



June 12, 2017

LETTER OF REPRIMAND

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Re: Grievance No. OBC15-1610 / Grievant Melissa Castro-Valencia

www.nvbar.org

Dear Mr. Hawkins:

A Formal Hearing Panel of the Southern Nevada Disciplinary Board met on May 24, 2017, and pursuant to a Conditional Guilty Plea In Exchange for a Stated Form of Discipline, directed that a Letter of Reprimand be issued to you as follows:

On or about January 31, 2014, the client met with you concerning your retention for purposes of processing an I-130 Petition for Alien Relative ("Petition") on behalf of the client's husband. The Petition had been submitted by your office prior to the meeting, and you met with the client to discuss the process going forward and the extended time-line involved.

Over the course of the next approximate 24 months, your staff interacted with the client to process the Petition. During this period your office gathered additional documents from the client and responded to Requests for Evidence in furtherance of the Petition. Although there was an error concerning the client's name in the initial submission of the Petition, that error was corrected by your office and the Petition was ultimately successfully submitted for processing.

Nonetheless, in December 2015, the client submitted a grievance to the State Bar concerning your failure to personally communicate with the client, and complaining of delay in the Petition process. You subsequently referred the client to alternate counsel to complete the Petition process.

However, in order to investigate the client's grievance, the State Bar, through the Office of Bar Counsel, sought your substantive response to the client's concerns expressed therein. The State Bar made written communication to you on at least four occasions between January 5, 2016, and April 12, 2016, asking that you provide a substantive response to the client's concerns expressed therein. Although you emailed the State Bar on several occasions between those dates to inquire concerning the status of the State Bar's investigation, and were granted three extensions of time to respond, you provided no substantive response to the first three written demands for information. Your April 26, 2016, attempt to deliver a substantive response after the fourth written demand, four months after it was first requested, was unsuccessful.

REPRIMAND

Based upon the foregoing, you are hereby REPRIMANDED for violating your obligation under Rule of Professional Conduct ("RPC") 8.1(b) which requires that you, as an attorney licensed to practice law in the State of Nevada, respond to the State Bar's lawful demands for information concerning a disciplinary matter. With respect to your response to the grievance submitted by your client Castro-Valencia, you failed to comply with this obligation.

Finally, in accordance with Nevada Supreme Court Rule 120(1) you are assessed costs in the amount of \$1,500, in addition to the actual costs of the disciplinary proceeding which are to be paid by you within sixty (60) days of your receipt of the State Bar's Memorandum of Costs.

Sincerely,



James P. Christensen, Esq.
Formal Hearing Panel Chair
Southern Nevada Disciplinary Board

JC/sab