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# ALIMOHAMMAD & ZAFAR, PLLC

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January 3, 2017

Joe Escobedo  
Chair, State Bar of Texas Board of Directors  
Via e-mail

Re: Nomination for Chair of the Board of Directors for the State Bar of Texas

Dear Mr. Chair:

Pursuant to Section 1.11.02 of the State Bar Board Policy Manual, I respectfully submit this statement to notify you of my intent to seek the Chair position for the 2017-2018 year. I am submitting this statement of position of my views and strategies relative to the issues I believe are of greatest significance to the Board and the State Bar, in the context of the Strategic Plan.

## The Standard of Legal Practice

In our statement of purpose regarding "Service to the Public," the State Bar aims to help lawyers provide the highest quality of legal and community service. With the number of our members at around 100,000 attorneys, and the difficulty that most new lawyers, including those that are less than 5 years in practice, are facing in finding a job, we have both a problem and an opportunity.

Many of the new lawyers are either bound to staying in document review assignments for many years, while many more are starting their own practices without the experience needed to navigate new practice areas, or the awareness of how to run a successful practice. When this happens, the standard of legal practice declines and the the public is negatively affected.

This also presents an opportunity where seasoned lawyers can positively influence the new generation of lawyers and have a great impact on the public, and incubators like the Texas Opportunity and Justice Incubator ("TOJI") can help low and modest-income citizens while teaching the lawyers how to run a practice.

In 2003, I was attempting to get into a new practice of law, transitioning from tax law to immigration law. If not for the luck of running into a lawyer who had more than 30 years in the practice of immigration law saying "Rehan, do it yourself...If you come across an issue you don't understand, I'll help you," I would not be where I am today. I also had a former Immigration Judge mentor me as well. There are many who help, and some that do not feel they should or feel that there will be more competition. I have helped many new lawyers in their practice and feel so strongly about mentoring that I wrote a blog on the state bar blog, see <http://blog.texasbar.com/2016/03/articles/ethics/is-mentoring-required-by-the-rules-of-professional-conduct/>.

## Protection of the Public and Access to Justice

By helping new lawyers and raising the standard of the practice of law, we can also help more people through community service and free high quality legal information. When I started my practice in

2003, I wrote a weekly article on legal topics in the community paper and appeared weekly on a community radio station answering legal questions in the field of immigration law. I wrote over 300 legal articles and answered thousands of legal questions at no charge. In 2009-2012, as the Chair for the Legal Board in the Ismaili Muslim community, I was able to tap into the many lawyers with varying years of experience, across the state that had never volunteered before. Through free legal seminars and wills workshops, we executed 1,000 wills across the state of Texas at no charge. Mother Theresa once said "Together we can do great things." In doing this, we can also ensure access to justice for all and protect the public.

As a frequent speaker, I have given over 200 free legal seminars on immigration and tax law to the public and bar associations to ensure that the public and attorneys can identify key areas where mistakes are frequently made.

In the scope of protecting the public, the Sunset Advisory Commission recommended many changes in regards to attorney disciplinary actions, and the grievance system. As a member of the Discipline and Client Attorney Assistance Committee, this is an important function, vital to maintaining our self-regulation.

#### Service to Our Members

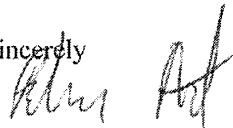
One of our goals is to "facilitate the use of state bar services by Texas lawyers." I have been a member of the bar since 2001 and honestly did not know about all the services we provide to our members, until I was preparing to give my first presentation on State Bar services to the Katy Bar Association. I had to check with Pat Nester and ask him "Really, we give free CLE to anyone if they ask?" After the presentation, many said that they did not know about all of the services we provide, but they now would take advantage.

I also have encouraged the first year board members to give a presentation and offered to come to their city to assist and shared the presentation with my notes. I have scheduled to do another presentation and have pulled in two more directors for a presentation in March. The first step to helping someone is always awareness that there is such a service available.

