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<b>State Bar Court of California</b> <b>HEARING DEPARTMENT</b> <b>LOS ANGELES</b> <b>ACTUAL SUSPENSION</b>		
Counsel for the State Bar  <b>Veronica Trejo</b> <b>Trial Counsel</b> <b>180 Howard Street</b> <b>San Francisco, CA 94105</b> <b>(415) 538-2285</b>  State Bar # <b>277516</b>	Case Number(s): <b>SBC-26-O-30271</b>  (OCTC Case Number: 25-O-25807)	For Court use only  <b>Public Matter</b> <b>FILED</b>  4/6/2026 <sup>B.B.</sup> <b>STATE BAR COURT</b> <b>CLERK'S OFFICE</b> <b>LOS ANGELES</b>
Counsel for Respondent  <b>Art Barsegyan, Esq.</b> <b>Pansky Markle</b> <b>1010 Sycamore Ave., Suite 308</b> <b>South Pasadena, CA 91030</b> <b>(213) 626-7300</b>  State Bar # <b>279064</b>	Submitted to: <b>Settlement Judge</b>  STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND DISPOSITION  ORDER APPROVING STIPULATION (to be attached by court clerk upon State Bar Court approval of stipulation)  <b>ACTUAL SUSPENSION</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> PREVIOUS STIPULATION REJECTED	
In the Matter of:  <b>SEPIDEH ARDESTANI,</b>  State Bar # 274259  (Respondent)		

Note: All information required by this form shall be included in the spaces provided below, unless an attachment is specifically required by the form. A full list of stipulation forms can be found [here](#).

**A. Parties' Acknowledgments:**

- (1) Respondent is an attorney licensed by the State Bar of California, admitted **December 7, 2010**.
- (2) Proposed stipulations for disposition are not binding on the Supreme Court. The parties agree to be bound by the factual stipulations set forth in **section C**, below, even if the conclusions of law or stipulated disposition are rejected by the State Bar Court or the Supreme Court.
- (3) All investigations or proceedings listed by case number in the caption of this stipulation are entirely resolved by this stipulation and are deemed consolidated.

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- (4) The stipulation, including all attachments, consists of **17** pages, not including the proof of service.
- (5) The stipulation contains a statement, included in **section B**, below, that the Respondent either:
  - (a) admits the truth of the facts comprising the stipulation and admits culpability for misconduct; or
  - (b) pleads nolo contendere to those facts and misconduct.
- (6) The stipulation contains a statement of facts in **section C**, below, supporting the acts or omissions acknowledged by Respondent as cause for discipline.
- (7) Conclusions of law, drawn from and specifically referring to the facts set forth in **section C**, are included in **section D**, below.
- (8) Dismissed charge(s)/count(s) are also included in **section D**, below.
- (9) Aggravating and mitigating circumstances are included in **sections E and F**, below. An authenticated copy of any prior record of discipline, as specified in Hearing Department [General Order 17-07](#) filed October 19, 2017, must be attached.
- (10) Supporting authority for the recommended level of discipline is included in **section G**, below.
- (11) Respondent must complete all court-ordered conditions as directed by the State Bar's Office of Case Management & Supervision (OCMS) and at Respondent's expense.
- (12) No more than 30 days prior to the submission of this stipulation to the State Bar Court, Respondent has been advised in writing of any pending investigation/proceeding not resolved by this stipulation, except for any law enforcement agencies' criminal investigations.
- (13) Any stipulation submitted in a proceeding pursuant to Business and Professions Code section 6049.1 must also attach supporting documents, as specified in Hearing Department [General Order 17-07](#) filed October 19, 2017.
- (14) The parties waive any variance/discrepancy between any Notice of Disciplinary Charges filed in this matter and the factual statements and conclusions of law set forth in this stipulation.
- (15) Any monetary requirements imposed in this matter shall be considered satisfied or waived when authorized by applicable law or orders of any court.
- (16) Upon State Bar Court approval of this stipulation, the court clerk will file the stipulation with the Order Approving Stipulation attached.
- (17) **Additional Acknowledgements by the Parties:**

## **B. Plea Statement:**

- (1)  **Respondent Admits Culpability**  
Respondent admits the truth of the facts comprising the stipulation and admits culpability for misconduct; or
- (2)  **Respondent Pleads Nolo Contendere**

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Respondent pleads nolo contendere to the facts comprising the stipulation and culpability for misconduct.

- As set forth in the **separate attachment entitled [Nolo Contendere Plea](#)**, the stipulation shows “that the attorney understands that the plea is treated as an admission of the stipulated facts and an admission of culpability.” (Rules Proc. of State Bar, rule 5.56(B).)

### C. Factual Stipulations:

1. On February 16, 2024, plaintiff Teniah Tercero (“Tercero”), filed a wage-and-hour class action complaint against defendants Sacramento Logistics, LLC and C&S Wholesale Grocers, LLC (collectively “defendants”) in Sacramento County Superior Court.
2. On March 27, 2024, defendants removed this action to federal district court. Respondent represented Tercero in the resulting federal action, *Tercero v. Sacramento Logistics, LLC*, Case No. 2:24-cv-00953-DC-JDP, before the United States District Court, Eastern District of California.
3. On January 7, 2025, the court issued an order granting defendants’ motion to compel arbitration of Tercero’s individual claims and staying all proceedings pending completion of arbitration.
4. On March 26, 2025, Respondent filed on behalf of Tercero a Motion for Reconsideration of the court’s January 7, 2025, order. The Motion for Reconsideration contained numerous internal citations and quotes from decisions that were non-existent, did not contain the language quoted, or did not support the propositions for which they were offered. Respondent did not take any measures to verify the accuracy and legitimacy of all case citations and quotations in the motion prior to submission.
5. On April 9, 2025, defendants filed an Opposition to Plaintiff’s Motion for Reconsideration, which noted citations to decisions that were non-existent, did not contain the language quoted, or did not support the propositions for which they were offered in the Motion for Reconsideration filed by Respondent.
6. On April 18, 2025, Respondent filed a reply stating that all erroneous citations were “minor” and “typographical errors.”
7. On June 13, 2025, the parties appeared before the court on Plaintiff’s Motion for Reconsideration and Motion for Remand. During the appearance, the court asked Respondent about several of the citations in her motion, including two citations to cases that did not exist. Respondent attempted to explain some of the errors by stating that because she handwrote her research notes, she “might have plugged in...case names and citations” from research she was doing for a family friend on an unrelated matter.
8. On June 16, 2025, the court issued an Order to Show Cause (“OSC”) ordering Respondent to show cause why sanctions or other disciplinary action should not be issued for Respondent’s use of nonexistent and erroneous citations in Plaintiff’s Motion for Reconsideration.
9. On June 20, 2025, Respondent submitted a declaration in response to the OSC stating, in relevant part, that in preparing and filing Plaintiff’s Motion for Reconsideration “any miscited cases in Plaintiff’s Motion were the result of human error...”; at the time she wrote the motion she “was also conducting research...for a family friend”; she “recorded case names, citations, and summaries of holdings by hand on a legal pad rather than typing them into a Word document”; and she believes the “errors in case names and citations stemmed from inaccuracies in [her] handwritten notes.” Respondent did not provide any documentation to the court or to the State Bar to support any of these statements, including the notes on the legal pad on which she asserted she wrote the case names and citations.
10. On September 9, 2025, the court sanctioned Respondent, finding that the majority of Respondent’s citations in Plaintiff’s Motion for Reconsideration were erroneous, including two citations to cases that do not exist. The court found Respondent was not forthcoming regarding her nonexistent and erroneous citations. The

