Sarah Peterson Stensrud Candidate for AILA Board of Governors



Dear Colleagues,

I am honored to be nominated by the AILA Nominating Committee to the slate of Candidates for the AILA Board of Governors. I am running for the AILA Board of Governors because I am committed to furthering the efficacy and relevance of AILA.

I. Background

Over the past six years, I have actively participated in AILA on a national and local level. My activities include:

- Nebraska Service Center (NSC) Liaison Committee, I-140 product line (2010-present)
- AILA National Election Judge (2010)
- Immediate Past Chair, Minnesota/Dakotas Chapter (2010-11)
- AILA Board of Governors, Chapter Chair member (2009-10)
- Chair, Minnesota/Dakotas Chapter (2009-10)
- Vice Chair, Minnesota/Dakotas Chapter (2008-09)
- Treasurer, Minnesota/Dakotas Chapter (2007-08)

I was honored to speak at the AILA National Conference in San Diego (2011) and will speak at the upcoming conference in Nashville (2012). In 2010 I was asked to speak on a panel of Chapter Chairs at the AILA Leadership Training. I have spoken at the Upper Midwest Immigration Conference (2010, 2011) as well as other AILA and non-AILA events (see, http://www.aronsonimmigration.com/our-firm-peterson.htm).

I practice employment-based immigration law. I work with corporations, universities, and foreign nationals including international medical graduates. My practice includes non-immigrant and immigrant benefits, consular processing, I-9 compliance and audits, Labor Certification Applications, National Interest Waivers and priority worker petitions. Being from the Midwest I would bring greater geographic diversity to the Board. And on a purely personal note, I am a devoted runner and am always out early during AILA conferences if you ever care to join me!

II. Ideas to improve AILAs services and relevance

AILA is an incredible organization - both on a chapter and national level, the amount of collaboration among Attorneys is astonishing! However, transparency is essential for the success of any organization. For an organization of its size, spanning three diverse practice areas (Family, Business and Litigation), clearly defining and conveying the activities of the organization is critical. What follows are simple ideas to promote member satisfaction through organizational transparency:

- Update the website homepage to a more user-friendly format. Although AILA's website contains a wealth of information, it is not always easy to find.
- Require the Board of Governors to quarterly solicit ideas from members in their region via email or teleconferences to open lines of communication and invite members to participate through a less formal setting than a Board of Governors meeting.
- Introduce the Board of Governors at the AILA National Conference opening assembly to provide increased face recognition and better accountability.
- Require Board members to identify and measure annual goals.

During my term as Chapter Chair I received numerous calls from members inquiring how to contact our local USCIS Office. After some thought, I recommended to our Chapter Chair group that AILA compile a list of local USCIS Office contact information using the Chapter resources. It was a creative solution to help membership easily and effectively locate local USCIS Office contact information rather than work through local Chapter Chairs. I was thrilled when AILA leadership collaborated with Chapter Chairs and produced a document containing local USCIS Office contact information (AILA InfoNet Doc. No. 10062490). I believe we can take this resource one step further by creating this document in a wiki format so that rather than be a static document with outdated information, our membership can update information as required so that we have real-time access to the current USCIS Office contact information.

These are a few ideas that might make members feel more connected and invested in the success of the organization. I am eager to speak with you to learn your creative ideas to help make AILA more accessible and relevant to your practice.

III. AILAs role in the Policy Debate

Increased member participation in advocacy is AILA's primary strategic goal. Yet defining our "bumper sticker" to advance constructive immigration policy reform continues to be a major challenge. This is not in any way a criticism of the enormous efforts made by so many within the organization; it is rather recognition that a group the size of AILA has significant difficulties in agreeing upon collective Advocacy objectives.

A solution could be creating working subgroups in the Board of Governors around our membership's three main practice areas: Family, Business and Litigation. Although AILA has working committees, structuring the Board of Governors into the three specific practice area subgroups might help the Board of Governors more productively use the time during the quarterly Board of Governors meeting. For example, the Business subgroup could reach out to their regional constituents to solicit objectives and vet topics before the Board of Governors meeting. The other subgroups can do the same. These subgroups, while adding a layer to the Board of Governors, would encourage Board of Governors members to come to meetings prepared to achieve a current and grassroots based policy agenda.

IV. Summary

I am excited to serve you through a term on the Board of Governors and am happy to answer any further questions that you have regarding my candidacy. Below please find a list of AILA members who are publicly supporting my candidacy.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Peterson Stensrud