Another goal under service to our members, is working to increase diversity and inclusion among members of the Bar. As a minority director and a lawyer who works in the field of immigration law in the most diverse county in the United States, Fort Bend County, I understand the importance of diversity. As a member of the Texas Minority Counsel Program ("TMCP") Steering Committee, I earned a Rookie of the Year award. The TMCP is a client development, networking, and CLE event for diverse attorneys in Texas. I also served on the committee and as speaker for the Texas Minority Attorney Program in Houston. Currently leading the Diversity Action Team for the Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce, I have given several presentations on the importance of diversity for businesses and boards. As the only Asian member of the Board and the only immigration practitioner, I appreciate the respect I have been given by my fellow Board members, and I will work to be responsive and ensure everyone's voice is heard if I am given the opportunity.

I respectfully seek nomination for service as Chair of the Board. My CV is attached for your consideration. Thank you.

Sincerely



Rehan Alimohammad

**Rehan Alimohammad**  
77 Sugar Creek Center Blvd., #401  
Sugar Land, TX 77478  
281-340-2074  
Rehan@aandzlegal.com

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**Bar Participation:**

- **2015-Present Minority Director for the State Bar of Texas:** Serve on the Executive Committee, Discipline and Client Attorney Assistance Committee, Committee Review Task Force, Board Liaison for the Immigration Section and the Laws Relating to Immigration and Nationality Committee. Steering Committee Member for the Texas Minority Counsel Program and Texas Minority Attorney Program for 2016
- **2014-Present Member of Board of Directors for the Katy Bar Association:** Current Vice President, Serve on the Scholarship Committee, assisting to identify worthy recipients from local schools for college scholarships given by the association. Presented seminar on Immigration law for Non-Lawyers, and seminar on Services Provided by the State Bar
- **2012-Present Member of Fort Bend County Bar Association:** Presented seminar on Immigration Consequences of Criminal Convictions. Assisted at Legal Clinics and Legal lines for Fort Bend Lawyers Care
- **2012-Present Member of the Houston Bar Association:** Serve on the Subcommittees for Professionalism, Speakers Bureau, Minority Opportunities in the Legal Profession, and Communities in Schools. Presented seminar on Tax Settlements with the IRS
- **2003-Present Member of American Immigration Lawyers Association:** Presented seminar on Advanced Issues on L-1 Intercompany Visas
- **2013-2016 Member of the Texas State Bar Committee on Laws Relating to Immigration and Nationality:** Study and discussion of current laws and policies of U.S. immigration law and how best to educate the public and the state bar regarding trends and new policies

**Community Service:**

- **2014-Present Legal Counsel, Board Member, Head of Diversity Action Team, Member of Executive Committee for the Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce:** Reviewed bylaws and other corporate documents to assist the Chamber in achieving a 5 star accreditation from U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- **2003-Present Pro Bono cases for YMCA International Services, Catholic Charities, University of Houston Legal Clinic, Houston Volunteer Lawyers Program, DAYA:** Removal/Deportation, divorce, declaratory judgment cases for indigent members of the community on behalf of the non-profit organizations
- **2003-Present Seminars on Immigration and Tax Law:** Gave over 200 seminars on current and changes in the law for various organizations throughout Texas at no cost
- **2005-2014 Legal Articles in the Pakistan Chronicle:** Wrote over 300 weekly articles on current and changes in the law in immigration, tax, and family law in community paper that serves the South Asian Community throughout Texas
- **2003-2014 Appearances on 1460 AM Radio in Houston, Texas:** Weekly and bi-weekly updates on changes in immigration law and answering legal

questions on immigration and tax law from the South Asian Community in Houston

- **2014-2015 Member of National Immigration Task Force for the Ismaili Muslim Community:** Advise, draft announcements, prepare and deliver presentations to members regarding any changes in immigration laws or policies
- **2013-2015 Member of National Resettlement Project Team for the Ismaili Muslim Community:** Advise volunteer case workers over conference calls or via presentations on U.S. immigration law as it applies to individual cases
- **2011-2012 Legal Counsel for Houston Asian Junior Chamber of Commerce:** Served as legal counsel for the Board, reviewed all contracts entered into by the Chamber, organized will seminar and workshop providing wills for 100 individuals in the Asian Community at no cost
- **2009-2012 Head of Legal Matters Portfolio Board for the Southwest Region of the Ismaili Muslim Community:** Served as legal counsel for the Southwest Council, supervised large team of attorneys, oversaw the review of all contracts entered into by the council, organized and gave legal seminars on immigration and tax law to members in 4 different states, organized will seminars and workshops throughout Texas providing wills for 1000 individuals at no cost from 2009-2012