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court spent significant time conducting an independent careful review of all the citations in Plaintiff's Motion for Reconsideration. The court noted that the harm to the Eastern District of California was particularly noteworthy because it has one of the largest caseloads in the country. The court stated that Respondent's conduct led to a "waste of limited time and judicial resources in a district that has labored under a long-standing caseload crisis."

11. On September 10, 2025, Respondent paid the judicial sanction of \$1,500.

#### D. Conclusions of Law:

[1] If Any Dismissals – List Case Number, Count, and Alleged Violation Here.

12. By signing and submitting Plaintiff's Motion for Reconsideration to the court in *Tercero v. Sacramento Logistics, LLC*, Case No. 2:24-cv-00953-DC-JDP on March 26, 2025, without verifying the accuracy and legitimacy of all case citations in the motion prior to submission, which resulted in the submission to the court of a pleading that contained numerous internal citations and quotes from decisions that were non-existent, did not contain the language quoted, or did not support the propositions for which they were offered, Respondent recklessly and with gross negligence failed to perform legal services with competence on behalf of her client, Tercero, in a matter in which Respondent had agreed to perform legal services, in willful violation of Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 1.1(a).
13. By signing and submitting to the court in *Tercero v. Sacramento Logistics, LLC*, Case No. 2:24-cv-00953-DC-JDP on March 26, 2025, Plaintiff's Motion for Reconsideration that contained numerous internal citations and quotes from decisions that were non-existent, did not contain the language quoted, or did not support the propositions for which they were offered, Respondent through gross negligence committed acts involving moral turpitude in willful violation of Business and Professions Code section 6106.

#### E. Aggravating Circumstances [Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct, standards 1.2(h) & 1.5]:

**Significant Harm to Client, Public or Administration of Justice (Std. 1.5(j)):** Respondent filed a motion with numerous citations consisting of quotes from decisions that were nonexistent, did not contain the language quoted, or did not support the propositions for which they were offered. The court spent significant time conducting an independent careful review of all the citations in Plaintiff's Motion for Reconsideration as well as discussing the citations at the June 13, 2025, hearing. The court noted that the harm to the Eastern District of California was particularly noteworthy because it has one of the largest caseloads in the country. The court stated that Respondent's conduct led to a "waste of limited time and judicial resources in a district that has labored under a long-standing caseload crisis." (See *In the Matter of Maloney & Virsik* (Review Dept. 2005) 4 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr. 774, 792 [significant harm to administration of justice found in aggravation where an attorney's pleadings claiming the opposing party was dismissing case, when it was not, interfered with the proper administration of justice].)

**Lack of Candor (Std. 1.5(l)):** Respondent was not forthcoming to the court regarding her use of nonexistent and erroneous citations. Respondent did not provide any documentation to the court or to the State Bar to support any of her explanations for the nonexistent and erroneous citations in the Motion for Reconsideration, including the notes on the legal pad on which she asserted she wrote the case names and citations.

#### F. Mitigating Circumstances [Standards 1.2(i) & 1.6]:

**No Prior Discipline:** Respondent was admitted to the State Bar of California on December 7, 2010, and had over 14 years of discipline-free practice at the time of the misconduct. (*Hawes v. State Bar* (1990) 51 Cal.3d 587, 596 [more than ten years of discipline-free practice entitled to significant mitigation].)

**Good Character:** Respondent provided nine character letters from a wide range of references, including six attorneys who have known Respondent for decades. The authors of the letters have all known Respondent for extended periods of time, ranging anywhere between 3 and 38 years. The letters reflect an awareness and understanding of

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Respondent's underlying misconduct and nonetheless attest to Respondent's good character. Respondent is entitled to significant mitigation for good character. (*In the Matter of Lingwood* (Review Dept. 2019) 5 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr. 660, 675-676 [where respondent's character witnesses included a wide range of people who had known respondent for a long time; each witness had a basic understanding of charges against respondent; and witnesses believed respondent had strong moral character, respondent entitled to substantial weight in mitigation].)

**Family Problems:** In March 2025, at the time Respondent filed the Motion for Reconsideration at issue, Respondent was experiencing significant family difficulties that detracted her time, attention, and focus for her work. Respondent's 81-year-old father who is mute, wheelchair-bound, and paraplegic due to late-stage Parkinson's disease, requires around-the-clock care. Respondent spent significant time serving as her father's caretaker during a two-week period when her father's professional caretaker was unavailable. This caused Respondent mental, emotional, and physical stress which contributed to the misconduct herein. (*In the Matter of Hunter* (Review Dept. 1994) 3 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr. 81 [mitigating weight for emotional difficulties suffered by respondent in dealing with family problems].)

