

# LaRouche sues DNC Chairman Fowler for abuses under Voting Rights Act

by Nancy Spannaus

Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., a candidate for the Democratic Party nomination for President, and minority voters from four states and the District of Columbia, filed suit on Aug. 2 against Donald Fowler, chairman of the Democratic National Committee (DNC), and Democratic state parties and officials in Louisiana, Virginia, Texas, Arizona, and D.C. The lawsuit, filed in federal court in Washington, D.C., charges that Fowler conspired with the others to deny LaRouche, and his voters, duly won delegates to the Democratic National Convention. Fowler's actions are in violation the Voting Rights Act and the U.S. Constitution.

The suit stems from Fowler's issuing a Jan. 5, 1996 letter falsely ruling that LaRouche was not a *bona fide* Democratic candidate, and that, thus, state party officials "should disregard any votes . . . cast for LaRouche." Fowler's unilateral ruling was based on falsehoods made in total reckless disregard for the truth.

On Jan. 8, LaRouche demanded Fowler issue an apology because his determination was based on a "flagrant lie." In that response, LaRouche stated that "since I have been an active Democratic Party campaigner during more than 15 years . . . such an obviously hysterical document now, suggests that someone is terribly afraid of my candidacy. . . . Since Mr. Clinton's reelection is virtually inevitable, and since I am committed to support his reelection after the August convention, one may ask: whether the authorship of the scurrilous letter either wrote in a deranged state of mind, or is operating under the influence of some secret agenda. . . .?"

Fowler has not only refused to retract his determination, but he restated it to Democratic Party officials in Washington on April 1.

Despite Fowler's contention, LaRouche ran in 26 state Democratic Presidential primaries and received almost 600,000 votes. In Louisiana's 6th Congressional District primary and Virginia's 2nd CD caucus, LaRouche received enough votes to be awarded a delegate to the Democratic National Convention. But, because of Fowler's letter, party officials in those states have refused to certify any delegates pledged to LaRouche.

## The Pennsylvania outrage

Fowler's misguided attacks on LaRouche have already been used to help Republicans. Most recently, the suit alleges,

several television stations in Pennsylvania, relying on Fowler's letter, have refused to sell campaign ads to LaRouche's campaign committee. The half-hour broadcast, entitled "Impeach Governor Tom Ridge, for Nazi-style Crimes against Humanity," denounces the Republican governor for implementing cuts in medical benefits which will cause the deaths of 3,500 people before the end of the year, which, under the Nuremberg standards, is prosecutable as a crime against humanity. Ridge is considered a vice-presidential prospect for Republican candidate Bob Dole.

Fowler's letter was circulated by the Pennsylvania Association of Broadcasters, and was then used by the Federal Communications Commission, to argue that TV stations did not have to air LaRouche's shows under FCC rules, because he was allegedly not a "*bona fide* Democrat." This fraudulent argument led to all but one station pulling the show, which had already been paid for, in a move to protect Ridge from LaRouche's charges.

Fowler took his action against LaRouche pursuant to a Democratic Party rule which gives the chairman dictatorial power to determine who is a Presidential candidate. The party rules provide for no appeal of such a ruling, no matter how arbitrary or erroneous. The suit charges that Fowler's actions and the Democratic Party rules are in violation of the Voting Rights Act, because they had the effect of discriminating against African-American, Hispanic, American-Indian, and disabled voters. Because this rule affects the electoral process, it must be cleared by the Attorney General as required under the law, precisely to prevent discrimination against minority voters.

The lawsuit shows that neither Fowler, the DNC, nor the state parties took the steps to get clearance of their exclusionary rule; thus, their actions are in violation of the Voting Rights Act.

Furthermore, actions of state party officials, acting on the authority of Fowler's ruling, violated the civil rights of LaRouche and his voters.

Minority voters in the District of Columbia, Arizona, and Texas were denied the right to participate in Democratic Party elections and caucuses when local party officials, acting on Fowler's determination, prohibited them from running for office or being seated as delegates.

The suit also seeks monetary damages from Fowler.