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2024 NCEO Board Candidates & Statements

Howard L. Kaplan, Kaplan Fiduciary Group

My extensive experience and commitment to employee ownership make me a valuable candidate for a board position at the NCEO. My 20 years of financial support demonstrate a deep commitment to the NCEO's mission. My active attendance at events showcases my engagement and firsthand knowledge of the organization's activities. My extensive experience as a speaker at numerous events positions me as a thought leader and able to raise awareness, attract new members, and advance the NCEO's outreach efforts. My focus on improving board governance and fiduciary duties in ESOP-owned companies can contribute to the development of best practices and educational resources for ESOP companies. Using my strategic understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the field, I can be instrumental in guiding the NCEO's strategic direction and ensuring it remains at the forefront of employee ownership advocacy. My ability to foster collaboration can strengthen the NCEO's relationships with other organizations, businesses, and stakeholders.

Todd Leverette, Apis & Heritage

I am incredibly grateful to be nominated for a position on the board of the NCEO. I've been a member of the Board since 2022, and am thrilled at the prospect of continuing this work in service of the NCEO and its mission. Throughout my career, I have gained experience in various sectors of the business world and I currently hold the position of Co-Founding partner at Apis & Heritage Capital Partners. At A&H, our team is dedicated to expanding employee ownership and wealth-building opportunities for diverse workforces. My desire to continue serving on the board stems from my belief that as the NCEO grows stronger, so too do the companies that have chosen the path of employee ownership and the workers who build them.

Thank you again for the opportunity. I am eager to collaborate closely with all of you to create a better future.

Linshuang Lu, Praxis Consulting Group

I would be honored to continue serving on the National Center for Employee Ownership's Board of Directors. I have been active in the employee ownership community for nearly fifteen years, advising companies on how to strengthen their culture, leadership and strategy. I'm also a Core Faculty member in the University of Pennsylvania/Employee Ownership Foundation CEO Program and am on the Ownership Culture Committee of the ESOP Association.

I am excited to support the NCEO in a few ways: Providing thought partnership and guidance to the Board and staff as they continue to enhance their resources for supporting culture; helping with work funded under the NCEOX Inclusivity Fund; providing a culture and leadership service provider perspective; and promoting the NCEO's surveys, resources and membership. My knowledge of nonprofits, governance and facilitation can also contribute to effective board meetings and oversight.

Mike Mallaro, VGM Group

I've had the opportunity to be a CEO, a CFO and Board chair for an ESOP company. VGM Group, Inc., a 100% ESOP company with over 1,500 employee-owners. I was CEO of VGM for 8 years, and CFO of the Company for 14 years prior to becoming CEO. On 12/31/23, I transition out of the CEO role to a new role as Executive Chairman. In my new role I'll serve as board chair as well as working on strategic projects important to the company. I am a strong advocate for broad-based employee ownership. Our Company leads with employee-ownership both with our workforce as well as with our customer marketplace. Employee-ownership is embedded in the bloodstream of our company not only as a financial benefit and antidote to wealth-inequality, but also in terms of the emotional value of ownership in creating meaningfulness and fulfillment from work. I am passionate about advancing the benefits of employee ownership to more Americans. The NCEO plays a critical role in providing information around the power of employee ownership, including vitally important research and credible insights. My interests include advocating, informing, connecting and supporting related to the current and prospective employee-ownership community nationwide.

Kerry Siggins, StoneAge

The mission of the NCEO is to help employee ownership thrive, and I share this mission personally. I will contribute to this mission and the sustainability of the NCEO by sharing my expertise in running an ESOP, opening my network to the NCEO and its members, and advocating for the NCEO and employee-ownership at the State of Colorado and federal level. I speak and write about employee ownership regularly, helping educate founders and business owners about employee ownership options and benefits and will represent the NCEO professionally and passionately.