**Pre-filing stipulation:** By entering into this stipulation, Respondent will have acknowledged misconduct and will be entitled to mitigation for recognition of wrongdoing and saving the State Bar significant resources and time. (*Silva-Vidor v. State Bar* (1989) 49 Cal.3d 1071, 1079 [where mitigative credit was given for entering into a stipulation as to facts and culpability]; *In the Matter of Spaith* (Review Dept. 1996) 3 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr. 511, 521 [where the attorney's stipulation to facts and culpability was held to be a mitigating circumstance].)

## G. Discussion of Recommended Level of Discipline and Authorities Supporting Discipline:

The Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct "set forth a means for determining the appropriate disciplinary sanction in a particular case and to ensure consistency across cases dealing with similar misconduct and surrounding circumstances." (Rules Proc. of State Bar, tit. IV, Stds. for Atty. Sanctions for Prof. Misconduct, std. 1.1. All further references to Standards are to this source.) The Standards help fulfill the primary purposes of discipline, which include protection of the public, the courts, and the legal profession; maintenance of the highest professional standards; and preservation of public confidence in the legal profession. (See Standard 1.1; *In re Morse* (1995) 11 Cal.4th 184, 205.)

Although not binding, the standards are entitled to "great weight" and should be followed "whenever possible" in determining level of discipline. (*In re Silverton* (2005) 36 Cal.4th 81, 92, quoting *In re Brown* (1995) 12 Cal.4th 205, 220 and *In re Young* (1989) 49 Cal.3d 257, 267, fn. 11.) Adherence to the Standards in the great majority of cases serves the valuable purpose of eliminating disparity and assuring consistency, that is, the imposition of similar attorney discipline for instances of similar attorney misconduct. (*In re Naney* (1990) 51 Cal.3d 186, 190.) If a recommendation is at the high end or low end of a Standard, an explanation must be given as to how the recommendation was reached. (Standard 1.1.) "Any disciplinary recommendation that deviates from the Standards must include clear reasons for the departure." (Standard 1.1; *Blair v. State Bar* (1989) 49 Cal.3d 762, 776 & fn. 5.)

In determining whether to impose a sanction greater or less than that specified in a given Standard, in addition to the factors set forth in the specific Standard, consideration is to be given to the primary purposes of discipline; the balancing of all aggravating and mitigation circumstances; the type of misconduct at issue; whether the client, public, legal system or profession was harmed; and the member's willingness and ability to conform to ethical responsibilities in the future. (Stds. 1.7(b) and (c).)

Standard 2.7(c) applies to Respondent's performance violation of Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 1.1(a), which was limited in scope and time, and provides for a presumed sanction of suspension or reproof, with the degree of sanction depending on the extent of the misconduct and the degree of harm to the client or clients.

Standard 2.11 provides that disbarment or actual suspension is the presumed sanction and applies to Respondent's misrepresentations made in the Motion for Reconsideration through gross negligence in signing and submitting to the court a pleading that contained internal citations and quotes from decisions that were non-existent, did not contain the language quoted, or did not support the propositions for which they were offered. The degree of sanction depends on the magnitude of the misconduct; the extent to which the misconduct harmed or misled the victim, the impact on the administration of justice, if any, and the extent to which the misconduct related to the practice of law. Because

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Standard 2.11 calls for the most severe sanction, disbarment or actual suspension, it applies to Respondent's acts of misconduct.

Although Respondent's misconduct was limited to the filing of one pleading, it was so extensive that it caused the court to spend significant time and resources to conduct an independent careful review of all the citations in the pleading and thereafter with regard to the OSC. The court noted that the harm to the Eastern District of California was particularly noteworthy because it has one of the largest caseloads in the country. Respondent's misconduct thus caused significant harm to the administration of justice and the public, which is an aggravating factor. Respondent also exhibited a lack of candor when the court inquired as to the nonexistent and erroneous citations. It is unclear to date as to how and why the nonexistent and erroneous citations ended up in the motion. In mitigation, Respondent had over 14 years of discipline-free practice prior to her misconduct, she has presented evidence of good character, was experiencing emotional difficulties at the time of the misconduct, and is entering into a pre-filing stipulation, which is an acknowledgement of wrongdoing.

Based on the foregoing, a one-year suspension, execution of which is stayed, and a one-year period of probation with conditions, including a 30-day actual suspension, passage of the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination, and 10 hours of Minimum Continuing Legal Education ("MCLE") focused on technology, with at least five of those hours addressed to the benefits and risks of AI tools in legal work, will adequately serve the purposes of attorney discipline in this case.

Case law supports the recommended level of discipline. In *Drociak v. State Bar* (1991) 52 Cal.3d 1085, an attorney was found culpable of moral turpitude conduct when he answered interrogatories in a client's matter and attached the client's presigned verifications to the interrogatories, without first consulting with the client to verify the answers. In aggravation, the attorney had other clients sign blank verifications; he demonstrated no remorse for his conduct; and his misconduct posed a threat of harm to the administration of justice. In mitigation, the attorney had 25 years of practice with no prior discipline; there was no harm to his client; and he believed he was acting in the best interests of his client. The Supreme Court affirmed the Review Department's discipline recommendation of a one-year stayed suspension and two years probation on conditions, including a 30-day actual suspension.

Respondent filed a motion with the court which contained numerous internal citations and quotes from decisions that were non-existent, did not contain the language quoted, or did not support the propositions for which they were offered. Like the attorney in *Drociak*, Respondent committed an act involving moral turpitude by confirming the veracity of a document upon which a court would expect to rely, when she in fact did not verify its accuracy. Therefore, like the attorney in *Drociak*, respondent's misconduct caused significant harm to the administration of justice. While Respondent exhibited a lack of candor when confronted by the court regarding the nonexistent and erroneous citations, she has exhibited some amount of recognition of wrongdoing by entering the present stipulation. While Respondent does not have as many years of discipline-free practice as Drociak, she nonetheless has 14 years of discipline-free practice, which is significant, and has presented evidence of good character and emotional difficulties at time of the misconduct. Thus, balancing the nature of the misconduct, and the mitigating and aggravating factors, a level of discipline commensurate to that imposed in *Drociak* is warranted. In light of the foregoing, a one-year stayed suspension, a one-year probation with conditions, including a 30-day period of actual suspension, passage of the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination, and 10 hours of MCLE focused on technology, with at least five of those hours addressed to the benefits and risks of AI tools in legal work, will adequately serve the purposes of attorney discipline in this case.

