

SPUSA 2025 National Convention

Nominee Statements

Co-Chair/Chair

Mary Nickum (At-large Delegate)

Candidate for National Co-Chair, Socialist Party USA

Who I am

- SPUSA member since 2018,
- Chair of the Ecosocialist Working Group since 2019,
- Southwest Regional Coordinator since 2020,
- Member of the Labor Working Group (LWG) since 2021, and The Anti-war Working Group since 2022
- Member of the National Committee (NC) since 2023,
- Leader of the Track to the Future and Labor Rising projects in the LWG since 2023,
- Member the National Executive Committee (NEC) since 2024,
- Executive Editor of The Socialist magazine since 2024,
- Chair of The Socialist Editorial Board since 2024.

What I Stand for

1. Principles and actions of Ecosocialism,
2. Public rail (freight and passenger),
3. Increasing SP membership and building strong Locals,
4. Promote effective communication with the membership and the general public,
5. Improve public perception and knowledge about socialism,
6. Make SPUSA publications a prime source of socialism information. Put The Socialist magazine online for public consumption.
7. Position SPUSA as a highly regarded information source,
8. Improve relationships or develop new relationships with other socialist organizations.

Brian Bittner (Baltimore City Local)

Candidate for National Co Chair, Socialist Party USA

I am asking for your vote and support as a National Chair of the SPUSA. For the last two years I have served as a National Vice-Chair, where I've shown up consistently and tried to do my best to build the Socialist Party. I would prioritize three main goals as a National Chair:

1. Communicating on behalf of the party. I've authored many of the party's statements of the past year in opposition to the Trump administration. Last year I completed a Master's degree in Communication, concentrating in Political Communication. I want to be a Chair who can represent the party in writing, on podcasts, in videos, and in the new media that continues to develop.
2. Building local chapters. I helped form the local chapter in Baltimore and serve on its Local Executive Committee. I will work with any new local chapter in any town or city, but I think our national party leadership should spend some time focusing on forming strong local chapters in our biggest cities – Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York City. We also need to build a symbolic local presence in the District of Columbia, our nation's capital. From Baltimore, I can assist in-person when needed in DC and NYC, and will work remotely to help any other growing local chapter.
3. Contesting elections. I revitalized our federal committee – the Socialist National Committee – that financially supported our sole local candidate in last year's election and is fundraising now to support more local candidates. I served as the Treasurer for our 2024 Presidential ticket, and after the

campaign I formed the Ballot Access and Electoral Working Group to help continue supporting candidates and efforts to access ballots.

I live in north Baltimore with my partner and our eight (!) cats. I hope that the party can bring an upcoming national convention to Baltimore, so we can begin meeting face to face again. Organizing an in-person convention with a good online hybrid option will be a challenge, but I know that we can do it! I work as an administrator at a local university, so I know how to keep materials organized and stay up to date on new electronic tools. I previously worked for almost a decade in a national political office in DC.

I hope you will support me as a National Chair of the SPUSA. If you have any questions or just want to chat, you can reach me at 410-417-7410 or brianbittnersp@gmail.com.

Bill Shakalis (CT – At large)

Candidate for National Co Chair, Socialist Party USA

Who I am:

- SPUSA member since 1974
- Organized SP Boston Area Local (1982), SP of Massachusetts (1982)
- State Senate candidate, SP, 1982, 12.5%, Cambridge-Boston
- SPUSA Presidential campaigns: 1980, New England organizer; 1984, 1992, 2000
- National Co-Chair, 1983-1987
- Formed Committee for Ballot Access, Mass. 1985, a coalition of minor political parties. – reduced signature requirements for ballot access for minor parties and independent candidates (required signatures reduced from 33,000 sigs to 10,000; allowing Socialist registration as a voter) in Massachusetts
- Helped organize the 1996 SPUSA Convention held in Cambridge, MA
- Labor Working Group – Member: 2023-present
Chair: 2023-2025
LWG development: speakers, labor education, labor action in the workplace

What I stand for:

1. Debsian socialist outlook
2. Support independent political action with SPUSA candidates
3. Rank and file labor action in unions and labor generally
4. Support eco socialist principles and action as a crucial focus
5. Support socialist feminist principles and action
6. Build new membership and Locals: enhance growth and support for new members and locals
7. Support for the First Amendment
8. Opposition to authoritarianism
9. Developing positions on the current attack on working class, unions in this Constitutional crisis in the United States

National Committee

Keith G. Allen (At-Large, ND)

Boozhoo, that is hello in Ojibwe. My names Keith Allen and I reside in Fargo, ND. I was born in South Dakota and have lived in and love Minnesota as well. Basically a life long upper midster.

Things I care about and move me to the core are as follows: love, connection, mental health, improving the planet, indigenous peoples of the world and happiness.

Things I'm willing to die for: The betterment of our country in a way that will always place humans and life above profit.

I have had 20 years of being an electrical laborer. I have spent time in food and medical sectors. I am currently finishing a degree in pre-law. I have a blended family with 5 boys, my wife, 3 dogs, 1 Gineau Pig and Gecho.

I am non-binary and believe our perception of what is female and male is needs to be made more clear that it is not as easy as having two different states.

I hope that my views, beliefs and abilities will lead me to be able to make decisions on our parties behalf.

Thanks

Eric Chester (Triangle Local, NC)

I have been a member of the Socialist Party USA for most of the last forty years. I am currently convener of the labor working group and a member of the editorial board of the Socialist. I am a member of the Triangle, North Carolina, local.

The Socialist Party needs to be more visible as a pole for activists that refuse to work within the Democratic Party and that are committed to the creation of a democratic socialist feminist society.

One important focus of our activity should be actions to counter climate change. We need to move people out of cars and planes and into trains and buses. Pushing for increased funding for mass transit needs to be an essential point in our program.

Greg Pason (Northern NJ Local, NJ)

I have spent the majority of my adult life as an activist and organizer for the Socialist Party USA and am committed to building a strong membership organization as well as well as supporting strong socialist candidates for local and federal office.

The Party cannot take short cuts. We need to build a strong membership, connect our membership to local and national movements and build a party of local organizers and activists. This can only be done through strong Locals and ongoing movement campaigns. On the ground community organizing is key to strong party and strong socialist candidates for office. We also need to focus on education, outreach and mentorship.

I have served as a National Committee member, alternate, Vice Chair and currently National Secretary.

I am a seven-time SP candidate, with campaigns for Governor, US House of Representatives and US Senate.

I am a former Co-Chair of the NJ Branch of the National Writers Union and former Board member of Brainworkers International as well as former Chair of the Coalition for Free and Open Elections.

I am a former Board member of the North East Earth Coalition and a part member of the Montclair Parks, Rec and Cultural Affairs advisory committee.

Founding member of Montclair Mutual Aid and Montclair Area Solidarity Network, and current Director of Indie Arts Montclair.

Long time activist and organizer with Anti-Racist Action and founding member (in my youth) of Red and Anarchist Skinheads

I am also active in Montclair community gardens as well as a p/t staff person and activist with NJ Peace Action.

Over the last two years we have doubled our membership in the Northern NJ Local (which I serve as chair) and have coordinated a series of abolition workshops in Northern NJ. The Socialist Party of New Jersey also have more than 6,000 residents registered under Socialist Party of New Jersey.

Currently I am organizing with ICE Out of Montclair and working with Cosecha NJ and Resistencia NJ and part of a rapid response network.