

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF DISCIPLINARY APPEALS
APPOINTED BY
THE SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS**

**IN THE MATTER OF
JOSEPH KENNETH LACOME
STATE BAR CARD NO. 24083347**

§
§
§

CAUSE NO. 71741

AGREED JUDGMENT OF SUSPENSION

On this day the above-styled and numbered reciprocal disciplinary action was called for hearing before the Board of Disciplinary Appeals. The Commission for Lawyer Discipline (“the Commission”) and Respondent, Joseph Kenneth LaCome, appeared, by and through their respective attorneys, and announced that they agree to the findings of fact, conclusions of law, and orders set forth below solely for the purposes of this proceeding which has not been fully adjudicated. Respondent waives any and all defenses that could be asserted under Rule 9.04 of the Texas Rules of Disciplinary Procedure. The Board of Disciplinary Appeals, having reviewed the file and in consideration of the agreement of the parties, is of the opinion that the Commission is entitled to entry of the following findings, conclusions, and orders:

Findings of Fact. The Board of Disciplinary Appeals finds that:

- (1) Respondent, Joseph Kenneth LaCome, Bar Card No. 24083347, is an attorney licensed and authorized to practice law in the State of Texas by the Supreme Court of Texas.
- (2) On or about March 28, 2025, an Agreement for Discipline by Consent was entered in a matter styled: Before the Presiding Disciplinary Judge, *In the Matter of a Member of the State Bar of Arizona, JOSEPH LACOME, Bar No. 032676, Respondent.*, PDJ 2023-9099, [State Bar File Nos. 22-2090, 22-0355, 23-0217, 23-1443, 23-3115, 24-0602], as set forth in the Commission’s Petition for Reciprocal Discipline filed on September 15, 2025.

- (3) On or about April 16, 2025, an Order Accepting Agreement for Discipline by Consent was entered in a matter styled: Before the Presiding Disciplinary Judge, *In the Matter of a Member of the State Bar of Arizona, JOSEPH LACOME, Bar No. 032676, Respondent.*, PDJ 2023-9099, [State Bar File Nos. 22-2090, 23-0217, 23-1443, 23-3115, and 24-0602], which states in pertinent part:

On March 28, 2025, the parties filed an Agreement for Discipline by Consent ("Agreement") pursuant to Rule 57(a), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct. The State Bar of Arizona is represented by Senior Bar Counsel James D. Lee. Respondent Joseph LaCome is represented in this matter by counsel Donald Wilson, Jr. and Danielle Chronister. The Agreement seeks to address the State Bar's Formal Third Amended Complaint filed August 30, 2024 ("Complaint") referencing State Bar Nos. 22-2090, 23-0217, 23-1443, 23-3115, and 24-0602¹.

Contingent upon approval of the proposed form of discipline, Respondent voluntarily waives his right to an adjudicatory hearing, as well as all motions, defenses, objections, or requests that could be asserted. Pursuant to Rule 53(c)(3), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct., the State Bar provided notice of the Agreement and an opportunity to file a written objection to the Complainant by email on February 18, 2025.

Complainant in Count 2 of the Complaint/File No. 23-0217, Nery Osbeli Gomez Gonzalez and her Counsel, Holly Cooper who is the Co-Director of the Immigration Law Clinic at the UC Davis School of Law, submitted an objection to the Agreement², which will be addressed at the conclusion of this order.

