BEFORE THE HEARING BOARD
OF THE
ILLINOIS ATTORNEY REGISTRATION
AND
DISCIPLINARY COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

LAWRENCE ALLEN STEIN,

Attorney-Respondent,

No. 6216903.

Commission No. 2026PR00056

COMPLAINT

Lea S. Gutierrez, Administrator of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission, by her attorney, Ann R. Pieper, pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 753(b), complains of Respondent, Lawrence Allen Stein, who was licensed to practice law in Illinois on November 4, 1993, and alleges that Respondent has engaged in the following conduct which subjects Respondent to discipline pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 770:

COUNT I
(*Neglect, Failure to Keep Client Informed, and Failure to Return an Unearned Fee in Relation to E.J.'s Civil Matter*)

1. At all times related to this complaint, Respondent was a solo practitioner and owner of the firm known as Lawrence A. Stein, LLC, located in Wheaton. Respondent had a general practice in litigation and focused on estate and trust contests, appeals, and criminal defense matters.

2. On or about October 11, 2024, a person with the initials "E.J." and Respondent agreed that Respondent would represent E.J. in the defense of a lawsuit involving a roofing and siding company that would potentially be filed against E.J. for breach of contract. In or about September 2024, E.J. terminated the roofing and siding company's services for what E.J. considered the company's failure to install new siding and windows to his home within the terms

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of the contract. Respondent and E.J. agreed that E.J. would pay Respondent a $5,000 retainer for his fee to handle the defense of the roofing and siding company's anticipated lawsuit against E.J.

3. On October 16, 2024, E.J. mailed Respondent a cashier's check in the amount of $5,000, along with photographs of the newly installed windows and documents related to the contract entered with the roofing and siding company pursuant to Respondent's request. Respondent later negotiated the cashier's check and used the check's proceeds for his own business and/or personal purposes.

4. Respondent received the cashier's check, copies of the photographs and documents he requested shortly after E.J. sent them.

5. On September 1, 2025, E.J. was served summons and a complaint from the roofing and siding company for charges that included breach of contract and damages in the approximate amount of $10,000.

6. Between September 3, 2025, and September 12, 2025, E.J. made many attempts to contact Respondent via text and email messages requesting that Respondent contact him regarding the lawsuit and the next steps on how Respondent planned to move forward in the matter. Despite receiving these messages, Respondent did not return E.J.'s calls or respond to E.J.'s text and/or email messages.

7. As of September 12, 2025, Respondent had not performed any work on E.J.'s civil lawsuit for which E.J. had paid him.

8. On September 12, 2025, E.J. filed a charge with the Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission regarding Respondent's conduct and requested a refund of the unearned fees paid to Respondent. The Administrator docketed an investigation of E.J.'s allegations and sent Respondent a copy of E.J.'s complaint. When Respondent received the

Administrator's correspondence, if not sooner, he knew that E.J. had terminated his services and requested a refund of any unearned fees.

9. At no time did Respondent perform sufficient work or incur sufficient costs which would entitle him to retain the $5,000 he received from E.J.

10. As of the filing of this complaint with the Hearing Board, Respondent had not refunded any portion of E.J.'s fee.

11. By reason of the conduct described above, Respondent has engaged in the following misconduct:

a. failure to act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client, by conduct including failing to take any action to defend E.J.'s interests in the civil lawsuit filed against him by the roofing and siding company, in violation of Rule 1.3 of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010);

b. failure to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information from a client, by conduct including failing to respond to E.J.'s communications regarding his case, in violation of Rule 1.4(a)(4) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010); and

c. failure to refund an unearned fee after being terminated, by conduct including failure to refund any unearned portion of the $5,000 fee E.J. paid to Respondent, in violation of Rule 1.16(d) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010).

COUNT II
(*Neglect, Failure to Keep Client Informed and Failure to Return an Unearned Fee in Relation to R.G.'s Limited Scope Representation)*

12. On or about August 6, 2025, a person with the initials "R.G." met with Respondent regarding a pending civil action in which R.G.'s company was the plaintiff that had been filed before the Will County Circuit Court, Chancery Division ("Will County matter"). The Will County matter involved a contract dispute between R.G.'s company and another company. At the time that

R.G. met with Respondent, he had been appearing *pro se* in the Will County matter because he had fired the attorney who had been representing his company. A hearing had occurred on the defendant company's motion to dismiss and the court's decision was pending. Respondent and R.G. agreed that Respondent would represent R.G. in a limited scope representation focused on obtaining a voluntary dismissal without prejudice in the Will County matter, and that R.G. would pay Respondent a flat fee of $1,000.

13. On that date, R.G. provided Respondent with a check in the amount of $1,000. Respondent later negotiated that check and used its proceeds for his own personal and/or business purposes.

14. On August 11, 2025, shortly after R.G.'s meeting with Respondent, the court entered an order against R.G. in the Will County matter, dismissing the case with prejudice. After learning of the court's action, R.G. immediately contacted Respondent about the dismissal of his case at which time, Respondent told R.G. he would file a motion to reconsider the court's order within 30 days. Respondent also agreed that he would share a draft of that motion with R.G. before filing the motion if time permitted and provide R.G. with a file-stamped copy and a hearing date.

15. Between August 11, 2025, and September 1, 2025, R.G. made several attempts to contact Respondent via telephone calls and email messages regarding the status of the motion to reconsider that, based on Respondent's previous statements, R.G. expected Respondent to file within the 30-day deadline. At no time did Respondent respond to R.G.'s emails and/or telephone calls, and because Respondent's voicemail was full, R.G. could not leave any messages.

16. As of September 1, 2025, Respondent had not filed any motion to reconsider on behalf of R.G. in the Will County matter or performed any work for which R.G. had paid him.

