

# ESTEBAN KELLY

## CANDIDATE STATEMENT

I'm excited to be seeking re-election to the NCBA CLUSA board, building on a decade of service to this country's cross-sector cooperative movement's apex organization. As the Executive Director of the U.S. Federation of Worker Co-ops (USFWC), I connect NCBA to the worker co-op sector and to the momentum we've built through our networks and advocacy efforts at the grassroots. As a leader in what is currently the most rapidly growing co-op sector in the U.S. by many measures, I am keenly aware of how critical the cooperative business model is to the just, sustainable and equitable society we are trying to create.

My leadership on the NCBA CLUSA board has guided NCBA CLUSA's strategy to bolster an inclusive economy, by ensuring the benefits of the cooperative model are top of mind for the leaders addressing the dire social, economic and climate crises of our time. Last time I stood for election, I illustrated how NCBA CLUSA and the USFWC built a coalition bringing sustainable business allies and employee ownership associations to the table with the co-op sector to get the first piece of new co-op legislation in 20 years passed by congress and signed into law. Since then, we've made great progress. Together the USFWC and NCBA CLUSA's coalition managed to include co-op provisions in the CHIPS and Science Act and the most recent bipartisan omnibus legislation that passed Congress in December 2022. Most monumental was our swift work to pass the CARES Act, ensuring billions of dollars of federal aid could flow to consumer and worker co-ops at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. Much of this went to small and medium-sized co-ops whom the SBA had previously prohibited from accessing its loan programs. At the core of these efforts lies the principled and strategic commitment to a special partnership. By matching the scale and diversity of the co-op field and fueling it with the momentum of the worker co-op sector we're able to rebuild communities too often left devastated by the dominant economic system here and around the world.

My background in cooperatives is thoroughly cross-sector, particularly in housing, education, grocery/food, youth/student, multi-stakeholder and, of course, worker co-op sectors. I have also been a proud member of several credit unions and a sustainable electricity co-op in Philadelphia. For the last 20 years, I've stayed engaged in international co-op organizing as well. Last year I joined our CEO and the current and past NCBA CLUSA Board Chairs to represent the U.S. at the General Assembly for the ICA (International Cooperative Alliance) in Spain. I also represent our country on the board of CICOPA, the international association for worker co-ops.

I'm pleased with the progress NCBA CLUSA has made since I joined the board a dozen years ago. Having forged a close working relationship with our CEO, Doug O'Brien, I am excited about how we're applying cooperative solutions to tackle the emerging problems of the 21st century.