**Awards/  
Recognitions:**

- 2013-2015 Named to Top Lawyers of Houston for Immigration Law by Houstonia Magazine
- 2012-2014 10.0 Superb Rating on Avvo
- 2011 Recipient of Five Outstanding Young Texans Award by Texas Junior Chamber of Commerce
- 2005-2007 Pro Bono College of Texas

**Work Experience:**  
7/12-Present

**Alimohammad & Zafar, PLLC**  
Partner

Sugar Land, TX

- Partner in 4 attorney firm in charge of all matters in Immigration, Tax, and Family Law

3/2003 – 6/2012

**Rehan Alimohammad, PC**  
President

Sugar Land, Dallas TX

- Handled all matters in Immigration, Tax, and Family Law
- Trained 225 Attorneys, CPA's, and Enrolled Agents regarding communication with and preparation of documentation for Revenue Officers, Revenue Agents, Audit Examinations, Audit reconsideration, Appeals, Offers in Compromise, and Penalty Abatement Requests

9/2001 – 3/2003

**PricewaterhouseCoopers**  
Tax Consultant

Houston, TX

- Developed solutions to tax and accounting questions raised by clients leading to successful international and domestic structuring and direct tax savings

**Education:**

**The University of Houston Law Center**  
Doctor of Jurisprudence

May 2001

- Research and writing for use in several publications by Immigration Law Professor Michael Olivas

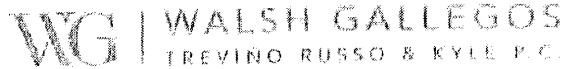
**The University of Texas at Austin**  
Bachelor of Business Administration  
Major: Accounting

May 1996

**Licenses:**

- **2001-Present: Bar License for State of Texas**
- **1998-Present: CPA License for State of Texas**





January 6, 2017

*Via Electronic Mail*

Mr. Joe Escobedo  
Chair, State Bar of Texas Board of Directors  
3700 N. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 210  
McAllen, Texas 78501

*Re: Nomination for Chair of the Board of Directors of the State Bar of Texas*

Dear Chair Escobedo:

I am respectfully submitting my nomination for the 2017-2018 Chair of the Board of Directors of the State Bar of Texas. Pursuant to Section 1.11.03 of the State Bar Board Policy Manual, I am presenting this statement of position setting out my views and strategies related to the issues that I believe will be of greatest significance to the Board and the State Bar, including those set forth in the State Bar of Texas Strategic Plan. It would be my privilege to serve as the Chair of the Board of Directors as it implements the strategies of the Board in true servant leadership.

The first half of my term as a Director has been a humbling honor, as I first carefully examined the facets of the State Bar from my perspective as a new Director, the interplay between the State Bar's administration and leadership, and the opportunities for further dialogue with regard to the issues presented by the profession we hold dear. I accepted and have enjoyed active participation in the Committee Review Task Force, working to complete the biannual review of the committees of the State Bar, and the Nominations and Elections Committee, diligently working to foster and support the honor of servant leadership. In my experience, the work of the Board of Directors is compelling, and its leaders, truly inspiring. The State Bar works to provide a dialogue to address crucial issues, including access to justice, educational opportunities for the youth of the community, diversity in the profession, numerous benefits to its members and our community, and professionalism in the honor of service. The leadership, the State Bar, and its members provide this voice, and seek innovative means to address these issues.

An element of great significance to the Board and the State Bar includes innovation in the post-Sunset Review and legislative session implementation of changes. The Sunset Review has not been one without controversy and challenges. I believe that the leadership of the State Bar has a unique opportunity to address the issues presented with an open dialogue. Such dialogue invites voices, ideas, opportunities for enabling deeper discussions and greater exploration of opportunities. With crucial conversations throughout the State Bar's members, its leadership, and the public the profession serves, the door can be opened in new, innovative ways.

Protection of the public is a key element included in the Strategic Plan and Sunset Review. The review, consideration, and supportive evolution of the State Bar's work to protect the public through its regulation of the conduct of its members and by promoting the



high ethical standards and professionalism is the foundation of the next steps as the improvements are implemented, including those to the disciplinary system.