The Agreement details a factual basis in support of Respondent's conditional admissions and is incorporated by reference.³ Respondent Joseph LaCome conditionally admits his conduct violated Title 8 of The Code of Federal Regulations, specifically CFR 1003.102(k), CFR 1003.102(n), CFR 1003.102(o), CFR 1003.102(p), CFR 1003.102(q), CFR 1003.102(r), CFR 1003.102(u), and CFR 1003.102(v); and Rule 42, Ariz. R. Sup. Ct., specifically ER 1.1, ER 1.2(a), ER 1.3, ER 1.4(a), ER 1.4(b), ER 1.5(d)(3), ER 3.1, ER 3.3(a), ER 3.4(c), and ER 8.4(d). As a sanction, the parties agree to a six (6) month suspension, effective 45 days from the date of this order, resignation from the State Bar

¹ The Attorney Discipline Probable Cause Committee("ADPCC") entered an order of probable cause on November 6, 2023 in File Nos. 22-2090, 23-0217, and 23-1443, and on July 17, 2024 in File Nos. 23-3115 and 24-0602.

² See Exhibit A to the Agreement.

³ See Rule 57(a)(4), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct.

of Arizona immediately upon reinstatement, and payment of the costs and expenses of the disciplinary proceeding. The State Bar and LaCome stipulate, "Restitution is not an issue in this matter." The parties further agree to dismiss the following file numbers without probable cause orders having been entered: State Bar File Nos. 24-2193, 24-2264 and 24-2989; and the allegations that Respondent violated 8 CFR 1003.102(a)(1), (c), (j), and (l); Rule 42, Ariz. R. Sup. Ct., ER 1.5(a), ER 1.16(d), ER 4.1(a), ER 5.1, ER 5.3, ER 8.1(a), ER 8.4(c); and Rule 54(c), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct.

Generally speaking, the ethical issues arose in the context of Respondent LaCome's representation of multiple clients in immigration matters. Between 2020 and 2023, Respondent represented California residents regarding various immigration matters. During that time, Respondent engaged in an overall pattern of neglect of clients, including: the submission of inadequate or "skeletal" documents with little attention to the specific factual or legal issues for specific clients; filed an application for asylum knowing that the signature on the document was not placed by his client; lacked adequate communication with clients or diligent representation of them; waited over a year to file the motions to dismiss removal proceedings in some cases; and further, Respondent's engagement agreements failed to advise clients that they could discharge representation at any time at which time they may be entitled to a refund of all or part of the fees paid.

Sanctions imposed against lawyers "shall be determined in accordance with the American Bar Association's *Standards for Imposing Lawyer Sanctions*" ("ABA Standards") Rule 58(k), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct. In reviewing this Agreement, the PDJ has considered the duties violated, the lawyer's mental state, the actual or potential injury caused by the misconduct, and the existence of aggravating and mitigating factors.

The parties agree that Respondent knowingly and negligently violated duties to his client, the profession, the legal system, and the public causing actual and potential harm as specified in the Agreement.

The Agreement relies on ABA Standards 4.42, 6.12, and 6.22 - all of which call for suspension as the presumptive sanction. The parties stipulate to four aggravating factors: (1) pattern of misconduct; (2) multiple offenses; (3) vulnerability of the victims; and (4) substantial experience in the practice of law.⁴ They agree

⁴ Respondent was licensed to practice law in the State of Arizona on December 15, 2015; in Texas in 2012; in Missouri in 2011; and District of Columbia in 2010.

that the following three mitigating factor applies: (1) absence of a prior disciplinary record; (2) full and free disclosure to bar counsel or cooperative attitude toward the proceedings; and (3) delay in disciplinary proceedings.

The Presiding Disciplinary Judge ("PDJ") turns to the objection reflected in Exhibit A to the Agreement (the "Objection"). The Objection raises concerns that these Arizona sanctions may not have an effect on the Respondent's license in other states such as Missouri and Texas or upon Respondent's federal immigration practice. In regard to other states, ABA's Annotated Standards for Imposing Lawyer Sanctions describes under, Standard 2.9, Purpose of Reciprocal Discipline:

A lawyer who has been disciplined in one U.S. jurisdiction is subject to reciprocal discipline in any other U.S. jurisdiction in which the lawyer is admitted. The purposes of reciprocal discipline are to prevent a lawyer admitted to practice in more than one jurisdiction from avoiding the effect of discipline by simply practicing in another jurisdiction, to prevent relitigation of misconduct that already has been established in another jurisdiction, and to protect the public [sic] from lawyers who commit such misconduct.

