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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **EOIR Announces Latest Disciplinary Actions Under Rules of Professional Conduct** *One Attorney Immediately Suspended; Five Receive Final Orders*

FALLS CHURCH, VA – The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) has taken disciplinary action against six attorneys after charging them with violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct for immigration practitioners. The Rules appear in Title 8 of the Code of Federal Regulations (8 CFR Parts 1003 and 1292). In most cases, the disciplinary action is initiated as a result of sanctions imposed by other jurisdictions or a criminal conviction.

Although the disciplinary process may vary according to the specific circumstances of each case, generally it includes the following steps:

Disciplinary proceedings begin with a Notice of Intent to Discipline filed with the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) by the Office of the General Counsel of either EOIR or the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The BIA requires the attorney to respond to the alleged violations. In some cases, a Petition for Immediate Suspension also is filed and the BIA orders the attorney to be suspended immediately from practice before the Immigration Courts, the BIA, and the DHS. (DHS joins EOIR in taking the disciplinary action.) Disciplined attorneys are directed to notify promptly, in writing, any clients with cases currently pending before the BIA, the Immigration Courts, or the DHS that they may no longer represent clients before these tribunals. Disciplined attorneys must petition and be reinstated by the BIA before they can resume the practice of law before the BIA, the Immigration Courts, and the DHS.

#### **Immediate Suspension**

The BIA ordered the immediate suspension of the following attorney:

- **Anthony E. Ramos:** He was disbarred from the practice of law by the Supreme Court of Florida. He was immediately suspended by the BIA on December 6, 2004, pending final disposition of his case.

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### Final Orders of Discipline

The BIA issued Final Orders of Discipline against the following attorneys:

- **Jordan N. Baker:** His license to practice law was revoked on October 28, 2003, in Virginia after pleading guilty to immigration-related fraud. He was immediately suspended by the BIA on November 16, 2004, pending final disposition of his case. The final order of December 7, 2004, expels him from practice before the immigration tribunals.
- **Steven Y. Lee:** His license to practice law was revoked on October 28, 2003, in Virginia, and he was disbarred by the District of Columbia Court of Appeals, after pleading guilty to immigration-related fraud. He was immediately suspended by the BIA on November 22, 2004, pending final disposition of his case. The final order of December 7, 2004, expels him from practice before the immigration tribunals.
- **Javier Lopera:** He was disbarred from the practice of law by the Supreme Court of Florida based on a criminal conviction for conspiracy to commit offenses against the United States, making false statements, and harboring aliens. He was immediately suspended by the BIA on November 4, 2004, pending final disposition of his case. The final order of December 7, 2004, expels him from practice before the immigration tribunals.
- **Alfred G. Santos:** He was suspended from the practice of law for 1 year by the District Court of Harris County, Texas, 29<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, for professional misconduct. He was immediately suspended by the BIA on November 4, 2004, pending final disposition of his case. The final order of December 7, 2004, suspends him from practice before the immigration tribunals for 1 year, effective November 4, 2004.
- **Joseph E. Sheridan:** He was disbarred from the practice of law by the Supreme Court of California for multiple acts of misconduct concerning an immigration client. He was immediately suspended by the BIA on September 9, 2004, pending final disposition of his case. The final order of December 7, 2004, expels him from practice before the immigration tribunals.

### Background

The Rules of Professional Conduct 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 immediately suspend a practitioner who has been subject to disbarment, suspension, or resignation with an admission of misconduct as imposed by a state or Federal court, or who has been convicted of a serious crime, pending a summary proceeding and final sanction. They are available on the EOIR Web site at [http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir/vll/fedreg/2000\\_2001/fr27jn00R.pdf](http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir/vll/fedreg/2000_2001/fr27jn00R.pdf).

EOIR announces these disciplinary actions to inform the public about practitioners who are not authorized to represent any matter before an immigration tribunal. EOIR also posts a “List of Suspended and Expelled Practitioners” on its Web site at <http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir> (near the bottom of EOIR’s home page).

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## Attorney Discipline

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Additional information about the Attorney Discipline Program can be found at <http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir/press/00/profcond.htm> and <http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir/press/00/profcondfaks.htm> on the EOIR Web site.

EOIR is responsible for adjudicating immigration cases. Specifically, under delegated authority from the Attorney General, EOIR interprets and administers Federal immigration laws by conducting Immigration Court proceedings, appellate reviews, and administrative hearings. EOIR consists of three components: the Office of the Chief Immigration Judge, which is responsible for managing the numerous Immigration Courts located throughout the United States where Immigration Judges adjudicate individual cases; the Board of Immigration Appeals, which primarily conducts appellate reviews of Immigration Judge decisions; and the Office of the Chief Administrative Hearing Officer, which adjudicates immigration-related employment cases. EOIR is committed to providing fair, expeditious, and uniform application of our Nation's immigration laws in all cases.

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