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NEWS RELEASE

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EOIR Announces Latest Disciplinary Actions Under Rules of Professional Conduct *Five Attorneys Immediately Suspended; Three Receive Final Orders*

FALLS CHURCH, Va. – The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) has taken disciplinary action against eight attorneys after charging them with violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct for immigration practitioners. These 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attorneys are directed to notify promptly, in writing, their clients with pending immigration cases that they may no longer represent them before the BIA, the immigration courts, or the DHS. 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 attorneys:

- **Hani Alex Azzam:** He was administratively suspended from the practice of law by the Supreme Judicial Court for Suffolk County, Commonwealth of Massachusetts. He was immediately suspended by the BIA on Sept. 1, 2005, based on his administrative suspension in Massachusetts, pending final disposition of his case.

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- **Terrence McGuire:** He was suspended from the practice of law for 2 years by the Supreme Court of California for multiple acts of misconduct in 19 immigration client matters. He was immediately suspended by the BIA on Sept. 1, 2005, based on his 2-year suspension in California, pending final disposition of his case.
- **William P. Vela:** He was suspended from the practice of law for 1 year by the Supreme Court of North Dakota for violations of the state bar rules of professional conduct, including failure to communicate, lack of candor toward the tribunal, and lack of diligence. He was immediately suspended by the BIA on Sept. 1, 2005, based on his 1-year suspension in North Dakota, pending final disposition of his case.
- **Stephen J. Alexander:** He was suspended from the practice of law by the Review Department of the State Bar Court of California based on his criminal conviction for subscribing to a false tax return. He was immediately suspended by the BIA on Sept. 16, 2005, based on his criminal conviction and suspension in California, pending final disposition of his case.
- **Maqsood Mir:** He was convicted of numerous counts of immigration-related fraud by the United States District Court for the District of Maryland. He was immediately suspended by the BIA on Sept. 16, 2005, based on his criminal conviction, pending final disposition of his case.

Final Orders of Discipline

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

- **Alfred Perez, Jr.:** The final order of Sept. 13, 2005, expels him from practice before immigration tribunals, effective July 20, 2004, based on his conviction in California for mail fraud and money laundering and his disbarment in Minnesota.
- **Robert M. Kuhnreich:** The final order of Sept. 16, 2005, expels him from practice before immigration tribunals, effective Aug. 11, 2005, based on his 2-year suspension in New York for neglect, failing to return fees, and engaging in conduct that adversely reflected upon his fitness as a lawyer.
- **Jose M. Quinones:** The final order of Sept. 16, 2005, suspends him from practice before immigration tribunals for 90 days, effective Sept. 16, 2005, based on his providing ineffective assistance of counsel in a 2005 immigration matter and a similar finding in a 2003 immigration matter.

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Background

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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 federal or state court, or who has been convicted of a serious crime, pending a summary proceeding and final sanction. They are available on the EOIR website at 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 clients in any matter before an immigration tribunal. EOIR also posts a “List of Disciplined Practitioners” on its website at <http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir/profcond/chart.htm>. In an effort to provide more detailed information about individual attorney discipline cases, every new immediate suspension or final order issued beginning June 27, 2005, can be accessed through this list by clicking on the highlighted “date” link. Links to older orders, issued since July 2000, will be included gradually.

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 website.

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 the nation's immigration laws in all cases.

Information about EOIR immigration proceedings is available on EOIR's website at <http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir/press/subject.htm>.

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