## H. Recommended Discipline:

(1)  **Actual Suspension:**

Respondent is suspended from the practice of law for **one year**, execution of that suspension is stayed, and Respondent is placed on probation for **one year** with the following conditions:

- Respondent must be suspended from the practice of law for the first **30 days** of the probation period.

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(2)  **Actual Suspension and Until Rehabilitation:**

Respondent is suspended from the practice of law for **LENGTH OF TIME**, execution of that suspension is stayed, and Respondent is placed on probation for **LENGTH OF TIME** with the following conditions:

- Respondent must be suspended from the practice of law for a minimum of the first **LENGTH OF TIME** of probation and until Respondent provides proof to the State Bar Court of rehabilitation, fitness to practice, and present learning and ability in the general law. (Rules Proc. of State Bar, tit. IV, Stds. for Atty. Sanctions for Prof. Misconduct, std. 1.2(c)(1).)

(3)  **Actual Suspension and Until Restitution and Rehabilitation:**

Respondent is suspended from the practice of law for **LENGTH OF TIME**, execution of that suspension is stayed, and Respondent is placed on probation for **LENGTH OF TIME** with the following conditions:

- Respondent must be suspended from the practice of law for a minimum of the first **LENGTH OF TIME** of probation, and Respondent will remain suspended until both of the following requirements are satisfied:
  - a. Respondent makes restitution, including the principal amount plus 10 percent interest per year (and furnishes satisfactory proof of such restitution to the State Bar's Office of Case Management & Supervision (OCMS)), to each of the following payee(s) or such other recipient(s) as may be designated by the OCMS or the State Bar Court (or reimburse(s) the Client Security Fund, to the extent of any payment from the Fund to such payee(s), in accordance with Business and Professions Code section 6140.5) and using the payment method directed by the OCMS. Reimbursement to the Fund is enforceable as a money judgment and may be collected by the State Bar through any means permitted by law:

<i>Payee</i>	<i>Principal Amount</i>	<i>Interest Accrues From</i>
NAME	\$AMOUNT	DATE
NAME	\$AMOUNT	DATE
NAME	\$AMOUNT	DATE
NAME	\$AMOUNT	DATE
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional payees listed in an attachment to this form. See page number(s) <b>PAGE #</b>		

- b. Respondent provides proof to the State Bar Court of Respondent's rehabilitation, fitness to practice, and present learning and ability in the general law. (Rules Proc. of State Bar, tit. IV, Stds. for Atty. Sanctions for Prof. Misconduct, std. 1.2(c)(1).)

(4)  **Actual Suspension and Until Restitution with Conditional Rehabilitation:**

Respondent is suspended from the practice of law for **LENGTH OF TIME**, execution of that suspension is stayed, and Respondent is placed on probation for **LENGTH OF TIME** with the following conditions:

- Respondent must be suspended from the practice of law for a minimum for the first **LENGTH OF TIME** of probation, and Respondent will remain suspended until the following requirements are satisfied:
  - a. Respondent makes restitution, including the principal amount plus 10 percent interest per year (and furnishes satisfactory proof of such restitution to the State Bar's Office of Case Management & Supervision (OCMS)), to each of the following payee(s) or such other recipient(s) as may be designated by the OCMS or the State Bar Court (or reimburse(s) the Client Security Fund, to the extent of any payment from the Fund to such payee(s), in

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accordance with Business and Professions Code section 6140.5) and using the payment method directed by the OCMS. Reimbursement to the Fund is enforceable as a money judgment and may be collected by the State Bar through any means permitted by law:

<b>Payee</b>	<b>Principal Amount</b>	<b>Interest Accrues From</b>
NAME	\$AMOUNT	DATE
NAME	\$AMOUNT	DATE
NAME	\$AMOUNT	DATE
NAME	\$AMOUNT	DATE
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional payees listed in an attachment to this form. See page number(s) PAGE #		

- b. If Respondent remains suspended for two years or longer, Respondent must provide proof to the State Bar Court of rehabilitation, fitness to practice, and present learning and ability in the general law. (Rules Proc. of State Bar, tit. IV, Stds. for Atty. Sanctions for Prof. Misconduct, std. 1.2(c)(1).)

(5)  **Actual Suspension with Credit for Interim Suspension:**

Respondent is given credit towards the above-recommended period of actual suspension for the period of interim suspension which commenced on ENTER DATE.

**I. Additional Conditions of Probation:**

- (1)  **Commencement of Probation/Compliance with Probation Conditions.** The period of probation will commence on the effective date of the Supreme Court order imposing discipline in this matter. At the expiration of the probation period, if Respondent has complied with all probation conditions, the period of stayed suspension will be satisfied and that suspension will be terminated.
- (2)  **Comply with State Bar Act, Rules of Professional Conduct, and Probation Conditions.** Respondent must comply with the provisions of the California Rules of Professional Conduct, the State Bar Act (Business and Professions Code sections 6000 et seq.), and all probation conditions.
- (3)  **Review Rules and Statutes on Professional Conduct.** Within 30 days after the effective date of the Supreme Court order imposing discipline in this matter, Respondent must read the California Rules of Professional Conduct and Business and Professions Code sections 6067, 6068, and 6103 through 6126. Respondent must provide a declaration, under penalty of perjury, attesting to compliance with this requirement, to the OCMS no later than the deadline for Respondent’s first quarterly report.
- (4)  **Complete E-Learning Course Reviewing Rules and Statutes on Professional Conduct.** Within 90 days after the effective date of the Supreme Court order imposing discipline in this matter, Respondent must complete the e-learning course entitled “California Rules of Professional Conduct and State Bar Act Overview”. Respondent must provide a declaration, under penalty of perjury, attesting to compliance with this requirement, to the OCMS no later than the deadline for Respondent’s quarterly report due immediately after the 90-day period for course completion.
- (5)  **Maintain Valid Official State Bar Record Address and Other Required Contact Information.** Within 30 days after the effective date of the Supreme Court order imposing discipline in this matter, Respondent must make certain that the State Bar Office of Licensee Records and Compliance (LR&C) has Respondent’s (1) current office address and telephone number, or if none, an alternative address and telephone number; and (2) a current email address (unless granted an exemption by the State Bar by using the form approved by LR&C, pursuant to California Rules of Court, rule 9.9(d)), not to be disclosed on the State Bar’s website or otherwise to the public without the licensee’s consent. Respondent must

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report, in writing, any change in the above information to LR&C within 10 days after such change, in the manner required by LR&C.

