

DEBORAH WEGE

CANDIDATE STATEMENT

As a long-time advocate for cooperative credit unions, I have devoted my career to championing the unique role that credit unions and cooperatives play in fostering an inclusive and fair economy. This has only been deepened and solidified through my honor of serving on the Board of the National Cooperative Business Association CLUSA International (NCBA CLUSA) for the past three years. I have steadfastly supported their mission and look forward to continuing this important work.

We find ourselves at a pivotal moment in history, where the importance of supporting cooperative efforts has never been more urgent. I firmly believe that many of the solutions to ensuring financial stability both domestically and abroad—are deeply rooted in the cooperative model. NCBA CLUSA is uniquely positioned to foster collaboration, bring cooperatives together, and showcase the proven, impactful solutions within various sectors, while inspiring continued positive change.

I have actively contributed to NCBA CLUSA's work by serving on various Board committees, and I currently co-chair the Governance Committee. Through these roles, I have worked to spread awareness of NCBA CLUSA's values and the profound reach of the cooperative model.

As a leader at one of the largest credit union cooperatives in the country, Board Chair of the Northwest Cooperative Development Center, and through my involvement in the National and International Credit Union Development Education (CUDE) program, I bring an informed passion and perspective that can support NCBA CLUSA's ongoing mission and work.

I am particularly aligned with NCBA CLUSA's Principle 6 initiative, which promotes cross-sector collaboration. Throughout my career, I have been engaged in such efforts, including helping establish a successful partnership between Express Credit Union and BECU, along with other credit unions, nonprofits, and service organizations in the Seattle area. I have also advocated for a local food co-op startup and various events locally. Cooperatives offer vital solutions that balance the market with human-centered, environmentally-conscious competition, providing inclusive opportunities for growth and engagement. I am eager to continue to contribute to these efforts, as they align closely with my career's work and values.

Additionally, my background in philanthropy and community engagement, including managing giving and partnership strategies at BECU, and serving on key nonprofit boards,

has given me a unique perspective on building community-driven relationships and support.

Collaboration is a core strength of mine, and I excel at convening ideas and building connections. The cooperative spirit thrives on bringing together diverse perspectives to find mutually beneficial solutions that create long-lasting, impactful change. It would be a privilege to serve NCBA CLUSA and help promote its mission at a broader level, furthering the work that has been central to my career.