

NELA CANDIDATE STATEMENT

I have been a member of NELA for 27 years and have attended virtually every convention since becoming a member. For the past 6 years, it has been my honor to have served on the Executive Board. I would be honored to serve one further and final term.

I am running again because I believe that my background and experience help to make NELA and the Board stronger. NELA cannot achieve many of its goals alone; it is best able to do so working in coalition with other progressive organizations. During my time on the Board, I have worked to develop and improve relationships with such sister organizations—including (to name a few) the National Women's Law Center, A Better Balance, Public Justice, the Center for Popular Democracy, Alliance for, and the AFL-CIO—that have helped NELA to achieve some but (certainly not all) of its goals.

This includes my work the past 5 years as NELA's co-chair of the Judicial Nominations Committee where, acting with other national cohorts, NELA has succeeded in recruiting and confirming professionally and demographically diverse individuals to serve on the federal bench since President Biden took office. During my tenure on the Board, I have also worked on both a state and federal level with other organizations to pass the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, to advocate for paid family medical leave, to try to eliminate forced arbitration, and more recently to reduce or eliminate the damage caps on awards altogether.

I believe that workers are best empowered through collective action and for that reason have represented labor unions for some 40 years. I am one of the few members of the Executive Board with strong connections with organized labor which I believe have been and can be valuable to NELA.

NELA is currently in a state of flux. Paul Tobias, our legendary founder and visionary, passed away three years ago. Other founding mothers and fathers are retiring. Our first and long-serving Executive Director, Terri Chaw, left us in 2017 and the current Executive Director recently resigned. As I write this statement NELA has been without a Legislative Director for almost a year. Membership has eroded slightly.

To steer the ship and realize our lofty goals, NELA needs a diverse Board composed of individuals from different backgrounds—race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, and experience—who can speak frankly and respectfully with each other and our membership and who can work successfully with other progressive groups. I bring not just that experience to the table, but perhaps more than anything else an ability to work collaboratively with others. I've dedicated much of my free time to NELA because I believe that NELA has a unique ability to make this country a better place for all workers. In this time of organizational uncertainty, I would welcome the opportunity to continue to serve.