



NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT LAWYERS ASSOCIATION
2017 EXECUTIVE BOARD ELECTION

CANDIDATE'S STATEMENT

Wade B. Cowan (Tennessee)

Date of admission to practice: **1981**

Your present position: **Of Counsel**

Size of your firm: **7 attorneys**

Year you became a NELA member: **1995**

Name of NELA Affiliate(s): **Tennessee Employment Lawyers Association**

What percentage of your professional legal work is devoted to the representation of employees and/or their interests? **Over 95%**

It has been my great personal and professional honor to serve this wonderful organization for the past six years as a member of NELA's Executive Board, and for the past two years as a member of the Executive Committee, first as Treasurer and currently as Secretary. NELA is facing a transition period as we bid a fond farewell to our long-time Executive Director, Teri Chaw (as Paul Tobias says, "The Best Damn Executive Director in the World!"), welcome an Interim Executive Director, and work on the transition to a new permanent Executive Director over the next 18 months. As a member of the Board, the Executive Committee, and the Executive Transition Committee, I have been privileged to be very involved in the transition process, and I ask for your vote and support to continue that involvement as well as to allow me to continue contributing to the progress NELA has made since I joined the Board in 2011. I ask for your vote as well so that I can bring my experience on the Board to bear in the development of a new strategic plan to shape our future.



Not only are we facing a transition to a new Executive Director, but we also face the challenges brought on by the country's transition to a new Administration and Republican control of Congress. Now more than ever, it is critical for NELA to mobilize its resources and membership to amplify our voice on Capitol Hill and in the courts. We must speak up and speak out to preserve the rights of working Americans and prevent the erosion of those rights either legislatively or by the appointment of judges with beliefs that are antithetical to those rights. For the past three years, I have served as the Co-Chair for NELA's Judicial Nominations Committee, working to find and vet nominees and potential nominees for our federal courts. Now, with the new Administration, that role is changing, and it is my vision for NELA that we amplify our collective voice and the individual voices of our members and clients in the fight against judicial nominees who have a record of opposing the progress of workers' rights or who have views that are contrary to or would be destructive of those rights. We must speak out and insist on diverse and fair minded judges who do not place the interests of employers over the rights of our clients. It is also my vision that we increase our membership and our financial stability and secure the means to hire a Communications Director for NELA. We need someone on our staff dedicated to leading our efforts to amplify our voice and make sure we are heard as we advocate for the rights of workers and our clients amid the din and commotion created by the new Administration.

It has been my great joy and privilege to have worked alongside the other members of the Board over the past six years on behalf of NELA's membership and in service to NELA's goals. As you know, NELA's Bylaws impose a three-term limit on Board membership, and I hope that you will conclude that my previous service to the Board, to NELA, and to you as a NELA member warrants your vote in this election so that I may continue my service to you for one last term. Thank you.