

My wife questions why I spend so much time with my “lawyer groups.” Between NELA, another board, and the bar’s ethics committee, I spend a good quarter of my billable time and Saturdays planning CLEs, doing membership drives, attending meetings, etc. I have fun doing it. I love planning CLEs. I edit bylaws like I’m doing a crossword puzzle. I’ve been lucky the last several years to go on regular vacations to NELA board meetings in different cities. I fly out early to see NELA members and go to NBA games. And then I get to talk about things like ending damage caps, making our processes and systems more inclusive and equitable, and changing the judiciary with some of the smartest people I know. Some of my best friends are on the board, so selfishly I hope you’ll elect me so I can continue to justify flying three hours to hang out with them a few times a year.

I spend 20-30 hours a month working on NELA stuff. But there are people who spend 160+ hours a month working on NELA stuff. During my time on the board, we’ve come up with a lot of awesome ideas. And we’ve done a lot of work to implement those ideas. But the people responsible for what you see as a NELA member are not the board, it’s the NELA staff. NELA’s mission is to empower workers’ rights attorneys through legal training, promoting a fair judiciary, and advocating for laws and policies that level the playing field for workers. The board argues over what that mission means, but NELA’s staff is why that mission is carried out.

NELA has two reliable constants. Its members and its staff. As a board member, I know I can rely on NELA’s members to do awesome work, attend our CLEs, and give NELA the money we need. I also know I can rely on NELA’s staff. These are some of the most amazing people I get to work in my life. We have great seminars because of Ashley and Alicia. We have money because of Leah. We have members because of Tacarra. We have the capacity to talk to each other throughout the day and trade insight and strategy because of Pedro. We have organized brainstorming because of Jason. We have a vision because of Karen, Jeffrey, and Teri.

My goal as a board member is to help NELA staff develop and implement systems that make it easier for them to do their work with board member and member support. It’s easy to come up with ideas for what NELA should be doing. I’m sure I articulated a lot of them in my past candidate statements. It’s harder to implement and maintain those ideas. I may have a good idea or two left in me for NELA, but if you elect me, my focus will be more on listening and figuring out how we can implement good ideas without overburdening our staff. Whether that’s using different technology, organizing more board member/member help, or just helping on my own.

My mom was the deputy director of the Colorado Trial Lawyers Association for most of my life. I grew up hearing about lobbying, CLEs, and an ominous “board of directors.” Some of my mom’s best friends served on that board, some of her worst nightmares came from that board. Good ideas can turn into staff working long hours and being overly stressed.

Whether you elect me or not, I’ll still be giving NELA as much of my time as it needs. If you elect me, I’ll be working to ensure the NELA board is collaborating with NELA staff and working to support the staff as much as possible in implementing the board’s ideas.