



Ira Azulay

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**Campaign Statement
Director of the Board of Governors of AILA**

My name is **Ira Azulay** and I am the CEO and a Member of AZULAYSEIDEN LAW GROUP (“AZULAYSEIDEN”). I was nominated to the nominating committee, but not selected. I am excited to run by petition and believe that I have a lot of good ideas to share with my fellow members.

I am a relatively new member of AILA, although our firm has twenty-four (24) attorneys, most of whom are AILA members and focus on immigration law. Over the last three (3) years the attorneys of AZULAYSEIDEN have been collectively very active members of local chapters and as a firm we are involved in many different AILA programs. We have members on committees in Chicago, Wisconsin, Florida, and as our presence grows in Texas and Arizona we expect our attorneys to participate there as well. We always have attorneys at the national conferences and have made proposals to present at these events. I have also participated in National Day of Action.

I think my answers to the following questions asked by the nominating committee are a good place to see where I stand and why I want to be involved in the Board of Governors:

1. (i) What do you consider the major challenges AILA and its members face over the next year and (ii) how do you propose to prepare the Association to meet the challenges for itself and its members?

- (i) First, the campaign for CIR. We must be careful not to lose sight of the short term needs while chasing this long term goal. Second, membership and value. In a time where many practitioners are hurting, one of the first things to get cut are membership dues. AILA must continue to provide significant value to avoid this result.
- (ii) I bring high energy and new ideas based on my diverse background. I think its time to incorporate new people and ideas in order to help AILA and its members grow and thrive.

2. How would you have AILA improve its services and relevance to the AILA membership?

AILA leadership has always appeared like a clique to me and those around me. Ultimately for AILA to thrive, people need to want to get involved and feel like they can break through. Too many people have told me they do not even try and get involved in AILA leadership because they expect to be rebuked. True or not, that perception is very damaging.

3. What do you consider to be your strengths that will assist you as a leader in AILA?

I have learned a lot the last few years leading our organization. Make no assumptions, be as open as possible in your communication, be as inclusive with those around you, collaborate, and embrace diversity. I would bring these same ideologies to AILA and believe they will be what shines through.

4. Describe your leadership style and collaboration skills in problem resolution.

The answer to 3 applies here as well. I try not to make assumptions. When we have a problem we try and talk it through. When people reach the same conclusions it is much more powerful and lasting than when they are told solutions. Plus they get their brain working instead of shutting it off.

For those of you who don't know me, I encourage you to reach out to me. I would love the opportunity to talk to you.

I spend significant time on strategic decisions and work for the advancement of the profession as a whole. By way of example, in 2007 I oversaw our class action law suit during visa gate. I regularly analyze our matters looking for places to challenge the status quo. Presently I sit on numerous committees and have been trying to raise awareness for CIR, using a bi-partisan, cross-cultural, inter-faith approach (see below). I also bring a unique approach to the practice of law, think of it as a consultant model. Prior to joining AZULAYSEIDEN, I ran technology companies and worked at large law firms practicing transactional law. What I learned there was the need to emphasize the client and the product. I also bring financial structuring to the practice. These management and organizational tools are what I believe all practitioners should be exposed to in order to survive in today's recessive, competitive environment.

Outside of AILA I sit on numerous committees all with aims that intersect and that will benefit AILA and its members. (i) I am on JCUA's Policy committee and Immigrant Justice Strategy Team. JCUA is a member organization of ICIRR and we are an instrumental player in its efforts for CIR and meetings with local elected officials. I attended Ecumenical Advocacy Days with them, to advocate for CIR, and worked with them on March for America (Chicago sent close to 10,000 people to DC). (ii) I am the Co-Chair of the Employment Law Committee of the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce. This committee is part of its government relations group, and in this capacity I work to show the impact of immigration on many of its agenda items, i.e. Education, Job Creation, Technology. Due to my efforts, the Chicagoland Chamber joined the Illinois Business Immigration Coalition. In this capacity I also work with the US Chamber, a leader on national immigration issues. (iii) I was appointed to the AJC Bridging America Task Force. This group is focused on getting business and political leaders together to change the thinking on CIR. A persuasive statement was issued demonstrating the broad based support. (iv) ISBA - Law Office Management & Economics - Secretary. (v) ABA - International Law - Immigration & Naturalization Committee - Vice Chair. (vi) American Association of Jewish Lawyers & Jurists - Board Member.

I encourage you to find out more about me by contacting me with any questions or comments by phone or email, or going to our firm website www.azulayseiden.com. Thanks.