

**Jeff Devore**  
**for**  
**AILA Board of Governors**

*“Immigration is a mystery and a mastery of obfuscation, and the lawyers who can figure it out are worth their weight in gold.”*



Dear AILA Colleague:

The words above, spoken by a legacy INS spokeswoman years ago, hold even more true today. I am running for the AILA Board of Governors by petition and would be honored to receive your vote so that I may continue to represent your interests and serve AILA.

I am the managing partner of the Devore Law Group located in Palm Beach County, Florida, home of the infamous “butterfly ballot” and “hanging chads” made famous in the 2000 Presidential election. I am Board Certified in Immigration and Nationality Law by The Florida Bar, AV<sup>®</sup> Rated by Martindale-Hubbell and have been a Florida Super Lawyer for many years.

My practice includes all facets of immigration law before the five agencies (USCIS, ICE, CBP, DOL and DOS) charged with administering the Immigration and Nationality Act. I am just as comfortable handling a family based adjustment of status case as I am preparing L-1 and H-1B visa petitions, labor certifications and extraordinary ability immigrant petitions. Additionally, I have an extensive litigation practice appearing before immigration courts and federal courts nationwide, including District Courts and the Courts of Appeals. I am not afraid to bring suit against an agency when the situation warrants.

I have been a member of AILA and the South Florida Chapter since 1993, serving on numerous chapter committees, including liaison with DOL, ICE, CBP, the Florida DMV, and USCIS, and as Chapter Chair in 2004-2005. I regularly attend chapter Board meetings and continue to contribute on a number of committees at the pleasure of the Chapter Chair. Over the years I have served on many AILA National committees including the Texas Service Center (2006-2012) and National Benefits Center liaison committees, the USCIS Technology Workgroup, AILA’s Strategic Planning committee, the 2009 program committee for AILA’s Mid-Year Conference in Aruba, and AILA’s 2012 Annual Conference Committee.

As an active member of AILA, I have participated in many AILA National Days of Action, spoken on many different topics at AILA CLE conferences (both in person and via teleconference) and written numerous articles for AILA publications. In 2009 I was honored to be elected to the AILA National Board of Governors.

Outside of AILA I am a former Chair of The Florida Bar’s Immigration and Nationality Law Certification Committee and am presently serving my second term as a committee member. I also believe pro bono work is extremely important. Consistent with that belief I currently serve as President of the Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County and am a two-time winner of its Immigration Law Award for pro bono service. I have testified as an expert witness on immigration

matters for The Florida Bar and private practitioners and have developed good relationships with the South Florida press and our Senators and Representatives.

AILA continues to face significant challenges in the coming years due to Congress' inability to address the country's need for immigration reform. In years past AILA members utilized technology which allowed them to manipulate data in ways more advanced than the ability of various agencies. Since 9/11 the government has spent billions of dollars and promulgated rules and memoranda to enhance the way it processes cases, tracks our clients, and perceives threats (whether real or imagined). USCIS in particular has been "legislating by memo" and is trying to use commercially available databases and create its own (e.g. VIBE) in order to verify the legitimacy of petitions it adjudicates. Technology used by CBP allows it to check passenger manifests well in advance of the arrival of international flights in order to determine whether an alien has a criminal record or previously overstayed. The result is easier agency access to more (though not always accurate) information than was available only a few short years ago. Members need to be aware of how the agency acts and how to properly prepare for and respond to technologically raised issues.

The Department of Labor continues to attack our practices by decreeing who can and cannot pay for our professional services. DOL's recent amendments to the H-2B program, with its onerous provisions on employers, are another example. Additionally, the issuance of denials and RFE's by USCIS is out of control. If the law and regulations have not substantially changed in over 20 years, why have the USCIS denial rates for L-1B petition increased from 7% in FY2004 to 27% in FY2011 and the rate H-1B denials from 4% to 26% during the same period? Surely it is not solely because the quality of the filings is down or fluctuations in the economy! These are just two examples of agencies which have run amok. AILA must find a way, whether it be through litigation or statutory or regulatory amendments, to stop this practice.

Equally important, however, is furthering AILA's core mission to advance the quality of the practice of immigration and nationality law and to enhance the professional development of its members. I believe AILA needs to take more steps to assist members in developing their practices, not just from a legal knowledge standpoint through CLE (which AILA produces in an unsurpassed manner), but how to run a practice, i.e. the business of law. AILA should also continue to educate foreign nationals to seek out quality legal representation instead of notarios.

I have been told that when I speak people want to listen and hear what I have to say. However, a leader does not successfully lead by making unbridled decisions and I seek to build consensus in support of my position. A successful leader must be able to listen to various opinions, explain his position, and encourage those around him to believe in the final decision and to work together for the common good. That being said, I am not afraid to stand my position when I think it is right and will not bow to undue pressure.

Thank you for your time, consideration and support. If you have any questions, concerns or comments, I am more than happy to discuss them with you. Please feel free to call me at (561) 478-5353 or email me at [jdevore@devorelawgroup.com](mailto:jdevore@devorelawgroup.com). I can also be reached on my cell phone at (561) 373-8795.