

AILA Board of Governors Campaign Statement

I am honored to have been nominated to the AILA Board of Governors and am appreciative of this opportunity to explain why I am running and what I hope to accomplish if you elect me to serve you.

I believe one of AILA's most significant current challenges is the spread of anti-immigration politics that, in the absence of comprehensive immigration reform, is resulting in the shift of immigration enforcement and compliance issues onto agencies and institutions ill-equipped and ill-educated to bear this burden (e.g., state Departments of Motor Vehicles, local law enforcement agencies) and that drive the agencies that *are* properly charged with immigration adjudication and enforcement (USCIS, DOL, DOS, ICE, CBP) to adopt increasingly restrictive and often *ultra vires* approaches to implementing the law.

AILA is already doing a superlative job in pushing for legislative change and advocacy through Congress. However, I believe the organization could do more to meet the challenges our members and their clients are facing at the *state and local* level. AILA must build upon its already well established liaison and advocacy efforts to develop innovative strategies that coordinate and inspire the membership to form contacts and open dialogue with state and local-oriented agencies to which immigration enforcement has been delegated; and help educate local/state agencies, the media and the public at large about immigration issues.

As just one example of this kind of enhanced grass roots coordination between AILA national and its local chapters, AILA could work in coordination with its State Agencies Liaison Committee and various Chapter Chairs to develop and maintain a database of immigration contacts at the state Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) offices so that members would be able to draw upon this resource when resolving issues of driver's license eligibility for clients. Making this kind of local information nationally accessible would be of tremendous benefit to our membership who represent clients all over the country but may not otherwise be able to assemble key pieces of state-specific information that can mean the difference between their clients waiting days, or weeks, to drive legally. As part of this effort, AILA could also disseminate links to the various DMV website information sources outlining what documentation a given state will accept as evidence of 'lawful presence' for purposes of issuing a driver's license and/or develop a 'wiki' where members could post updated information regarding changes in DMV policy in real time.

Further, designated AILA members within each chapter could reach out to the contacts at the various DMV offices and other state/local agencies that have been tasked with managing immigration enforcement issues. In my experience, these state agencies are anxious to do the right thing but comprehending our nation's complex immigration laws is difficult work even for experts, much less underfunded state agencies whose primary purpose is wholly unrelated to immigration enforcement. By volunteering to serve as a resource to state agencies like DMVs that have been delegated immigration-related duties

outside the scope of their expertise, AILA can build cooperative partnerships that will defuse tensions and, more importantly, lead to real results for our clients at the local level where they live.

The various federal and state agencies charged with immigration adjudication and enforcement seem to have adopted a particularly adversarial tone toward the immigration bar in recent years that makes it more important than ever that AILA advocate zealously for the interests of its members and their clients while continuing to forge positive coalitions between the various agencies, the bar and the public that mitigate tensions and spark constructive dialogue and debate. I would like to be a bigger part of setting the AILA agenda to make that happen.

I believe my prior service to AILA and other immigration-oriented organizations demonstrates my commitment to serving AILA and its membership. My recent contributions to AILA include the following:

- 2009 – present: *AILA Healthcare Professionals Committee Member*. In this role, I served on the planning committee for AILA’s October 2009 CLE Seminar on Physician Immigration. I also served as Discussion Leader for the J-1 waiver panel of that seminar. More recently, I have been involved in planning AILA’s response to the recent USCIS shift in policy with regard to the adjudication of cap exempt H-1B petitions.
- 2009. *AILA National Conference Speaker*. I served as Discussion Leader at the 2009 AILA National Conference in Las Vegas on the topic of J-1 clinical waivers for physicians. In that capacity, I also co-authored and edited an article for AILA’s Immigration & Nationality Law Handbook entitled “*Clinical J-1 Waivers: A Primer*.”
- 2009. *AILA Publications Author*. I authored an article for AILA’s third edition of “Immigration Options for Physicians” entitled “*Getting the Green Card on the Five Year Plan: National Interest Waivers for Clinical Physicians*.”
- 2011. *AILA CLE Speaker*. In February of this year, I participated as a speaker on AILA’S CLE on hiring and credentialing foreign medical graduates.

In addition to my work directly with AILA, I have also been involved with other organizations -- the International Medical Graduate Taskforce (IMG Taskforce) and ILW.com -- that I believe reflect positively upon my ability to provide leadership as part of the AILA Board of Governors. I have volunteered as a speaker on numerous ILW.com CLE seminars, including, most recently, ILW.com’s “Physician Immigration for Experts” series in both 2010 and 2011. As Discussion Leader for the 2010 series, I developed the curriculum for this three-part CLE series, selected the speakers and coordinated/lead the discussion for each of the three panels. I am also the author of an

article on green card options for physicians to be published in a forthcoming (2011) ILW book.

Perhaps more significantly, I chair the Government Agency Liaison Committee of the IMG Taskforce, a group of immigration practitioners and medical professionals committed to easing the immigration process for IMGs and ensuring improved access to healthcare in the nation's rural and medically underserved communities. As Chair of the Government Liaison Committee, I have worked with USCIS, DOS, AILA and the USCIS Ombudsman's office to resolve a series of issues, including the current inconsistent adjudications with regard to H-1B cap exemption; the eligibility of medical specialists for the National Interest Waiver physician category under INA §203(b)(2)(B)(ii); typographical errors and omissions appearing on Department of State J-1 waiver recommendation letters; medical licensure issues for IMGs; the Neufeld Memo, etc. This work has provided me with valuable experience in diagnosing and addressing various problems of importance to AILA members that I believe better equips me to understand and fulfill member needs as part of the Board of Governors.

I would bring an energy, enthusiasm and commitment to the Board of Governors that is informed by my prior experiences both within and outside AILA as a dedicated advocate and bridge-builder. I thank you for your time and hope I can count on your support.

Jennifer Minear