

Candidate Statement:

The National Association of Hispanic Journalists, just like the media industry, finds itself at a crossroad. In these times of changes, layoffs, mergers and overall uncertainty, it is important for journalists to feel reassured that there are professional groups out there that will advocate on their behalf.

NAHJ is one of those groups and I've been proud of the work and advocacy our organization has done over the years. As a board member, I have voted in favor of measures condemning mergers that could hurt Spanish-language media and government decisions that could limit internet access to information for minorities. I have also voted in favor of suspending from the Parity Project a newspaper company we believed had not taken diversity into consideration when laying off dozens of journalists. I want to stay on the board of directors to continue the advocacy members have come to expect out of the NAHJ board and staff.

It's clear, though, that the economic downturn has taken a toll in the donations and funding NAHJ had counted on for years as part of its budget. The organization finds itself in a tough budgetary situation and this comes at a time when it is imperative that we grow our training programs for students and professionals.

As vice president of print, and member of the executive committee of NAHJ, I vow to keep thinking of ways to streamline the budget in a way that will not affect the programming our members want and deserve. That means finding alternate avenues for funding, planning smarter and more affordable conferences and conventions and looking at current costs to identify spending that should be reconsidered. It's also clear that many members and potential members see NAHJ as an organization whose main purpose is to put together an annual convention, and that there are few other benefits to membership other than that event.

In the last three years I have pushed to make NAHJ more relevant to members throughout the country. With the help of other board members and the staff we have begun to establish more local programming in the form of regional conferences, local workshops and social mixers during board of directors meetings in different cities.

I hope to continue this push to make NAHJ an organization that has a presence not just in New York City and Washington, D.C., but also throughout the major metropolitan centers where our members are located.