

Home » About DOJ » Agencies » Executive Office for Immigration Review » News and Information

EOIR NEWS

Department of Justice

Executive Office for Immigration Review

Monday, June 20, 2011

EOIR Announces Latest Disciplinary Actions Under Rules of Professional Conduct

Eighteen Attorneys Immediately Suspended; Twelve Receive Final Orders

FALLS CHURCH, Va. — The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) has recently taken disciplinary action against 30 attorneys for violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct for immigration attorneys and representatives.

EOIR announces these disciplinary actions to inform the public about attorneys and representatives who are no longer authorized to represent clients before an immigration tribunal. These names will be added to the list of disciplined immigration attorneys and representatives, which is available at <http://www.justice.gov/eoir/profcond/chart.htm>. The list includes links to immediate suspension orders, final orders, and reinstatement orders issued in each disciplinary case.

Disciplinary proceedings begin when the Office of the General Counsel of either EOIR or the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, files a Petition for Immediate Suspension and/or a Notice of Intent to Discipline with EOIR's Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA). The disciplinary action can result in the public censure, suspension, or expulsion of an attorney or representative before the immigration courts, the BIA, and DHS. Before a suspended or expelled attorney can resume the practice of law before the immigration courts, the BIA, or DHS, the BIA must reinstate that attorney.

EOIR has recently taken the following disciplinary actions:

Immediate Suspensions

The BIA ordered the immediate suspension of the following attorneys:

- **Bradford J. Barneys:**The Court of Appeals of Maryland and the District of Columbia Court of Appeals disbarred Mr. Barneys for engaging in the unauthorized practice of law. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on Feb. 24, 2011, based on Mr. Barneys's disbarments in Maryland and the District of Columbia and pending final disposition of his case.
- **Patrick Dennis Beasley:**The Supreme Court of Colorado disbarred Mr. Beasley for engaging in conduct involving neglect, failure to communicate, and lack of diligence. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on April 14, 2011, based on Mr. Beasley's disbarment in Colorado and pending final disposition of his case.
- **Alfonso S. Cabral:**The Supreme Court of Colorado suspended Mr. Cabral from the practice of law for three years for engaging in conduct involving neglect, failure to communicate, and conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on April 21, 2011, based on Mr. Cabral's three-year suspension in Colorado and pending final disposition of his case.
- **Bart A. Chavez:**The Supreme Court of Nebraska placed Mr. Chavez on disability inactive status. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on April 26, 2011, based on Mr. Chavez's disability inactive status in Nebraska and pending final disposition of his case.
- **David P. De Costa:**The Supreme Court of Arizona suspended Mr. De Costa from the practice of law for one year for engaging in conduct involving lack of candor toward a tribunal and conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on May 5, 2011, based on Mr. De Costa's one-year suspension in Arizona and pending final disposition of his case.
- **Maritza Diaz:**The United States District Court for the Southern District of New York convicted Ms. Diaz of one count of conspiracy to make false statements in connection with her handling of immigration matters. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on April 14, 2011, based on Ms. Diaz's criminal conviction in New York and pending final disposition of her case.
- **Koston Hui Feng, a.k.a., Koston F. Pelly:**The New York Supreme Court, Appellate Division, Second Judicial Department, suspended Mr. Feng from the practice of law for six months for conversion and trust account violations. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on April 12, 2011, based on Mr. Feng's six-month suspension in New York and pending final disposition of his case.
- **Frank M. Fernandez:**The Supreme Court of Hawaii suspended Mr. Fernandez from the practice of law on an interim basis for violating the Hawaii Rules of Professional Conduct and posing a substantial threat of serious harm to the public. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on May 11, 2011, based on Mr. Fernandez's interim suspension in Hawaii and pending final disposition of his case.
- **Larry Paul James:**The Supreme Court of California suspended Mr. James from the practice of law for 90 days for conduct involving lack of competence, moral turpitude, and failing to cooperate with a state bar investigation. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on May 3, 2011, based on Mr. James's 90-day suspension in California and pending final disposition of his case.
- **Willie Jones:**The Supreme Court of Florida suspended Mr. Jones from the practice of law after he was held in contempt of court. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on May 5, 2011, based on Mr. Jones's suspension in Florida and pending final disposition of his case.
- **Mahendra R. Mehta:**The Supreme Court of Illinois suspended Mr. Mehta from the practice of law for conversion, failing to promptly deliver client funds, and engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on March 29, 2011, based on Mr. Mehta's suspension in Illinois and pending final disposition of his case.
- **Otto Ivan Pena:**The California State Bar Court, Hearing Department, placed Mr. Pena on involuntary inactive enrollment status. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on April 14, 2011, based on Mr. Pena's involuntary inactive enrollment status in California and pending final disposition of his case.
- **Terry W. Rombough:**The State Bar of Texas suspended Mr. Rombough from the practice of law for failing to pay his bar dues and occupation tax, and for failing to complete his continuing legal education requirements. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on Feb. 23, 2011, based on Mr. Rombough's suspension in Texas and pending final disposition of his case.
- **Claude Richard Simpson:**The New York Supreme Court, Appellate Division, Second Judicial Department, disbarred Mr. Simpson after he resigned while a disciplinary investigation was pending. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on April 12, 2011, based on Mr. Simpson's resignation and disbarment in New York and pending final disposition of his case.
- **Charles V. Stebley:**The California State Bar Court, Hearing Department, placed Mr. Stebley on involuntary inactive enrollment status. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on April 12, 2011, based on Mr. Stebley's involuntary inactive enrollment status in California and pending final disposition of his case.