612/455-1166

sstensrud@aronsonimmigration.com

List of AILA Endorsers

D . M. 10 1 . C . 1:C .	
Bernie Wolfsdorf, California	Sam Myers, Minnesota
AILA Past President	AILA Past President
Pamela Mick, Illinois	Anthony Drago, Massachusetts
DOL Liaison Committee	Director, AILA Board of Governors
Michelle Funk, Washington, D.C.	Kristen Harris, Illinois
Past Chair, Washington, D.C. Chapter	
Michael Nowlan, Michigan	Brenda Oliver, Washington, D.C.
Chair, AILA Business Committee	Chair, Washington, D.C. Chapter
Eli Maroko, Michigan	Carl Shusterman, California
Past Chair, Michigan Chapter	Past Director, AILA Board of Governors
Nathan Waxman, New York	Khorzad Mehta, Washington, D.C.
Robert Cohen, Ohio	Rita Sostrin, California
Vice Chair, American Immigration Council	Chair, California Service Center Liaison Committee
Greg Siskind, Tennessee	Elise Fialkowski, Pennsylvania
Director, AILA Board of Governors	Past Chair, Philadelphia Chapter
Dan Berger, Massachusetts	Roberta Freedman, Washington, D.C.
Editor-in-Chief, Immigration Options for	Past Director, AILA Board of Governors
Academics & Researcher	
Ellen Freeman, Pennsylvania	Jerry Grzeca, Wisconsin
Past Chair, Pittsburgh Chapter	Past Director, AILA Board of Governors
Paul Samartin, London	Elizabeth Quinn, Washington, D.C.
Scott Borene, Minnesota	Jennifer Minear, Virginia
Past Director, AILA Board of Governors	Chair, AILA Healthcare Prof/Physicians Committee
Paschal Nwokocha, Minnesota	Robert Aronson, Minnesota
Past Chair, MN/DAK Chapter	Past Chair, MN/DAK Chapter
Loan Huynh, Minnesota	DeAnne Hilgers, Minnesota
Past Chair, MN/DAK Chapter	Past Chair, MN/DAK Chapter
Craig Peterson, Minnesota	Chris Wendt, Minnesota
Jacqui Bucar, Connecticut	Robert Webber, Minnesota
Gretel M. Ness, Oregon	Roger Tsai, Utah
NSC AILA Liaison Committee	Past Chair, Utah Chapter

SARAH PETERSON STENSRUD

CANDIDATE FOR AILA BOARD OF GOVERNORS



I am honored to be nominated by the AILA Nominating Committee to the slate of Candidates for the AILA Board of Governors. I am running for the AILA Board of Governors because I am committed to furthering the efficacy and relevance of AILA.

"Sarah will bring energy, thoughtful insight and passion to the Board of Governors. One of our responsibilities in selecting candidates for the Board of Governors is to groom the next generation of AILA leaders which is why I fully support her candidacy."

- Bernie Wolfsdorf, Recent Past AILA President

"I wholeheartedly endorse Sarah's election to a directorship of AILA's Board of Governors. She is one of the very best lawyers practicing immigration law in the Midwest, an important geographic area of our country where AILA's Board needs to retain significant representation.

She has tirelessly served our chapter for years, ultimately as our Chapter Chair. She currently serves our members in the difficult and thankless position of the Nebraska Service Center Liaison Committee, focusing on the challenges associated with I-140s. In these times, handling members' problems with NSC I-140 issues is very difficult and important to our members.

She will be an excellent director, if elected. She has great energy, a keen insight into the value of AILA to small-firm practitioners and has pledged to carry these issues forward on the board if elected. From her statement, you can see that she has very specific and clearly articulated ideas how AILA can improve. I strongly recommend that you vote for her."

Sam Myers,Past President, AILA

Ideas to Improve Transparency

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AILA Service

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- Treasurer, Minnesota/Dakotas Chapter (2007-08)

Commitment

I will work tirelessly to serve you through a term on the Board of Governors and am happy to answer any further questions that you have regarding my candidacy. Thank you for your support.

Sarah Peterson Stensrud 612/455-1166

Please read my full campaign statement on AILA National's Election Page

VOTE May 4-June 14

List of AILA Endorsements

Bernie Wolfsdorf, California AILA Recent Past President

Sam Myers, Minnesota AILA Past President

Pamela Mick, Illinois DOL Liaison Committee

Anthony Drago, Massachusetts Director, AILA Board of Governors

Michelle Funk, Washington, D.C. Past Chair, Washington, D.C. Chapter

Michael Nowlan, Michigan Chair, AILA Business Committee

Eli Maroko, Michigan Past Chair, Michigan Chapter

Brenda Oliver, Washington, D.C. Chair, Washington, D.C. Chapter

Greg Siskind, Tennessee Director, AILA Board of Governors

Ellen Freeman, Pittsburgh Chair, Pittsburgh Chapter

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Loan Huynh, Minnesota Past Chair, MN/DAK Chapter

Elise Fialkowski, Pennsylvania Past Chair, Philadelphia Chapter

Jerry Grzeca, Wisconsin Past Director, AILA Board of Governors

Robert Aronson, Minnesota Past Chair, MN/DAK Chapter DeAnne Hilgers, Minnesota Past Chair, MN/DAK Chapter

Carl Shusterman, California Past Director, AILA Board of Governors

Rita Sostrin, California Chair, California Service Center Liaison Committee

Roberta Freedman, Washington, D.C., Past Director, AILA Board of Governors

Dan Berger, Massachusetts Editor-in-Chief, Immigration Options for Academics & Researcher

Gretel Ness, Oregon NSC AILA Liaison Committee

Jacqui Bucar, Connecticut

Robert Cohen, Ohio Vice Chair, American Immigration Council

Roger Tsai, Utah Past Chair, Utah Chapter

Craig Peterson, Minnesota

Kristen Harris, Illinois

Nathan Waxman, New York

Khorzad Mehta, Washington, D.C.

Paul Samartin, London

Elizabeth Quinn, Washington,

Jennifer Minear, Virginia, Chair, AILA Healthcare Prof/ Physicians Committee

Chris Wendt, Minnesota

Robert Webber, Minnesota