

NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT LAWYERS ASSOCIATION  
2014 EXECUTIVE BOARD ELECTIONS

**CANDIDATE STATEMENT**

**RICHARD R. RENNER** (Washington, DC)

Date of admission to practice: **November 6, 1981**

Present position: **Of Counsel**

Size of firm: **8 attorneys**

Year became a NELA member: **1996**

Names of NELA Affiliates: **Metropolitan Washington Employment Lawyers Association, Maryland Employment Lawyers Association, Ohio Employment Lawyers Association**

Percentage of legal work devoted to the representation of employees and/or their interests: **95%**



Change in the workplace, or in our country, begins when individuals speak out about the need for change. My legal career has focused on the rights of whistleblowers, particularly working class whistleblowers. I have represented wastewater treatment workers, factory workers, truck drivers, fast food workers, and the occasional federal employee or corporate executive. As whistleblower law advances, so too does free speech at work.

Attorneys are workers too. When we face reprisals, it discourages attorneys from zealously representing their clients. Sanctions pose a deterrent to the advocacy that advances the Civil Rights Movement. That is why I volunteered in 2004 for the NELA Ethics and Sanctions Committee. I have written *amicus* briefs opposing sanctions in *Lucas v. Duncan*, 574 F.3d 772 (D.C.Cir. 2009); *Garner v. Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court*, 554 F.3d 624 (6th Cir. 2009); and *Howe v. City of Akron* (6th Cir. pending).

Judges can further deter our work by making fee awards that are a far cry from market rates. That is why I volunteered to co-write (with Margie Harris) NELA's *amicus* brief in *Hithon v. Tyson Foods*, (11th Cir. pending), challenging an 80% fee reduction for Alicia Haynes' historic victory in *Ash v. Tyson Foods*.

I want NELA to be an effective support for employee rights attorneys throughout their careers. We need NELA Board members who are visible and accessible. We need to be effective in litigation and in legislation. That is why I attended NELA Lobby Days in 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010, and 2013. See <http://www.taterenner.com/nelalobbydays.php>.

In 2008, I won election to the NELA Board when I was the principal of Tate & Renner in Dover, Ohio. That same year, I became the Legal Director of the National Whistleblowers Center (NWC) and moved to Washington, DC. In 2011, I was representing immigrants as a Staff Attorney at CASA de Maryland, while continuing my duties at NWC. I did not have the time or resources to continue as a NELA Board Member. In 2012, I found myself unexpectedly separated from NWC. Last year, I joined the firm of Kalijarvi, Chuzi, Newman and Fitch in Washington, DC. I now have firm support to serve again as a NELA Board Member.

One weakness I will have as a NELA Board Member is fundraising. I don't hang around rich people very much. If you know people who can support NELA and The Institute, please let me know. It would make all our advocacy so much easier. Thank you.