(6)  **Meet and Cooperate with the OCMS:**

- a. Within 15 days after the effective date of the Supreme Court order imposing discipline in this matter, Respondent **must schedule** with the assigned OCMS Probation Case Coordinator, a meeting or meetings either in-person, by telephone, or by remote video (at the OCMS Probation Case Coordinator's discretion) to review the terms and conditions of probation. The intake **meeting must occur** within 30 days after the effective date of the Supreme Court order imposing discipline in this matter.
- b. During the period of probation, Respondent must (1) meet with representatives of the OCMS as directed by the OCMS; (2) subject to the assertion of applicable privileges, fully, promptly, and truthfully answer any inquiries by the OCMS and provide any other information requested by the OCMS; and (3) meaningfully participate in the intake meeting and in the supervision and support process, which may include exploring the circumstances that caused the misconduct and assisting in the identification of resources and interventions to promote an ethical, competent practice.
- c. If at any time the OCMS determines that additional probation conditions are required, the OCMS or the Office of Chief Trial Counsel of the State Bar may file a motion with the State Bar Court to request that additional conditions be attached pursuant to rule 5.300 of the Rules of Procedure of the State Bar and California Rules of Court, rule 9.10(c).

(7)  **State Bar Court Retains Jurisdiction/Appear Before and Cooperate with State Bar Court.** During the probation period, the State Bar Court retains jurisdiction over Respondent to address issues concerning compliance with probation conditions. During probation, Respondent must appear before the State Bar Court as required by the court or by the OCMS after written notice to Respondent's official State Bar record address and e-mail address (unless granted an exemption from providing one by the State Bar as provided pursuant to condition 5, above). Subject to the assertion of applicable privileges, Respondent must fully, promptly, and truthfully answer any inquiries by the court and must provide any other information the court requests.

(8)  **Quarterly and Final Reports:**

a. **Deadlines for Reports.**

- I. **Quarterly Reports.** Respondent must submit quarterly reports to the OCMS no later than each January 10 (covering October 1 through December 31 of the prior year), April 10 (covering January 1 through March 31), July 10 (covering April 1 through June 30), and October 10 (covering July 1 through September 30) within the period of probation. If the first report would cover less than 45 days, that report must be submitted on the next quarter due date and cover the extended deadline.
- II. **Final Report.** In addition to all quarterly reports, Respondent must submit a final report no earlier than 10 days before the last day of the probation period, and no later than the last day of probation.

- b. **Contents of Reports.** Respondent must answer, under penalty of perjury, all inquiries contained in the report form provided by the OCMS, including stating whether Respondent has complied with the State Bar Act and the California Rules of Professional Conduct during the applicable period. All reports must be: (1) submitted on the written or electronic form provided by the OCMS; (2) signed and dated after the completion of the period for which the report is being submitted (except for the final report); (3) filled out completely and signed under penalty of perjury in a manner that meets the requirements set forth in the Rules of Procedure of the State Bar and the Rules of Practice of the State Bar Court; and (4) submitted to the OCMS on or before each report's due date.

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- c. **Submission of Reports.** All reports must be submitted to the OCMS. The preferred method of submission is via the portal on Respondent’s “My State Bar Profile” account that is accessed through the State Bar website. If unable to use the portal, reports may be submitted via (1) email; (2) certified mail, return receipt requested (postmarked on or before the due date); (3) other tracked-service provider, such as Federal Express or United Parcel Service, etc. (physically delivered to such provider on or before the due date); (4) fax; or (5) personal delivery.
- d. **Proof of Compliance.** Respondent must maintain proof of compliance with the above requirements for each submitted report for a minimum of one year after the probation period has ended. Respondent is required to present such proof upon request by the State Bar, the OCMS, or the State Bar Court.

- (9)  **State Bar of California Ethics School.** Within nine months after the effective date of the Supreme Court order imposing discipline in this matter, Respondent must submit to the OCMS satisfactory evidence of completion of the State Bar of California Ethics School and passage of the test given at the end of that session. This requirement is separate from any Minimum Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) requirement, and Respondent will not receive MCLE credit for attending Ethics School.

Respondent is encouraged to register for and complete Ethics School at the earliest opportunity. If Respondent provides satisfactory evidence of completion of Ethics School and passage of the test given at the end of the session prior to the effective date of the Supreme Court order imposing discipline in this matter but after the date this stipulation is filed, Respondent will receive credit for completing this condition.

- (10)  **State Bar of California Ethics School Not Recommended.** It is not recommended that Respondent be ordered to attend the State Bar of California Ethics School because Respondent completed the course on November 6, 2025.

- (11)  **State Bar of California Client Trust Accounting School.** Within nine months after the effective date of the Supreme Court order imposing discipline in this matter, Respondent must submit to the OCMS satisfactory evidence of completion of the State Bar Client Trust Accounting School and passage of the test given at the end of that session. This requirement is separate from any Minimum Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) requirement, and Respondent will not receive MCLE credit for attending this session.

Respondent is encouraged to register for and complete Client Trust Accounting School at the earliest opportunity. If Respondent provides satisfactory evidence of completion of Client Trust Accounting School and passage of the test given at the end of the session prior to the effective date of the Supreme Court order imposing discipline in this matter but after the date this stipulation is filed, Respondent will receive credit for completing this condition.

- (12)  **Proof of Compliance with Rule 9.20 Obligations.** Respondent is directed to maintain, for a minimum of one year after commencement of probation, proof of compliance with the Supreme Court’s order that Respondent comply with the requirements of California Rules of Court, rule 9.20 (a) and (c), as recommended below. Such proof must include: the names and addresses of all individuals and entities to whom Respondent sent notification pursuant to rule 9.20; a copy of each notification letter sent to each recipient; the original receipt or postal authority tracking document for each notification sent; the originals of all returned receipts and notifications of non-delivery; and a copy of the completed compliance affidavit filed by Respondent with the State Bar Court. Respondent is required to present such proof upon request by the State Bar, the OCMS, or the State Bar Court.