The PDJ certainly encourages other jurisdictions or licensures to consider all of the findings of facts in this matter in considering the appropriate reciprocal order to fashion to protect the public.

The Objection also discusses a concern regarding the costs of Respondent's representation and whether Mr. LaCome has retained money paid to him for services he did not provide. The PDJ relies on the State Bar's avowal provided on page 56 of the Agreement in finding that restitution is not an issue in this matter.

In considering the Agreement and the Objection, the PDJ finds that it is in the best interest of public protection to overrule the Objection.

After reviewing the matters presented, the PDJ concludes that under this specific set of circumstances the Agreement adequately achieves the recognized purposes of the lawyer discipline process.

IT IS ORDERED accepting the Agreement for Discipline by Consent. A final judgment and order is separately filed this date.

- (4) On or about April 16, 2025, a Final Judgment and Order was entered in a matter styled, Before the Presiding Disciplinary Judge, *In the Matter of a Member of the State Bar of Arizona, JOSEPH LACOME, Bar No. 032676, Respondent.*, PDJ 2023-9099, [State Bar Nos. 22-2090, 23-0217, 23-1443, 23-3115, 24-0602], that states in pertinent part:

The Presiding Disciplinary Judge having accepted the parties' Agreement for Discipline by Consent(" Agreement") submitted pursuant to Rule 57(a), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct.,

IT IS ORDERED that JOSEPH LACOME, Bar No. 032676, is suspended for six (6) months from the practice of law effective, effective forty-five (45) days from the date of this order, for his conduct in violation of the Arizona Rules of Professional Conduct and Rules of the Supreme Court of Arizona, as set forth in the Agreement documents

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent comply with the requirements relating to notification of clients and others and provide and/ or file all notices and affidavits required by Rule 72, Ariz. R. Sup. Ct.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that upon reinstatement, Respondent shall immediately resign from the State Bar of Arizona.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent pay the costs and expenses of the State Bar of Arizona in the amount of \$2,650.00 within 30 days of this order. There are no costs or expenses incurred by the Office of the Presiding Disciplinary Judge in these proceedings.

- (5) Respondent, Joseph Kenneth LaCome, is the same person as the Joseph Kenneth LaCome, who is the subject of the Final Judgment and Order entered by the Supreme Court of Arizona.
- (6) The Final Judgment and Order of the Supreme Court of Arizona is final.

Conclusions of Law. Based upon the foregoing findings of facts, the Board of Disciplinary

Appeals makes the following conclusions of law:

- (1) This Board has jurisdiction to hear and determine this matter. TEX. RULES DISCIPLINARY P. R. 7.08(H).

- (2) Reciprocal discipline identical, to the extent practicable, to that imposed by the Supreme Court of Arizona is warranted in this case for Respondent's professional misconduct occurring after September 15, 2021.
- (3) Respondent should be actively suspended from the practice of law for a period of six (6) months.

It is, accordingly, **ORDERED, ADJUDGED, and DECREED** that Respondent, Joseph Kenneth LaCome, State Bar Card No. 24083347, is hereby SUSPENDED from the practice of law in Texas for a period of six (6) months beginning November 5, 2025, and extending through April 4, 2026.

It is further **ORDERED, ADJUGED, and DECREED** that Respondent, Josph Kenneth LaCome, during said suspension is prohibited from practicing law in Texas, holding himself out as an attorney at law, performing any legal service for others, accepting any fee directly or indirectly for legal services, appearing as counsel or in any representative capacity in any proceeding in any Texas or Federal court or before any administrative body, or holding himself out to others using his name, in any manner, in conjunction with the words "attorney at law," "attorney," "counselor at law", or "lawyer."