The State Bar's Strategic Plan includes the elements of: (1) sound administration and resources; and (2) financial management. The goals range from goals of enhancement of training and mentoring of the State Bar staff, to the emphasis on review of communication tools (electronic, paper, and in person), to the inter-related goals of diversity and further stretching through the comfort zone to improve and adapt methods of communication. These fold into sound financial management of the resources as key and observed by state agencies and by similarly situated bar associations. As the membership grows, entering six digits, these core elements build the foundation for the State Bar to meet its goals.

Service to the State Bar's members, providing superior services, including resources, opportunities, and benefits, is another element of the Strategic Plan. The resources and commitments are vast. The implementation and communication to reach the members, to enhance the services, is key. The evolving technological and business environment requires us to reach out for new, innovative support tools, including social media. The service to the members is interrelated to the service to the public, as the focus on diversity and inclusion, including publication of the services, is important to the community.

Service to the public includes working for equitable access and participation in all aspects of the justice system by diverse groups. Access to justice has taken leaps in positive, multiple directions over the years since I became licensed. We are at the dawn of the Texas Opportunity and Justice Incubator program, offering further access. The Legal Access Division has flourished. And yet we still have an overwhelming gap in service. We remain in need of services for those in need. Women, children, those with illness, those with financial impediments, and all facets of our community are impacted by such need. We have committed to serve our entire community, including all in need. Our time, our financial resources, our commitment to voice concerns on behalf of those without a voice, is required.

Service to the public also includes service to the youth of the State. Core critical issues throughout the state impact the youth. The issues of diversity within the profession and access to justice are two of the issues. We continue to examine means to access and serve the youth, to further diversity in the profession, and to educate the youth as to the honor of justice. It is with the knowledge of the benefits of the rule of law that the youth can access and be connected to their participation in the benefits of a diverse and accessible system of justice. Reaching the law schools, but also reaching the students through K-12 programs, is a key strategy for increasing the inclusion and supporting the community.

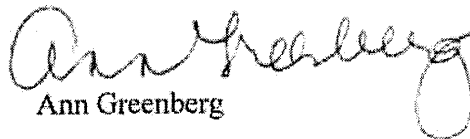
I had the honor of identifying and facilitating a recent, innovative opportunity between members of two committees of the State Bar. Through active dialogue among the Jury Service Committee and the Law Related Education Committee, we recently identified an opportunity to further efforts to honor our jury service into the educational framework of

Mr. Joe Escobedo, Chair  
State Bar of Texas Board of Directors  
January 6, 2017  
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the Law Related Education Committee, furthering the efforts to reach our youth in a positive, constructive, educational manner, with the hope of inspiring future interest in the rule of law, the honor of our service, and the justice that must be accessible to all. The focus of this new outreach program will be elementary school children, folding in the social studies, government, history, and current aspects of their curriculum. The State Bar has long implemented programs serving high school students entering into the riches of participation in the rule of law as adults. The jury service programs, working with government, social studies and history teachers to foster an appreciation for the opportunity to have a jury of peers, has served the community well. Further evolution to reach the youth and the public as a whole in a variety of means of communication, including social media, are important elements of our service to the community.

It would be my honor to serve to implement the views and strategies of the State Bar, through dialogue and communication, through multiple platforms as the Chair of the Board of Directors. As the Chair, I would utilize my years of law practice representing governmental entities, which includes experience with the Open Meetings Act, Public Information Act, and other unique government requirements, to facilitate the crucial conversations, open dialogue, and meaningful actions of the Board of Directors. For all of these reasons, I respectfully submit my nomination for service as the Chair of the Board of Directors of the State Bar of Texas for the 2017-2018 year.

