

Candidate Statement:

I have been a member of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists since 1988. I found my first newspaper job at the Dallas convention that year, and every job I've held since, I found through NAHJ.

Our organization is just as necessary today as it was then. Future journalists will also need jobs; midcareer professionals need support and skills to return to the newsroom if they've lost their jobs or to adapt and advance in the face of new challenges and demands.

Latinos are the fastest growing minority group and the fastest growing consumer group. Yet we remain invisible. Our best journalists and commentators are seldom seen on network or cable television news shows. We were never adequately represented in newsrooms and downsizing and layoffs have disproportionately eroded the few numbers we had. The rise of blogs and new media has changed little for us--we still have no presence on the most influential online sites. What's wrong with this picture?

At the same time, the mood in the country has turned nastily anti-Hispanic. "Illegal alien" is now synonymous with Hispanic, and there is little understanding that most of us are U.S. born and raised, sometimes for generations. Recent legislation passed in Arizona allowing police to request proof of status not only creates a discriminatory climate against Latinos, but there is growing interest in passing such laws in other states.

Latino journalists are needed as never before, not only to tell our stories fairly, but to demand that our stories be told--period. NAHJ is desperately needed to support our journalists not only through a bad job climate, but a poisonous political climate as well.

As our profession faces unprecedented challenges, NAHJ needs a strong leader to meet those challenges. Over the next two years I'd like to see NAHJ go beyond its fine training programs to:

- Empower every member to hold employers accountable for our share of jobs.
 - Hold news organizations accountable for the tone and accuracy of their coverage of Latinos, and empower our members to influence the report.
 - Insure that the best of our bloggers, writers and on air talent have visibility and a voice on national news shows and prominent online forums.
 - Provide support to those who have lost their jobs by offering skills training at the regional and chapter level through podcast or Skype, as well as career counseling, group health insurance and financial advice.
 - Develop new sources of funding, such as by turning the Parity Project into a revenue generator and establishing an NAHJ credit card.
 - Grow vital membership through chapters, expand the number of chapters, especially professional chapters, and identify and develop leadership within those groups to strengthen the national board.
 - Continue strong programming for Spanish language media reporters and editors.

- Establish the Council of Presidents to provide continuity and expertise and assist with fundraising.

If you believe in these goals, if you want to strengthen NAHJ to take on the important issues we face not only as journalists, but as Latinos, I hope you will support my candidacy. Together, we can use our power to gain the presence and respect we deserve.