- (13)  **Restitution.** SELECT ONE of the period of probation, Respondent must make restitution, including the principal amount plus 10 percent interest per year (and furnish satisfactory proof to the OCMS that restitution has been satisfied), to each of the following payee(s) or such other recipient(s) as may be designated by the OCMS or the State Bar Court (or reimburse(s) the Client Security Fund, to the extent of

(Do not write above this line)

any payment from the Fund to such payee(s), in accordance with Business and Professions Code section 6140.5) and using the payment method directed by the OCMS. Reimbursement to the Fund is enforceable as a money judgment and may be collected by the State Bar through any means permitted by law. Such restitution may be made by partial payments or by a single lump sum payment during the period set forth above unless otherwise specified:

<b>Payee</b>	<b>Principal Amount</b>	<b>Interest Accrues From</b>
NAME	\$AMOUNT	DATE
NAME	\$AMOUNT	DATE
NAME	\$AMOUNT	DATE
NAME	\$AMOUNT	DATE
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional payees listed in an attachment to this form. See page number(s) PAGE #		

- (14)  **Installment Restitution as Directed by the OCMS.** In addition to the above deadline for completing restitution, Respondent must make installment payments for as long as the full amount of restitution remains unsatisfied as directed by the OCMS, including using the payment method directed by the OCMS, if any. Respondent will be deemed delinquent if any payment is not timely submitted as directed by the OCMS to such payee(s), or to such other recipient(s) as may be designated by the OCMS or the State Bar Court. The obligation to make installment payments to a particular payee will terminate when the full amount of restitution owed to that payee, including accrued interest, has been paid. If Respondent fails to timely pay any installment as described above, or as may be modified in writing by the OCMS or the State Bar Court, the remaining balance is due and payable immediately.

With each quarterly and final report, or as otherwise directed by the OCMS, Respondent must provide satisfactory proof of such installment payments to the OCMS.

- (15)  **Installment Restitution.** In addition to the above deadline for completing restitution, Respondent must make installment payments for as long as the full amount of restitution remains unsatisfied according to the following schedule. Payments will be due on the **SELECT ONE** commencing 60 days immediately following the effective date of the Supreme Court order imposing discipline and will be deemed delinquent if not submitted to such payee(s), or such other recipient(s) as may be designated by the OCMS or the State Bar Court. If Respondent fails to timely pay any installment as described below, or as may be modified in writing by the State Bar Court, the remaining balance is due and payable immediately. The obligation to make installment payments to a particular payee will terminate when the full amount of restitution owed to that payee, including accrued interest, has been paid.

With each quarterly and final report, or as otherwise directed by the OCMS, Respondent must provide satisfactory proof of such installment payments to the OCMS.

<b>Payee</b>	<b>Minimum Payment Amount</b>
NAME	\$AMOUNT
NAME	\$AMOUNT
NAME	\$AMOUNT
NAME	\$AMOUNT
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional payees listed in an attachment to this form. See page number(s) PAGE #	

- (16)  **Reporting re Safekeeping Funds and Property of Clients and Other Persons.** Respondent must comply with rule 1.15 of the California Rules of Professional Conduct and the Standards adopted by the State Bar Board of Trustees pursuant to rule 1.15(e). Respondent must also comply with the following reporting requirements:

- a. If Respondent received or held funds, securities, and/or other property for a client or other person to whom Respondent owed a contractual, statutory, and/or other legal duty at any time during the period

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covered by a required quarterly or final report, Respondent must submit with the report for that period a statement, made by Respondent under penalty of perjury, stating whether Respondent handled all such funds, securities, and/or other property in compliance with rule 1.15 of the California Rules of Professional Conduct and the Standards adopted by the State Bar Board of Trustees pursuant to rule 1.15(e).

- b. If Respondent did not receive or hold any funds, securities, and/or other property for a client or other person to whom Respondent owed a contractual, statutory, and/or other legal duty during any part of the period covered by a quarterly or final report, Respondent must so state under penalty of perjury in the report filed with the OCMS for that reporting period.

(17)  **Reporting re Safekeeping Funds and Property of Clients and Other Persons (Accountant Certification – 1st Reporting Period That Respondent Received or Held Funds, Securities, and/or Other Property).** Respondent must comply with rule 1.15 of the California Rules of Professional Conduct and the Standards adopted by the State Bar Board of Trustees pursuant to rule 1.15(e). Respondent must also comply with the following reporting requirements:

- a. For the first period during which Respondent receives or holds funds, securities, and/or other property, for a client or other person to whom Respondent owed a contractual, statutory, and/or other legal duty, Respondent must submit a statement from a certified public accountant or other financial professional approved by the OCMS. The statement must set forth whether Respondent handled all such funds, securities, and/or other property in compliance with rule 1.15 of the California Rules of Professional Conduct and the Standards adopted by the State Bar Board of Trustees pursuant to rule 1.15(e).
- b. For all subsequent periods during which Respondent receives or holds funds, securities, and/or other property, for a client or other person to whom Respondent owed a contractual, statutory, and/or other legal duty, Respondent must submit with the report for that period a statement, made by Respondent under penalty of perjury, stating whether Respondent handled all such funds, securities, and/or other property in compliance with rule 1.15 of the California Rules of Professional Conduct and the Standards adopted by the State Bar Board of Trustees pursuant to rule 1.15(e).
- c. If Respondent did not receive or hold any funds, securities, and/or other property for a client or other person to whom Respondent owed a contractual, statutory, and/or other legal duty during any part of the period covered by a quarterly or final report, Respondent must so state under penalty of perjury in the report filed with the OCMS for that reporting period.

(18)  **Criminal Probation.** Respondent must comply with all probation conditions imposed by the sentencing court and directions of probation, if any, in the underlying criminal matter: List Criminal Court and Case Numbers.