Best wishes,



Ann Greenberg

cc: *Via Electronic Mail: [fstevenson@lockelord.com](mailto:fstevenson@lockelord.com)*  
Mr. Frank Stevenson, President  
STATE BAR OF TEXAS

*Via Electronic Mail: [tvick@vickcarneylaw.com](mailto:tvick@vickcarneylaw.com)*  
Mr. Tom Vick, President-Elect  
STATE BAR OF TEXAS



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**GARY L. NICKELSON**

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FAMILY LAW SPECIALISTS  
FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY  
OF MATRIMONIAL LAWYERS  
FELLOW OF THE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY  
OF MATRIMONIAL LAWYERS  
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**CHRIS NICKELSON**

BOARD CERTIFIED CIVIL APPELLATE LAW  
TEXAS BOARD OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION

**NORMA A. BAZAN**

MEMBER COLLEGE OF THE STATE BAR  
OF TEXAS

December 30, 2016

Mr. Jose "Joe" Escobedo, Jr.  
Escobedo & Cardenas, L.L.P.  
3700 N. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Ste. 210  
McAllen, Texas 78501

Re: Nomination for Chair of the Board of Directors of the State Bar of  
Texas 2016-2017

Dear Mr. Escobedo:

I would like to be nominated for the 2016-2017 Chair of the Board of Directors of the State Bar of Texas. Pursuant to the Policy Manual, I am presenting my views and strategies relative to the issues of greatest significance to the Board and the Bar.

Being a Director for the past four and one-half years has given me an eye-opening view to the State Bar, the amazing people within the organization, and the public perception about the Bar. My first three years as a Director was as a section representative to the Board. I was so impressed by the Bar Board and its good works I ran and was elected to a three year term. I am proud to say I am now the Director of District 7 and an active member of the State Bar of Texas.

I have always been surprised about how attorneys view the State Bar. First, they are suspicious of the State Bar and paranoid about the entire organization. Second, they view the State Bar as non-friendly to their practices and third, they do not view the State Bar as being helpful to their practices. While these misconceptions are usually because they have never been involved in State Bar work, these feelings exist. I believe it would serve us to do a better job educating our members about Bar programs and all the benefits of Bar membership.

One of the most pressing issues today facing the State Bar is how to address indigent and self-represented litigants. We have pledged to ensure justice for all. However, there is still a significant number of indigent litigants. These people need lawyers and legal help to get through the Court system as opposed to some promulgated forms. I whole heartedly endorse President Frank Stevenson's legal incubator project and believe we must offer as many "lawyer assisted

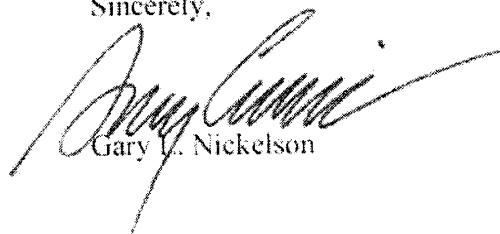
solutions” as we can. Further, on this issue the Bar could be a big impetus in getting the legislature to enact some “summary proceedings” to help indigent self-represented litigants be moved easily and guided through the Court system.

I am very proud to be a lawyer and a member of the State Bar. We as lawyers do a lot of good work for society; much of which goes unnoticed by the general public. The Bar should find ways to better publicize the good deeds and programs of the Bar like the client security fund. While we remain the butt of many jokes, our members are hard at work, dedicated to right wrongs and represent the oppressed.

The job of the Chair is to conduct the Board meetings in a fair, impartial way to get the maximum discussion on any meaningful issue. Further, to make sure every voice is heard. Everyone should have the opportunity to voice their opinion and to meaningfully participate in the discussions. We have many potentially volatile issues that may come before the Board in the upcoming bar year. The Chair should understand the issues and conduct the meetings in a cogent, organized manner. My decades of bar leadership on the local, state and national levels has prepared me to do just that. I believe I can accomplish these goals and I would be honored to be given the opportunity.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be honored and humbled to be elected Chair and serve with you, Frank Stevenson, Tom Vick, and the Board to advance our purpose and carry out our mission.

Sincerely,



Gary V. Nickelson

Cc: President Frank Stevenson  
President – Elect Tom Vick  
Executive Director Michele Hunter

January 5, 2017

Via Email

Joe Escobedo  
Chair, State Bar of Texas Board of Directors  
3700 N. 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Suite 210  
McAllen, TX 78501

*Re: Nomination for Chair of the Board of Directors of the State Bar of Texas*

Dear Chair Escobedo,

This letter is respectfully submitted in support of my nomination for Chair of the Board of Directors of the State Bar of Texas for 2017-2018. Pursuant to the Board's Practice Manual, Section 1.11.03, I offer this statement of "views and strategies relative to the issues of greatest significance to the Board and the State Bar."

