

Falls Church, Virginia 22041

File: D2017-0096

Date: MAY 22 2017

In re: JAMES S. SARPONG, ATTORNEY

IN PRACTITIONER DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS

FINAL ORDER OF DISCIPLINE

ON BEHALF OF EOIR: Jennifer J. Barnes
Disciplinary Counsel

ON BEHALF OF DHS: Jeannette V. Dever
Associate Legal Advisor

The respondent will be disbarred from practice before the Board of Immigration Appeals (“Board”), the Immigration Courts, and the Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”).

On March 21, 2017, the Supreme Court of Colorado disbarred the respondent from the practice of law in that state, effective immediately. The “Order and Decision Imposing Sanctions” issued by the court discussed how the respondent, in three matters, failed to communicate and act with diligence, “effectively abandoning his vulnerable immigration clients.” The respondent, moreover, declined to cooperate with disciplinary authorities in their investigation. The Disciplinary Counsel for the Executive Office for Immigration Review (“EOIR”) petitioned for the respondent’s immediate suspension from practice before the Board and the Immigration Courts on April 4, 2017, and stated that he remains disbarred from the practice of law in Colorado, as of the date of its filing. The DHS then asked that the respondent be similarly suspended from practice before that agency. We granted the petition on April 25, 2017.

The respondent was required to file a timely answer to the allegations contained in the Notice of Intent to Discipline but has failed to do so. 8 C.F.R. § 1003.105. The respondent’s failure to file a response within the time period prescribed in the Notice of Intent to Discipline constitutes an admission of the allegations therein, and the respondent is now precluded from requesting a hearing on the matter. 8 C.F.R. § 1003.105(d)(1).

The Notice of Intent to Discipline proposes that the respondent be disbarred from practicing before the Board and the Immigration Courts. The DHS asks the Board to extend that discipline to practice before that agency as well. Because the respondent has failed to file an answer, the regulations direct the Board to adopt the proposed sanction contained in the Notice of Intent to Discipline, unless there are considerations that compel us to digress from that proposal. 8 C.F.R. § 1003.105(d)(2). The proposed sanction is appropriate, in light of the fact that on March 21, 2017, the Supreme Court of Colorado disbarred the respondent from the practice of law in that state, effective immediately. Further, as the respondent is currently under our April 25, 2017, order of suspension, we will deem his disbarment to have commenced on that date.

ORDER: The Board hereby disbars the respondent from practice before the Board, the Immigration Courts, and the DHS. The disbarment is deemed to have commenced on April 25, 2017.

FURTHER ORDER: The respondent must maintain compliance with the directives set forth in our prior order. The respondent must notify the Board of any further disciplinary action against him.

FURTHER ORDER: The contents of the order shall be made available to the public, including at the Immigration Courts and appropriate offices of the DHS.

FURTHER ORDER: The respondent may petition this Board for reinstatement to practice before the Board, the Immigration Courts, and the DHS under 8 C.F.R. § 1003.107.



FOR THE BOARD