

Candidate Statement for Helen Eby

NAJIT represents members as well as a larger body of interpreters and translators. It supports language access stakeholders in government and business. A search through the profiles of NAJIT members, 681 NAJIT members have items related to translation and 893 have items related to interpreting. This shows that NAJIT members are both interpreters and translators, they are involved in two key aspects of language access.

Because two thirds of our members translate, it is important to have a clear view of what is involved in translation and what is involved in interpreting. NAJIT published a paper describing the roles of interpreters and translators with the support of over 10 other professional associations. As a Board member, I would use that paper to guide NAJIT continuing education and advocacy for the profession.

NAJIT belongs to its members. Therefore, I support open and transparent practices in board meetings. I have recently been elected to be the incoming Vice Chair of the Oregon Council for Healthcare Interpreters. In that public body, we have had open and transparent practices with the people of Oregon at all levels, and public comment has always strengthened our practices. Today there is technology available for all Board meetings to be open to members for the entire duration of the meeting. Professional associations such as the Editorial Freelancers Association also have this practice and their members are engaged and support the Board in all its actions and work.

Members can participate in guiding the Board in important decisions through surveys and town hall meetings. When surveys are designed by people who have different points of view, and meetings are run by people with different interests, all members can be represented. Of course, the results of the survey and the conclusions of the meetings must be released promptly, hopefully within the month, since software helps do the heavy lifting. These processes build trust, engagement, and member participation.

Engaged members move organizations forward. NAJIT belongs to all its members, and all the members need the Board to hear from them on a regular basis, not just at election time.