



Struggle-La-Lucha.org

Trump-inspired California recall effort stopped

written by John Parker
September 21, 2021



Protesters gather outside McDonald's in Los Angeles, Calif., on Dec. 5, 2013. An unprecedented ballot initiative created by members of the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice in California in 2013 called for an immediate minimum wage increase to \$15 per hour.

California voters got another taste of the national effort by the Republican Party to disenfranchise the votes of working and poor people, especially the votes of people of color. But this time, regarding their initiative to recall Gov. Gavin Newsom, they were unsuccessful.

In spite of the policies that run counter to the interests of working people by both

political parties, the Republican Party's romance with Trump, his fascist-minded initiatives and anti-science stance during a pandemic targeted the Democratic Party's Gov. Gavin Newsom.

The leading opponent of Newsom was rightwing radio talk show host Larry Elder, exposing once again the willingness of the two ruling class parties to use a person of color to push anti-Black and Brown policies – like his call for reparations for the slave owners and to deprive the communities hit most by the pandemic of the means to fight the virus.

Elder called for an end to mask and vaccine protocols called for by the medical and scientific community being utilized in the schools.

In regards to sexism, Elder has said that men are better equipped for politics than women, and would welcome the type of anti-woman legislation that occurred in Texas to deny woman the right to an abortion, advocating that those who have an abortion should be tried for murder.

In regards to workers' right to a living wage, Elder thinks there should be no minimum wage laws.

Many of the other rightwing candidates dominating the recall election hoped to launch their political careers, like Trump and Elder, by appealing to white supremacists and anti-science voters.

Newsom got about 64% in favor of his staying in office. The yes votes for the recall were about 36%.

Many attribute this large victory for the governor having mostly to do with the voters' desire to end this pandemic. In fact, most counties with at least 45% to 48% vaccination rates voted against the recall.

Big money wins

Although the defeat of fascist-minded politicians must be considered a progressive development as a barometer of how the majority in California rejected those ideals, the amount of money spent by both parties once again exposed the importance, and usually primary importance, of big money in an election. Both parties and their allies raised about \$140 million in total, with Newsom raising \$90 million of that sum.

The top Republican Party donors for the recall included business owners and real estate developers. The top Democratic Party donors included mostly wealthy millionaire business owners that tend to vote for more liberal politicians, with the exception of the CEO of Netflix and his spouse — Reed Hastings and Patty Quillin — who donated over \$3 million to Newsom, exceeding the California Democratic Party donations, which were about \$2 million.

Other top donors on the more conservative side supporting Newsom include realtor associations and even the California Correctional Peace Officers Association.

What Newsom's support did include that wasn't included in the support for the Republican challenge was backing from unions, whose top donors included the California Teachers Association, Service Employees International Union Local 1000, American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees and the California State Association of Electrical Workers.

Excluding the union contributions, the donors both for and against the recall show that the ruling class is still divided on the best method of continuing the exploitation of our class, and many were worried about a radical rightwing takeover in California.

Terms of recall would deny votes of majority

The terms of the recall were such that if it was successful, Newsom could not be

considered a candidate for governor. With 46 candidates running, only about 15% of the vote could ensure victory. Those terms set for the recall would deny the votes of the majority and further the disenfranchisement of Black and Brown voters.

In socialist countries like Cuba, recalls are part of the constitution but are instituted to ensure the will of working people, not deny them. And the threat of rightwing extremism is often used by the ruling class here to further justify the denial of democratic rights to working people. This experience with the recall is included.

There are calls from some in the Democratic Party to stop the recall process altogether, instead of modifying it. This is similar to the legislation to limit access to filing ballot initiatives by raising the cost 10 times in 2015 to supposedly stop frivolous ballot initiatives after a rightwing homophobic initiative was filed.

However, it was probably more targeted at the unprecedented ballot initiative created by members of the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice in California in 2013 calling for an immediate minimum wage increase to \$15 per hour.

Undoubtedly initiatives like that, which are against exploitation and repression, are the real target of legislative “reform” by both the Democratic and Republican Parties.

Which is why, although the result of this recall was positive in the sense of denying fascist-minded ideologues even more seats in government, it will take the watchful eye of our class and the building of a genuine people’s movement against both political parties of the ruling class to maintain democratic gains and push the struggle forward.