Respondent must report such compliance under penalty of perjury in all quarterly and final reports submitted to the OCMS covering any portion of the period of the criminal probation. In each quarterly and final report, if Respondent has an assigned criminal probation officer, Respondent must provide the name and current contact information for that officer. If the criminal probation was successfully completed during the period covered by a quarterly or final report, that fact must be included in the report and satisfactory evidence of such must be provided with the report.

If, during the period of probation, Respondent is alleged to have violated any conditions of the criminal probation in any manner, Respondent must submit the probation records or criminal court records regarding any such action to the OCMS within 10 days of the action or with the next quarterly or final report to the OCMS, whichever is earlier.

(19)  **Minimum Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) Courses – California Legal Ethics.** No later than 90 days prior to the end of the probation period, Respondent must complete NUMBER hour(s) of participatory

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activity approved as California MCLE in the subject of California legal ethics and must provide proof of such completion to the OCMS. This requirement is separate from the State Bar established MCLE requirements for California licensees, and Respondent will not receive MCLE credit for these MCLE sessions.

Respondent is encouraged to register for and complete this MCLE at the earliest opportunity. If Respondent completes the MCLE, which meets the requirements above, prior to the effective date of the Supreme Court order imposing discipline in this matter but after the date this stipulation is filed and provides satisfactory evidence of completion, Respondent will receive credit for completing this condition.

- (20)  **Minimum Continuing Legal Education (MCLE).** No later than 90 days prior to the end of the probation period, Respondent must complete **10** hour(s) of participatory activity approved as California MCLE in **technology, with at least 5 of those hours addressing the risks and benefits of the use of AI tools in legal work** and must provide proof of completion of the MCLE to the OCMS. This requirement is separate from the State Bar established MCLE requirements for California licensees, and Respondent will not receive MCLE credit for these MCLE sessions.

Respondent is encouraged to register for and complete this MCLE at the earliest opportunity. If Respondent completes the MCLE, which meets the requirements above, prior to the effective date of the Supreme Court order imposing discipline in this matter but after the date this stipulation is filed and provides satisfactory evidence of completion, Respondent will receive credit for completing this condition.

- (21)  **Behavioral Health and/or Substance Use.** No later than 15 days after the effective date of the Supreme Court order imposing discipline in this matter, Respondent must contact the State Bar of California's Lawyer Assistance Program (LAP) to schedule an intake assessment. No later than 30 days after the effective date of the Supreme Court order imposing discipline in this matter, Respondent must provide to the OCMS (1) a copy of the LAP form confirming completion of the intake assessment; and (2) the signed OCMS waiver authorizing LAP to provide to the OCMS and the State Bar Court information regarding the terms and conditions of Respondent's participation in the LAP and Respondent's compliance or non-compliance with the LAP requirements. Revocation of the OCMS waiver is a violation of this condition. Respondent is encouraged to begin the LAP intake process and may begin participating in the LAP prior to the effective date of the order imposing discipline in this matter.

If Respondent qualifies for the LAP, Respondent must fully comply with all requirements of the LAP. In each of the quarterly and final reports, Respondent must report whether Respondent complied with the LAP requirements. Withdrawal or involuntary termination from the LAP constitutes a violation of this condition.

If Respondent does not qualify for the LAP, but LAP determines that Respondent does have a substance use or behavioral health issue, then the OCMS may move to modify to add an alternate treatment condition(s), including, but not limited to, psychiatric or psychological counseling or treatment; alcohol and/or drug abstinence; abstinence program meetings; and laboratory testing, and to add relevant reporting requirements.

- (22)  **Other.** Respondent must also comply with the following additional conditions of probation:

## J. Other Requirements Negotiated by the Parties (Not Probation Conditions):

- (1)  **Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE) Within One Year or During Period of Actual Suspension.** It is further recommended that Respondent be ordered to do the following within one year after the effective date of the Supreme Court order imposing discipline in this matter or during the period of Respondent's actual suspension in this matter, whichever is longer:

(Do not write above this line)

- a. Take and pass the MPRE administered by the National Conference of Bar Examiners;
- b. During registration, select California as the jurisdiction to receive Respondent’s score report; and
- c. Provide satisfactory proof of such passage directly to the OCMS.

Respondent is encouraged to register for and pass the MPRE at the earliest opportunity. If Respondent provides satisfactory evidence Respondent passed the MPRE prior to the effective date of the Supreme Court order imposing discipline in this matter but after the date this stipulation is filed, Respondent will receive credit for completing this requirement.

Failure to comply with this requirement may result in suspension. (Cal. Rules of Court, rule 9.10(b).)

- (2)  **Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE) Requirement Not Recommended.** It is not recommended that Respondent be ordered to take and pass the MPRE because **INSERT REASON**.
- (3)  **California Rules of Court, Rule 9.20.** It is further recommended that Respondent be ordered to comply with California Rules of Court, rule 9.20, and to perform the acts specified in (a) and (c) of that rule within 30 and 40 calendar days, respectively, after the date the Supreme Court order imposing discipline in this matter is filed. (*Athearn v. State Bar* (1982) 32 Cal.3d 38, 45 [the operative date for identification of clients being represented in pending matters and others to be notified is the filing date of the Supreme Court order imposing discipline]). Failure to do so may result in disbarment or suspension.

Respondent is required to file a rule 9.20(c) affidavit even if Respondent has no clients to notify on the date the Supreme Court filed its order in this proceeding. (*Powers v. State Bar* (1988) 44 Cal.3d 337, 341.) In addition to being punished as a crime or contempt, an attorney’s failure to comply with rule 9.20 is, inter alia, cause for disbarment, suspension, revocation of any pending disciplinary probation, and denial of an application for reinstatement after disbarment. (Cal. Rules of Court, rule 9.20(d).) The court-approved Rule 9.20 Compliance Declaration form is available on the State Bar Court website under [“Forms.”](#)

- (4)  **California Rules of Court, Rule 9.20, Requirement Not Recommended.** It is not recommended that Respondent be ordered to comply with the requirements of California Rules of Court, rule 9.20, because **INSERT REASON**.
- (5)  **Payment of Monetary Sanctions.** Respondent acknowledges Business and Professions Code section 6086.13 and rule 5.137 of the Rules of Procedure of the State Bar. Monetary sanctions are payable through Respondent’s “My State Bar Profile” account. Further inquiries related to payment of monetary sanctions should be directed to the State Bar’s Division of Regulation. It is further recommended that (check one option only):

