

NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

BEFORE THE  
GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR  
15G0491

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IN THE MATTER OF	)	
	)	REPRIMAND
PATRICK M. MEGARO,	)	
ATTORNEY AT LAW	)	

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On October 22, 2015 the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar met and considered the grievance filed against you by the North Carolina State Bar. The grievance was assigned to a Subcommittee, which thoroughly reviewed the results of the State Bar staff's investigation of this matter.

Pursuant to Section .0113(a) of the Discipline and Disability Rules of the North Carolina State Bar, the Grievance Subcommittee conducted a preliminary hearing. After considering the information available to it, including your response to the letter of notice, the Grievance Subcommittee found probable cause. Probable cause is defined in the rules as "reasonable cause to believe that a member of the North Carolina State Bar is guilty of misconduct justifying disciplinary action."

The rules provide that after a finding of probable cause, the Grievance Committee may determine that the filing of a complaint and a hearing before the Disciplinary Hearing Commission are not required, and the Grievance Committee may issue various levels of discipline depending upon the misconduct, the actual or potential injury caused, and any aggravating or mitigating factors. The Grievance Committee may issue an admonition, a reprimand, or a censure to the respondent attorney.

A reprimand is a written form of discipline more serious than an admonition issued in cases in which an attorney has violated one or more provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct and has caused harm or potential harm to a client, the administration of justice, the profession, or a member of the public, but the misconduct does not require a censure.

The Grievance Committee was of the opinion that a censure is not required in this case and issues this reprimand to you. As chairman of the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar, it is now my duty to issue this reprimand.

In 2013, you agreed to work for Brownstone, P.A., an out-of-state law firm not authorized to practice law in North Carolina. While working in this capacity, you aided Brownstone in providing legal services to North Carolina residents.

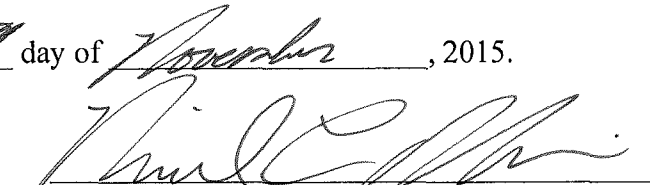
By working with Brownstone to provide legal services to North Carolina residents, you assisted an entity in the unauthorized practice of law in violation of Rule 5.5(f) (formerly Rule 5.5(d)). Additionally, by claiming to clients that you were able to provide legal services via an out-of-state entity that is not authorized to provide legal services here, you participated in making false or misleading statements about your services in violation of Rule 7.1(a).

In determining that a reprimand was appropriate in this case, the Committee took into account the harm that necessarily results whenever attorneys aid unregistered, out-of-state entities in the unauthorized practice of law, particularly when money exchanges hands, court appearances are made, and legal forms are drafted or filed on behalf of others. The Committee also considered your association from June 2014 to June 2015 with another entity named "Appeals Law Group" ("ALG"), a Florida-based law firm that was not, during that time period, authorized to provide legal services in North Carolina as it was not registered as an interstate law firm with the North Carolina State Bar.

You are hereby reprimanded by the North Carolina State Bar for your professional misconduct. The Grievance Committee trusts that you will heed this reprimand, that it will be remembered by you, that it will be beneficial to you, and that you will never again allow yourself to depart from adherence to the high ethical standards of the legal profession.

In accordance with the policy adopted July 23, 2010 by the Council of the North Carolina State Bar regarding the taxing of administrative fees and investigative costs to any attorney issued a reprimand by the Grievance Committee, an administrative fee in the amount of \$350.00 is hereby taxed to you.

Done and ordered, this the 4<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2015.

  
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Michael L. Robinson, Chair  
Grievance Committee

MLR/hp