In visiting with the constituents we represent – Texas attorneys – to learn what Bar issues they think are important, I observed widespread member apathy and heard a variety of misconceptions about our Bar. Quite a few of our members expressed that they choose to tune out the Bar altogether; these attorneys opt not to read our traditional media: the State Bar mailings, mass emails, and the Texas Bar Journal. Apathy, misconceptions, and misinformation about the Bar are serious issues that will not go away on their own. We can address these and other member satisfaction issues by incorporating non-traditional media into our long-term strategy.

A growing percentage of our members use social media. Just as there were significant changes in generations before us, more recent generations are more comfortable communicating electronically and online. No longer do singles meet their future spouse through a friend. Largely, they now find these through a website. They no longer pick up the phone to call a friend; many open their Facebook app instead. We can and should engage our membership in this new terrain.

As Texas Supreme Court Justice Don Willett advises, "It's political malpractice not to engage people smartly via social media." In an effort to engage Texas lawyers smartly, I created the "Texas Lawyers Group" on Facebook, a closed forum consisting of over 5,900 actively licensed attorneys, with more joining every day. I believe that this forum is a perfect medium whereby our State Bar leaders can engage our members across the state, all in plain view of other participating members. Through these kinds of interactions, we can expand, establish, or reestablish for the Bar a relationship of trust to build rapport with our members.

In addition to the referrals and practice management topics that pique the attention of the attorney audience, this forum is also a place where a representative cross-section of our Bar's members can read about or participate in discussions of "issues of significance to the Board and the State Bar" including: State Bar CLE, *pro bono* experiences, the access to justice gap, unauthorized practice of law, ethics, our new oath, e-filing, candidates for Bar leadership positions, encouraging members to vote in Bar elections, speakers at the Annual Meeting, the Texas Bar Private Insurance Exchange, the Texas Opportunity and Justice Incubator championed by current President Frank Stevenson, the gender gap, minority concerns, opportunities to volunteer for State Bar committees, recommendations to the Legislature by the Sunset Commission, and TYLA projects, to name a few. Inspired by Immediate Past President, Allan Dubois, we also converse about the Texas Lawyers Assistance Program (TLAP), alcohol abuse, addiction statistics, mental health, and other substance abuse issues. In this way, as such topics arise, attorneys can learn about Bar-related opportunities, issues, and programs – some for the very first time.

Discussions like these can help right misconceptions and misinformation about the Bar, and even help some who have been apathetic to the Bar become more interested or knowledgeable about our Bar's outstanding programs. By raising these topics where our members are – on social media – we can help our members feel more connected to the Bar and to the profession.

This Group is also a source of real-time information that can help the administrative wing of our Bar learn promptly about service outages or immediate problems; by the same token, our members hear sooner that reported issues are being addressed. For example, concerns about the inadvertent mass publication of private email addresses were reported and confirmed by members of the Group, communicated to our Bar, and resolved promptly – all on a Saturday afternoon.

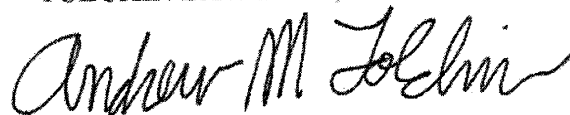
While I have chaired meetings in the formal sense, I also serve in a capacity much like a chair in "Texas Lawyers Group" – a modern day meeting of attorneys across the state that has now lasted several years. I serve in that leadership capacity in other social media forums too. For example, I collaborate with the Chair of the Military and Veterans Lawyers Section to manage a resource where attorneys can ask questions and get answers when helping current and former service members.

With respect to my views regarding the role of the Chair of our Board, I believe that our meetings should be run with respect, dignity, and neutrality. I will remain approachable and continue to reach out to listen to you for input, concerns, and ideas. I pledge to give close consideration to your stated preferences while working with incoming President, Tom Vick, to make committee assignments. I will also make a special effort to contact each first year Director by phone to open a dialogue, answer questions, and encourage participation.

For the above stated reasons, I respectfully submit this letter in support of my nomination for Chair of the Board of Directors.

Very truly yours,

TOLCHIN LAW FIRM, PLLC

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew M. Tolchin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "A".

Andrew M. Tolchin