- Respondent be ordered to pay monetary sanctions to the State Bar of California Client Security Fund in the amount of **\$1,000** in accordance with Business and Professions Code section 6086.13 and rule 5.137 of the Rules of Procedure of the State Bar. Monetary sanctions are enforceable as a money judgment and may be collected by the State Bar through any means permitted by law. Monetary sanctions must be paid in full as a condition of reinstatement or return to active status, unless time for payment is extended pursuant to rule 5.137 of the Rules of Procedure of the State Bar. Monetary sanctions in the above amount are recommended because Respondent is receiving an actual suspension for failing to perform with competence and for conduct involving moral turpitude, implicating a baseline amount of \$2,500 in monetary sanctions under Rule 5.137(E)(2)(b). However, a downward deviation from this baseline amount is appropriate here where the misconduct was limited to a single event/client matter and because Respondent has presented significant mitigation, including entering into a pre-filing stipulation, and thereby saved the State Bar

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and the State Bar Court significant time and resources. Thus, monetary sanctions in the amount of \$1,000 are appropriate in this case.

- Respondent be ordered to pay monetary sanctions to the State Bar of California Client Security Fund in the amount of \$ENTER AMOUNT in accordance with Business and Professions Code section 6086.13 and rule 5.137 of the Rules of Procedure of the State Bar. Monetary sanctions must be paid in installments with Respondent’s annual fees for each of the following years:

Years	Installment Amount
	\$AMOUNT
	\$AMOUNT
	\$AMOUNT
	\$AMOUNT

If Respondent fails to pay any installment as described above, or as may be modified in writing by the State Bar or the State Bar Court, the remaining balance is due and payable immediately.

Monetary sanctions are enforceable as a money judgment and may be collected by the State Bar through any means permitted by law. Monetary sanctions in the above amount are recommended because INSERT REASON]. Respondent may pay the monetary sanctions in installments because INSERT REASON].

- Respondent be ordered to pay monetary sanctions to the State Bar of California Client Security Fund in the amount of \$ENTER AMOUNT in accordance with Business and Professions Code section 6086.13 and rule 5.137 of the Rules of Procedure of the State Bar. The time to pay such monetary sanctions is extended, and Respondent must pay the sanctions with Respondent’s annual fees by INSERT YEAR. Monetary sanctions are enforceable as a money judgment and may be collected by the State Bar through any means permitted by law. Monetary sanctions in the above amount are recommended because INSERT REASON]. The time to pay such monetary sanctions is extended because INSERT REASON].
- Monetary sanctions are entirely waived because INSERT REASON].

(6)  **Payment of Disciplinary Costs.** Respondent acknowledges the provisions of Business and Professions Code sections 6086.10 and 6140.7. Costs are payable through Respondent’s “My State Bar Profile” account. Further inquiries related to payment of costs should be directed to the State Bar’s Division of Regulation. It is further recommended that (check one option only):

- Costs be awarded to the State Bar in accordance with Business and Professions Code section 6086.10, and are enforceable both as provided in Business and Professions Code section 6140.7 and as a money judgment, and may be collected by the State Bar through any means permitted by law. Unless the time for payment of discipline costs is extended pursuant to subdivision (c) of section 6086.10, costs assessed against an attorney who is actually suspended or disbarred must be paid as a condition of applying for reinstatement or return to active status.
- Costs be awarded to the State Bar in accordance with Business and Professions Code section 6086.10, and are enforceable both as provided in Business and Professions Code section 6140.7 and as a money judgment, and may be collected by the State Bar through any means permitted by law. SELECT ONE of the costs must be paid with Respondent’s annual fees for each of the following years INSERT YEARS.

If Respondent fails to pay any installment as described above, or as may be modified in writing by the State Bar or the State Bar Court, the remaining balance will be due and payable immediately.

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Costs are waived in part as follows: .

Costs are entirely waived.

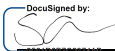


(7)  **Other Requirements:** It is further recommended that Respondent be ordered to comply with the following additional requirements that are not probation conditions: .

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In the Matter of:  SEPIDEH ARDESTANI	Case Number(s):  OCTC CASE No. 25-O-25807
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### SIGNATURE OF THE PARTIES

By their signatures below, the parties and their counsel, as applicable, signify their agreement with each of the recitations and each of the terms and conditions of this Stipulation Re Facts, Conclusions of Law, and Disposition.

2/23/2026   11:08 AM PST		_____	Sepideh Ardestani
Date	Respondent's Signature		Print Name
2/23/2026   11:05 AM PST		_____	Art Barsegyan
Date	Respondent's Counsel Signature		Print Name
2/23/2026   11:10 AM PST		_____	Veronica Trejo
Date	Deputy Trial Counsel's Signature		Print Name



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In the Matter of: <b>SEPIDEH ARDESTANI</b>	Case Number(s): <b>SBC-26-O-30271</b>
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**ACTUAL SUSPENSION ORDER**

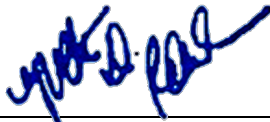
Finding the stipulation to be fair to the parties and that it adequately protects the public, IT IS ORDERED that the requested dismissal of counts/charges, if any, is GRANTED without prejudice, and:

- The stipulated facts and disposition are APPROVED and the DISCIPLINE RECOMMENDED to the Supreme Court.
- The stipulated facts and disposition are APPROVED AS MODIFIED as set forth below, and the DISCIPLINE IS RECOMMENDED to the Supreme Court.
- All Hearing dates are vacated.

On page 17, in the caption at the top, "SBC-26-O-30271" is inserted after "Case Number(s):"

The parties are bound by the stipulation as approved unless: 1) a motion to withdraw or modify the stipulation, filed within 15 days after service of this order, is granted; or 2) this court modifies or further modifies the approved stipulation. (See Rules Proc. of State Bar, rule 5.58(E) & (F).) **The effective date of this disposition is the effective date of the Supreme Court order herein, normally 30 days after the filed date of the Supreme Court order. (See Cal. Rules of Court, rule 9.18(a).)**

April 6, 2026  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
YVETTE D. ROLAND  
Judge of the State Bar Court