

End the "Slay ride": Elston K. McCowan for Mayor of St. Louis

With the November elections over, most working people and youth have turned their attention away from the electoral arena and are worried about the unraveling economy. Hundreds of thousands are losing their jobs and companies are going bankrupt week after week. Millions are now being threatened with foreclosure on their homes. Millions more still lack access to quality, affordable health care and others don't have access to any kind of health care whatsoever.

Municipalities, from major cities like Philadelphia to small towns across the country are facing their worst budget crises in decades. Funding for schools, public health clinics, local services, roads, bridges, other infrastructure and public workers' wages is rapidly drying up and the Big Business politicians, both Republicans and Democrats, cannot offer any fundamental alternative to drastic cuts at the national or local level. Poor and working class Americans are being asked to foot the bill for the crisis of capitalism while the multi-billionaires who control the big banks get fat corporate welfare checks.

Many voted for the Democratic Party and Barack Obama in the recent national elections out of disgust with Bush and the Republican Party. But it is the capitalist system itself that is the root cause of all of the problems facing working people today. So, how could the Democratic Party, which just like the Republican party is organically connected to the interests of the big corporations provide any meaningful alternative to the crisis? They cannot bring about any fundamental change because to do so would require them to infringe on the interests of the capitalist class, their real "base."

Literally millions of people are looking for an alternative to this state of affairs. In cities across the country, voices are being raised demanding: "Enough is enough!" In St. Louis, Missouri, the campaign to elect Elston K. McCowan as Mayor on April 7th offers an alternative at the local ballot box. A long time SEIU member and union organizer, Elston McCowan has pledged to be an "activist candidate and an activist Mayor," and is running on the

Green Party ticket.

McCowan is running against Francis G. Slay, the deeply unpopular Democratic incumbent. Slay's administration has been marked by attacks on the St. Louis Public Schools, including the misuse of federal funds earmarked for removal of lead paint from school buildings, an increase in racist police violence against the city's majority Black population, and the scandalous giveaway of \$365 million in public funds toward the construction of the new Busch Stadium in 2006. Neither Slay nor any of his Democratic predecessors have been able to offer any real alternative to the disappearance of quality, union jobs over the

past few decades, which has led to the deterioration of the city and the living conditions of city residents.

In 2007, Slay's firing of the city's first Black Fire Chief ignited a grassroots campaign to recall him from office, which later developed into the campaign to elect McCowan mayor. McCowan is running on an election platform that represents a clear alternative to Slay and the Democratic Party, calling for, among other things: full employment, quality housing, universal health care, for the federal government to pay its fair share to bailout the nation's beleaguered state and municipal budgets and to fund our public schools and universities, health, public transportation, infrastructure and other services.

We in the Workers International League believe that this campaign offers workers and youth, both Black and White, the best option in the upcoming St. Louis city elections. We are in favor of building a mass party of labor, based on the unions, armed with a program of socialist demands that truly addresses the interests of the working class majority of American society. We believe that this campaign can give a bold lead nationally in this direction, and shows that it is possible to run independent labor candidates fighting cuts and working to implement policies that can improve the lives of working people.



SOCIALIST APPEAL
Marxist Voice of Labor and Youth



"Yes!" to full employment,
quality union jobs and benefits for all at a living wage.

"Yes!" to quality housing for all,
with rents fixed at no more than 10 percent of income.

"Yes!" to free, quality education for all,
fully fund our schools and universities:
no to privatization, vouchers and school closings.

"Yes!" to free, quality health care for all,
for a socialized national health care system.

**"No!" to big-business bailouts at public expense:
Make the rich pay for their crisis!**

For more information, contact the WIL by phone at (314) 435-2493,
email stl@socialistappeal.org, or visit the campaign website: www.mccowan4mayor.com