. The format is still developing, but we hope that it will be more interesting and more readable. You can help DSA build its electronic list by making good use of the "**forward to a friend**" button at the bottom of this message.

Democratic Socialists of America endorsed Ned Lamont in Connecticut's August 8th Democratic primary election for the Senate seat currently held by Joe Lieberman. A letter sent to current and former DSA members in the state urged them to vote for Lamont and get involved in the campaign. The letter pulled no punches: "The main issue is Lieberman's support for President Bush's policies in Iraq. But on a host of other issues Senator Lieberman repeatedly votes with conservatives and the interests of the insurance companies and healthcare industry to which he is beholden." The DSAPAC letter criticized Lieberman's dismissal of Lamont supporters as "blog-inspired fringe voters," citing "Senator Lieberman's neo-liberal, balance-the-budget domestic policies and his hawkish views on defense and foreign policy as out of touch with the Democratic base." The letter went on to charge that "he [Lieberman] is ideologically aligned with the "unatic fringe" that matters -- the one led by Bush, Cheney, and Rumsfeld -- that controls our government."

SUPPORT THE KUCINICH MIDDLE EAST CEASE-FIRE RESOLUTION

With the toll of the dead and injured on all sides mounting daily in Lebanon and Israel and our government going through the diplomatic motions, as President Bush puts his faith in yet another military solution, effective action can be hard to agree on, especially given the rhetorical overkill that often accompanies any action that touches the region.

The current humanitarian crisis could escalate into catastrophe, if an immediate cease-fire is not achieved. Already in the first days of attacks and reprisals, reports say that 29 or more Israeli civilians were killed, numerous others injured and thousands have been forced to leave their homes. In Lebanon, more than 250 civilians are reported killed, countless others injured, and some 500,000 displaced or seeking refuge in other countries. After 15 years of brutal civil war, the people of Lebanon had devoted 16 years to reconstruction and peacebuilding. What has taken a score of years to build up is being torn down in a matter of days. The killing and destruction must be stopped now.

One concrete thing that every one of us can do is urge our member of

Congress to sign on as a co-sponsor to H.Con.Res.450, introduced by Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-OH), which calls upon the United States to pursue an "immediate cessation of violence" and "multi-party negotiations with no preconditions." If your representative has already co-sponsored this resolution, please call to thank him or her.

Congressional Switchboard: 202-224-3121

List of Current Co-Sponsors of H.Con.Res.450:

Neil Abercrombie, Tammy Baldwin, Emanuel Cleaver, John Conyers, Danny K. Davis, Bob Filner, Raul M. Grijalva, Maurice D. Hinchey, Michael M. Honda, Marcy Kaptur, Carolyn C. Kilpatrick, Barbara Lee, Betty McCollum, Jim McDermott, Gregory W. Meeks, James P. Moran, Charles B. Rangel, Bobby L. Rush, Louise McIntosh Slaughter, Hilda L. Solis, Fortney Pete Stark, Maxine Waters, Lynn C. Woolsey,

SANDERS PARTIES OFF TO FLYING START

DSA members are off to an excellent start organizing house parties to support Bernie Sanders' campaign for the U.S. Senate in Vermont. Parties have now been held in **Atlanta, Boston, Boulder (CO), Columbus (OH), Detroit, Indianapolis, and Portland, (ME)**. DSAPAC's national grass roots fundraising campaign has already raised more than \$25,000 for the Sanders effort. Additional house parties are now scheduled in **Ithaca, (NY), the Twin Cities, Washington (DC), and New York City**. Parties in **San Diego and Springfield, (MA)** are being finalized. Several other house parties are still in the planning stage and will be announced in the next report.

MEXICAN ELECTIONS

DSA participated in the observer delegation from the Socialist International to the Mexican elections in early July. DSA National Director Frank Llewellyn led the delegation, which included Skip Roberts (Washington, DC), Daniel Reynolds (Miami) and Michael Lettieri (Washington, DC). Michael Lettieri also represented the Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA). We participated in this delegation because of the extraordinary importance that political developments in Mexico hold for the United States and because of DSA's very close relationship with the PRD--the only significant party representing genuine social democratic change in Mexico.

The media is downplaying charges of fraud, while commentators, following the line of the conservative PAN and the corrupt PRI, suggest that Andrés Manuel López Obrador, the PRD presidential candidate, was endangering Mexican democracy and its institutions by mobilizing massive demonstrations in support of his demand for a vote-by-vote recount. This follows the campaign theme of both the PRI and the PAN, which maliciously and inaccurately suggested that López Obrador was a dangerous radical and authoritarian political leader. Fraud has a long history in Mexican elections, and it would not be the first time that the PRD was robbed. It is now widely acknowledged in Mexico that in 1988 the PRD candidate, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, lost the presidential election

as a consequence of massive fraud.

There were indeed problems with this election. Felipe Calderón's so-called "margin of victory" was cut in half between the preliminary and final counts, and there are questions about whether all of the votes were counted and about collusion between political leaders of the PAN and the PRI in some states to throw the election to Calderón when it became clear that the PRI candidate, Roberto Madrazo, would finish a distant third. There were not enough ballots at some polling stations, and on election night, the IFE (the Mexican Electoral commission that supervises the administration of elections) released inaccurate information about the number of ballots that remained to be counted.

Moreover, there were two disturbing developments in the run-up to this presidential election. In 2003, the PAN and the PRI conspired to prevent the PRD from having any representative on the board of IFE, where it previously had been represented. And in 2005, they attempted to prevent López Obrador from running for President with a politically inspired indictment. It took months of public pressure in Mexico and internationally including large public demonstrations, much like the ones now taking place, to get the indictment thrown out.

In an election so close (the margin was .58% of the vote), many factors could lead to the result, including political mistakes, random instances of fraud, or worse. Mexican democracy and its institutions are better served by a recount than by institutional and political intransigence. Instead of trying to bury Mexican democracy, as the right charges, López Obrador and the demonstrators are really acting to save it.

Media reports in Mexico now say that the IFE was closely divided on the question of a recount, in spite of the political leanings of its board. And, in fact, no one has been yet certified as the winner of the election. The Mexican Electoral Tribunal (court) has that responsibility--and it has until September 6th to make the determination. The Tribunal could order a recount, and may well do so, despite Calderón's threat to contest such a decision before Mexico's Supreme Court. Despite what you might read in the papers the election has not been decided.

While whoever ultimately gains the presidency can hardly claim a mandate, the PRD has established itself as Mexico's second party in the legislature and in the contest for the presidency, and it has done so without yet being a truly national party. In the 2003 mid-term elections, the PRD got less than 10% of the vote in many states. If the PRD is able to better organize in those states thus gaining a larger share of the vote, they will be in a much stronger position next time out.

Since the election the National Director has sent messages of solidarity to the demonstrators in Mexico City, and a letter to IFE and the electoral tribunal urging them to order a full recount.

Paid for by Democratic Socialists of America PAC, 75 Maiden Lane, Suite 505, NY, NY 10038; not approved by any candidate or candidate's committee.

