

# NARSOL, Vivante Espero directors gather for annual planning retreat

written by Robin Vander Wall | January 15, 2020



By Robin . . . The combined boards of **NARSOL** and [Vivante Espero](#) gathered together in Houston, Texas, for their fifth annual board retreat planning session January 10-12, 2020. Unlike the previous two retreats, which were dominated by exercises intended to increase organizational awareness and cohesiveness, the 2020 retreat was all about business and budgetary planning.

All ten directors were actively engaged in the business meetings for the duration of the retreat with additional support and assistance provided by the current chair of the nominating committee who was invited to join the boards as recording secretary.

As a special treat on Saturday evening, the directors visited **Sandy Rozek** at her home in Houston for dinner and fellowship. Sandy has faithfully served as corporate secretary for NARSOL

(intermittently) and Vivante Espero (continuously) for nearly nine years and continues to serve as director of communications.

Over the course of five retreats, NARSOL's membership and annual budgets have consistently increased. Consequently, necessary measures have been put in place to sustain this growth and prepare NARSOL for the challenges it will face in the future.

With growth comes greater responsibility to manage resources wisely and efficiently in the best interest of NARSOL's overall [vision and mission](#) which, lest anyone forget, is to eradicate dehumanizing registries and, in the meantime, fight for the constitutional rights of citizens affected by them.

NARSOL's board retreats are anything BUT relaxing with sessions beginning at 8:30 each morning and lasting well into the night, taking only hour-long breaks for meals in between. The pace is grueling, exhausting, and sometimes intense as directors don't always agree on important matters of discussion.

Still, as a national civil rights advocacy group lead by two boards of directors from eight different states, it's vital to NARSOL's long-term success that the directors meet face-to-face at least once a year in order to maintain the collegiality and professional cooperation that are hallmark principles of corporate governance.

From its inception as Reform Sex Offender Laws, NARSOL has maintained a culture of collegiality and diversity at its highest levels of governance. Before the adoption of corporate by-laws in 2011, important decisions were made by an administrative team that operated by consensus. This diffusion of power away from a single, dominant leader makes it possible to maintain a model of governance that allows for adaptation, resolution, and respectful compromise in the interest of

everyone, not just a few.

At this year's retreat, the combined boards enacted a new corporate policy enshrining 2-deep leadership as an operational goal for 2020 and beyond. In every area of critical operations—communications, marketing, volunteer management, technology, donor cultivation, membership growth, membership retention, legal projects, and affiliate development—the boards, in coordination with the director of volunteer management, will be actively seeking qualified individuals with the necessary skills and interest to begin shadowing current project leaders. Over time, this 2-deep policy will ensure a smooth transition of labor and responsibility to the next generation of NARSOL leadership.

None of NARSOL's efforts would be possible without the sacrifice of time and financial resources from the people who have invested in NARSOL's advocacy. Going forward, the boards of NARSOL and Vivante Espero will become more active in the areas of development, membership retention, and donor relations. If you are a member of NARSOL or a donor to either NARSOL or Vivante Espero, don't be surprised to hear from one of the directors by email or by phone just to let you know how much you are appreciated for what you do to make it all possible.

If you are not a member or donor, your interest in NARSOL's advocacy is greatly appreciated. Perhaps you will consider making 2020 a year of commitment and [join NARSOL](#) or [make a generous contribution](#) to Vivante Espero, NARSOL's foundation and legal fund. You should definitely consider joining advocates and members from all over the country at the [national conference](#) in Raleigh, North Carolina, June 11-14. You won't be disappointed if you do.