

Candidate Statement:

My name is Israel Balderas and I would like to ask for your vote to serve on the NAHJ Board as a General At-Large Director. If elected, I will bring a different perspective and expertise to the organization.

I'm not only a veteran journalist, but I'm also an attorney. While I still make a career in the news business, my legal background and knowledge of communications law will help shed a light on regulatory matters such as media ownership and net neutrality that affect Latino journalists. I'm also passionate about First Amendment rights that often appear to be diminishing.

Over the last few years, I took a break during law school from being a member of NAHJ and joined the Hispanic National Bar Association. During that time period, while working as a segment/line producer at the FOX News Channel and FOX News Sunday, I also did legal and policy work for the Federal Communications Commission, a federal district judge and a communications law firm.

Upon graduation, faculty and students selected me as the 2006 student commencement speaker. If you recall what was happening on Capitol Hill at that time, the nation began to debate immigration policy. I used the occasion to speak out for comprehensive reform in our immigration system. With me on stage was Rep. Rick Renzi (R-AZ) who at that time was a voice of opposition.

I spoke about my grandfather's legacy and how this great country of ours gave an undocumented immigrant an opportunity to make a better life for his family. My grandpa was there and heard my speech in Spanish via an I-Pod. The title of my speech: "You Are The Indispensable Party To A Cause." Today, that applies to you as well.

One of my passions includes the expansion of educational opportunities for our community. As a Board of Visitors member for the Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law, I am currently working within the legal education community to increase Latino representation in the classroom and afterwards, law firms.

I believe there is a cause worth fighting for as we try to increase professional opportunities for Latinos, especially in media. More of us in the newsroom is the crucial step in getting everyone else educated about what we can do, how we can do it, and why it's important to do it. Of course, I'm talking about being leaders in our communities. I recently took this approach while working as anchor/reporter for KFOX-TV in El Paso, Texas.

I want to work with other NAHJ board members and continue to:

- 1) Strengthen our membership numbers;
- 2) Minimize the decrease of Latino representation in the newsroom while increasing new media training opportunities (well under way);

3) Use the organization's largeness to bring positive changes, both in law and policy, that helps Hispanics transition to a majority-minority citizenry.

Thank you for this consideration and your vote. I look forward to seeing a lot of you at the convention in Denver this June.