It is further **ORDERED** that Respondent, Joseph Kenneth LaCome, within thirty (30) days of the signing of this judgment, shall notify each of his current clients and opposing counsel, if any, in writing, of this suspension. In addition to such notification, Respondent is **ORDERED** to return all files, papers, unearned fees paid in advance, and all other monies and properties which are in his possession but which belong to current or former clients, if any, to those respective clients or former clients, or to another attorney designated by such client or former client, within thirty (30) days of the date of this judgment, if requested.

It is further **ORDERED** that Respondent shall file with the State Bar of Texas, Statewide

Compliance Monitor, P.O. Box 12487, Austin, TX 78711-2487 (1414 Colorado St., Austin, TX 78701), within thirty (30) days of the date of this judgment, an affidavit stating all current clients and opposing counsel have been notified of Respondent's suspension and that all files, papers, monies and other property belonging to all current clients have been returned as ordered herein. If Respondent should be unable to return any file, papers, money or other property requested by any client or former client, Respondent's affidavit shall state with particularity the efforts made by Respondent with respect to each particular client and the cause of his inability to return to said client any file, paper, money or other property.

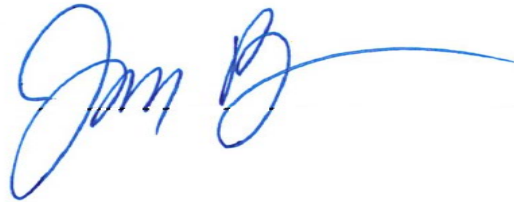
It is further **ORDERED** that Respondent, Joseph Kenneth LaCome, within thirty (30) days of the date of this judgment, shall notify in writing each and every justice of the peace, judge, magistrate, administrative judge or officer, and chief justice of each and every court, if any, in which Respondent, Joseph Kenneth LaCome, has any matter pending, of his suspension, of the style and cause number of the pending matter(s), and the name, address, and telephone number of the client(s) Respondent is representing. Respondent is also **ORDERED** to mail copies of all such notifications to the Statewide Compliance Monitor, Office of the Chief Disciplinary Counsel, State Bar of Texas, P.O. Box 12487, Capitol Station, Austin, Texas 78711.

It is further **ORDERED** that Respondent shall file with the State Bar of Texas, Statewide Compliance Monitor, P.O. Box 12487, Austin, TX 78711-2487 (1414 Colorado St., Austin, TX 78701), within thirty (30) days of the date of this judgment, an affidavit stating Respondent has notified in writing each and every justice of the peace, judge, magistrate, administrative judge or officer, and chief justice of each and every court in which Respondent has any matter pending of the terms of this judgment, the style and cause number of the pending matter(s), and the name, address, and telephone number of the client(s) Respondent is representing in Court.

It is further **ORDERED** that, within thirty (30) days of the date of this judgment, Respondent shall surrender his law license and permanent State Bar Card to the Statewide Compliance Monitor, Office of the Chief Disciplinary Counsel, State Bar of Texas, P.O. Box 12487, Capitol Station, Austin, Texas 78711, for transmittal to the Clerk of the Supreme Court of Texas.

It is further **ORDERED** that this Judgment of Suspension shall be made a matter of public record and be published in the *Texas Bar Journal*.

Signed this 5th day of ~~October~~ **November, 2025.**
~~xxxxxxx~~

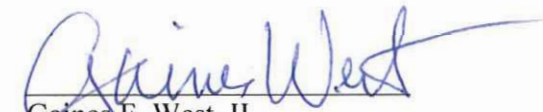
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Jim B", written over a horizontal line.

CHAIR PRESIDING

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND CONTENT:

DocuSigned by:


E4BF9C5755D64F3
Joseph Kenneth LaCome
Bar No. 24083347
Respondent


Gaines F. West, II
Bar No. 21197500
Attorney for Respondent


Amanda M. Kates
Bar No. 24075987
Attorney for the Commission for Lawyer Discipline