AILA InfoNet Doc. No. 11062240. (Posted 06/22/11)

- **Eric Jefferson Tinsley:**The Supreme Court of Florida suspended Mr. Tinsley from the practice of law until further order of the court. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on May 5, 2011, based on Mr. Tinsley's suspension in Florida and pending final disposition of his case.
- **Jessica Torres Vinals:**The Supreme Court of Puerto Rico indefinitely suspended Ms. Vinals from the practice of law. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on May 11, 2011, based on Ms. Vinals's indefinite suspension in Puerto Rico and pending final disposition of her case.
- **Maria Katherine Woroby:**The Supreme Court of Minnesota placed Ms. Woroby on disability inactive status. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on May 11, 2011, based on Ms. Woroby's disability inactive status in Minnesota and pending final disposition of her case.

Final Orders of Discipline

- **Noel Peter Mpaka Canute:**A final order of March 16, 2011, indefinitely suspends by consent Mr. Canute from practice before immigration tribunals, effective July 14, 2010, based on his admission to violating the Rules of Professional Conduct for Practitioners by appearing as an attorney before immigration tribunals when he did not have employment authorization because he was an alien out of status.
- **Gregory Chandler:**A final order of March 2, 2011, suspends Mr. Chandler from practice before immigration tribunals for two years and three months, effective Feb. 19, 2009, based on his two-year and three-month suspension in California for failing to comply with an arbitration award.
- **Guy Vincent Croteau:**The Supreme Court of Illinois suspended Mr. Croteau from the practice of law for three years for engaging in conduct involving failure to communicate, lack of diligence, and conduct that is prejudicial to the administration of justice. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on April 14, 2011, based on Mr. Croteau's three-year suspension in Illinois and pending final disposition of his case. A final order of May 5, 2011, suspends Mr. Croteau from practice before immigration tribunals for three years, effective April 14, 2011, based on his three-year suspension in Illinois.
- **Patricia Greenwald Gittelson:**The Supreme Court of California suspended Ms. Gittelson from the practice of law for six months for failing to comply with conditions of her probation from a previous disciplinary matter. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on April 14, 2011, based on Ms. Gittelson's six-month suspension in California and pending final disposition of her case. A final order of May 17, 2011, suspends Ms. Gittelson from practice before immigration tribunals for six months, effective April 14, 2011, based on her six-month suspension in California.
- **Andrea Goode-James:**A final order of Feb. 9, 2011, suspends Ms. Goode-James from practice before immigration tribunals for eight years, effective May 12, 2009, based on her disbarment in Massachusetts and her conviction in the U.S. District Court in Massachusetts for mail and wire fraud and misappropriation of client funds.
- **Karen Kaye Meade:**The Supreme Court of Ohio indefinitely suspended Ms. Meade from the practice of law for engaging in conduct lacking diligence and for failing to cooperate with a state bar investigation. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on March 9, 2011, based on Ms. Meade's indefinite suspension in Ohio and pending final disposition of her case. A final order of April 20, 2011, indefinitely suspends Ms. Meade from practice before immigration tribunals, effective March 9, 2011, based on her indefinite suspension in Ohio.
- **Keh Soo Park:**Mr. Park's license to practice law in Virginia was revoked for trust account violations and for conduct lacking competence and diligence. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on March 29, 2011, based on the revocation of Mr. Park's license in Virginia and pending final disposition of his case. A final order of May 5, 2011, expels Mr. Park from practice before immigration tribunals, effective March 29, 2011, based on the revocation of his license in Virginia.
