

Falls Church, Virginia 22041

File: D2003-119

Date: AUG 1 2003

In re: PAUL HOWARD CURTIS, ATTORNEY

IN PRACTITIONER DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS

FINAL ORDER OF DISCIPLINE

ON BEHALF OF GENERAL COUNSEL: Jennifer J. Barnes, Esquire

ON BEHALF OF DHS: Eileen M. Connolly, Appellate Counsel

ORDER:

PER CURIAM. On March 7, 2003, the respondent was suspended from the practice of law for three years, stayed, with an actual suspension of six months, and probation for four years, by the Supreme Court of California. The respondent admitted that he "intentionally, recklessly, or repeatedly failed to perform legal services with competence" with regard to two clients, in violation of the California Rules of Professional Conduct. Moreover, the respondent admitted that he violated provisions of the California Business and Professions Code, concerning the two clients.

Consequently, on June 16, 2003, the Office of General Counsel for the Executive Office for Immigration Review petitioned for the respondent's immediate suspension from practice before the Board of Immigration Appeals and the Immigration Courts. On June 25, 2003, the Department of Homeland Security (the "DHS," formerly the Immigration and Naturalization Service) asked that the respondent be similarly suspended from practice before that agency. Therefore, on July 16, 2003, we suspended the respondent from practicing before the Board, the Immigration Courts, and the DHS pending final disposition of this proceeding.

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. See 8 C.F.R. § 1003.105(c)(1).¹ The respondent's failure to file a response within the time period prescribed in the Notice 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), (2).

The Notice recommends that the respondent be suspended from practicing before the Board and the Immigration Courts, for a period of 6 months. The DHS asks that we extend that discipline to practice before it as well. Because the respondent has failed to file an answer, the regulations direct us to adopt the recommendation contained in the Notice, unless there are considerations that compel us to digress from that recommendation. 8 C.F.R. § 1003.105(d)(2). Since the recommendation is appropriate in light of the sanctions imposed in California, we will honor that recommendation.

¹Regulations relating to the Executive Office for Immigration Review, found in title 8 of the Code of Federal Regulations, were reorganized on February 28, 2003, due to the Homeland Security Act of 2002. See 68 FR 9824 (February 28, 2003). There was no substantive changes made to the regulations. *Id.* at 9825. Until February 28, 2003, 8 C.F.R. § 1003.105 was found at 8 C.F.R. § 3.105.

Accordingly, we hereby suspend the respondent from practice before the Board, the Immigration Courts, and the DHS for a period of 6 months. As the respondent is currently under our July 16, 2003, order of suspension, we will deem the respondent's suspension to have commenced on that date. The respondent is instructed to maintain compliance with the directives set forth in our prior order. The respondent is also instructed to notify the Board of any further disciplinary action against him.

After the 6-month suspension period expires, the respondent may petition this Board for reinstatement to practice before the Board, Immigration Courts, and DHS. See 8 C.F.R. § 1003.107(a). In order to be reinstated, the respondent must demonstrate that he meets the definition of an attorney or representative, as set forth in 8 C.F.R. § 1001.1(f) and (j). *Id.* Therefore, the respondent must show that he has been reinstated to the State Bar of California before he may be reinstated by the Board. See 8 C.F.R. § 1001.1(f) (stating that term "attorney" does not include any individual under order suspending him from the practice of law). The respondent may seek earlier reinstatement under appropriate circumstances. See 8 C.F.R. § 1003.107(b).



FOR THE BOARD