- **Yohan Park:**A final order of Feb. 23, 2011, suspends Mr. Park from practice before immigration tribunals, for two years, effective Feb. 19, 2009, based on his two-year suspension in New York for violating the State's Rules of Professional Conduct.
- **Juan Jesus Rodriguez:**The Supreme Court of Minnesota disbarred Mr. Rodriguez for engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation and for conduct that is prejudicial to the administration of justice. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on April 7, 2011, based on Mr. Rodriguez's disbarment in Minnesota and pending final disposition of his case. A final order of May 17, 2011, indefinitely suspends Mr. Rodriguez from practice before immigration tribunals, effective April 7, 2011, based on his disbarment in Minnesota.
- **Hugo Rojas:**The State Bar of Texas suspended Mr. Rojas from the practice of law for two years for engaging in conduct lacking competence and diligence. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on April 14, 2011, based on Mr. Rojas's suspension in Texas and pending final disposition of his case. A final order of May 5, 2011, suspends Mr. Rojas from practice before immigration tribunals, effective April 14, 2011, based on his two-year suspension in Texas.
- **Giselle M. Samuely:**A final order of Feb. 9, 2011, expels Ms. Samuely from practice before immigration tribunals, effective Jan. 26, 2011, based on her two-year suspension in New York for conduct involving neglect and dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation, and conduct adversely reflecting on her fitness to practice law.
- **Toan Q. Thai:**A final order of Feb. 9, 2011, indefinitely suspends Mr. Thai from practice before immigration tribunals, based on his repeated appearances in the Los Angeles Immigration Court while under suspension by the BIA.

Background

The Rules of Professional Conduct appear in Title 8 of the Code of Federal Regulations (8 C.F.R. §§ 1003 and 1292). They include provisions specifying grounds for disciplinary action, requirements for receiving and investigating complaints, and procedures for conducting hearings. The rules also authorize the BIA to suspend immediately an attorney or representative who has been subject to disbarment, suspension or resignation with an admission of misconduct as imposed by a federal or state court, or who has been convicted of a serious crime, pending a summary proceeding and final sanction. The Rules of Professional Conduct are available at http://www.justice.gov/eoir/vl/fedreg/2000_2001/fr27jn00R.pdf (PDF) and http://www.justice.gov/eoir/vl/fedreg/2008_2009/fr18dec08c.pdf (PDF).

Additional information about the Attorney Discipline Program can be found at <http://www.justice.gov/eoir/press/00/profcond.htm> (PDF) and <http://www.justice.gov/eoir/press/09/AttorneyDisciplineFactSheet.pdf> (PDF).

- EOIR -

The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) is an agency within the Department of Justice. Under delegated authority from the Attorney General, immigration judges and the Board of Immigration Appeals interpret and adjudicate immigration cases according to United States immigration laws. EOIR's immigration judges conduct administrative court proceedings in immigration courts located throughout the nation. They determine whether foreign-born individuals—whom the Department of Homeland Security charges with violating immigration law—should be ordered removed from the United States or should be granted relief from removal and be permitted to remain in this country. The Board of Immigration Appeals primarily reviews appeals of decisions by immigration judges. EOIR's Office of the Chief Administrative Hearing Officer adjudicates immigration-related employment cases. EOIR is committed to ensuring fairness in all of the cases it adjudicates.

PDF version of news release

Executive Office for Immigration Review