17. On or about September 1, 2025, R.G. hired another lawyer to represent him in the Will County matter and sent a termination email in which he asked Respondent to refund the $1,000 fee R.G. had paid Respondent. Respondent received R.G.'s email but did not respond.

18. On September 3, 2025, R.G. filed a complaint with the Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission regarding Respondent's conduct and requested a refund of the unearned fees paid to Respondent. The Administrator docketed an investigation of R.G.'s allegations and sent Respondent a copy of R.G.'s complaint. When Respondent received the Administrator's correspondence, if not sooner, he knew that R.G. had terminated his services and requested a refund of any unearned fees.

19. At no time did Respondent perform sufficient work or incur sufficient costs which would entitle him to retain the $1,000 he received from R.G.

20. As of the filing of this complaint with the Hearing Board, Respondent had not refunded any portion of R.G.'s fee.

21. By reason of the conduct described above, Respondent has engaged in the following misconduct:

a. failure to act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client, by conduct including failing to file a motion to voluntarily dismiss the Will County matter or a motion to reconsider the case's subsequent dismissal with prejudice on R.G.'s behalf, in violation of Rule 1.3 of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010);

b. failure to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information from a client, by conduct including failing to respond to R.G.'s email communications and telephone calls requesting information about the status of his case, in violation of Rule 1.4(a)(4) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010); and

c. failure to refund an unearned fee after being terminated, by conduct including failing to refund any unearned portion of

the $1,000 fee R.G. paid to Respondent, in violation of Rule 1.16(d) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010).

COUNT III
(*Neglect, Failure to Keep Client Informed and Failure to Return an Unearned Fee in Relation to J.B.'s Probate Matter)*

22. On or about August 1, 2025, a person with the initials "J.B." spoke with Respondent by telephone regarding the opening of a decedent's estate for her late mother's estate and J.B.'s desire to take action to prevent the sale of her mother's property located in Chicago. At that time, J.B. and Respondent agreed Respondent would represent J.B. in matters relating to the deceased mother's estate, including filing a memorandum of contract with the Cook County Recorder of Deeds to stop the sale of her deceased mother's property, and opening a decedent's estate in Cook County Circuit Court.

23. On that date, Respondent and J.B. orally agreed J.B. would pay Respondent a $107 filing fee to file the memorandum of contract with the Cook County Recorder of Deeds, a $500 retainer, and monthly payments of $150 to handle matters relating to the probate of J.B.'s deceased mother's estate.

24. Between August 1, 2025, and August 6, 2025, J.B. sent Respondent payment for the $107 recording fee to file the memorandum of contract with the Cook County Recorder of Deeds and $500 for the retainer via Cash App, a mobile payment application, to open a decedent's estate for J.B.'s late mother's estate. Respondent received both of J.B.'s payments shortly thereafter.

25. On August 6, 2025, Respondent filed a memorandum of contract with the Cook County Recorder of Deeds and sent J.B. a copy of the memorandum of contract and receipt showing the memorandum of contract had been filed.

26. Beginning on August 7, 2025, and continuing through September 2025, J.B. made several attempts to contact Respondent via text messages, emails and telephone calls regarding the status of her deceased mother's estate. Respondent received J.B.'s text messages, emails, and phone calls, but did not respond to her emails or texts and did not return her phone calls.

27. As of November 6, 2025, Respondent had not taken any action on behalf of J.B. to open a decedent's estate in the Circuit Court of Cook County for her late mother's estate.

28. On November 6, 2025, J.B. filed a complaint with the Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission regarding Respondent's conduct and requested a refund of the unearned fees paid to Respondent. The Administrator docketed an investigation of J.B.'s allegations and sent Respondent a copy of J.B.'s complaint. When Respondent received the Administrator's correspondence, if not sooner, he knew that J.B. had terminated his services and requested a refund of any unearned fees.

29. At no time did Respondent perform sufficient work or incur sufficient costs which would entitle him to retain the $500 retainer he received from J.B.

30. As of the filing of this complaint with the Hearing Board, Respondent had not refunded any portion of J.B.'s fee.

31. By reason of the conduct described above, Respondent has engaged in the following misconduct:

a. failure to act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client, by conduct including failing to take any action on behalf of J.B. to open a decedent's estate in the Circuit Court of Cook County for her deceased mother's estate, in violation of Rule 1.3 of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010);

b. failure to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information from a client, by conduct including failing to respond to J.B.'s text messages, emails and telephone calls regarding the status of the decedent's estate for her late

mother's estate, in violation of Rule 1.4(a)(4) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010); and

c. failure to refund an unearned fee after being terminated, by conduct including failing to refund any unearned portion of the $500 retainer fee J.B. paid to Respondent, in violation of Rule 1.16(d) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010).

COUNT IV
(*Failure to Cooperate with Disciplinary Investigations)*

32. The Administrator realleges and incorporates paragraphs 1 through 31, above.

33. Between September 3, 2025, and November 6, 2025, the Administrator initiated three investigations of Respondent from three different former clients related to Respondent's handling of each of their cases. After reviewing the correspondence, the Administrator docketed investigations into each of their allegations as matters 2025IN03649, 2025IN03857 and 2025IN04689, respectively. Accordingly, between the dates stated above, counsel for the Administrator sent Respondent letters pursuant to Commission Rule 53, requesting that Respondent submit a response to the Administrator setting forth the material facts responsive to the former clients' complaints and produce documents related to their allegations within 14 days.

34 As of April 1, 2026, Respondent had not submitted a written response to the Administrator's correspondence dated between September 3, 2025, and November 6, 2025, relating to the allegations in each of Respondent's former clients' request for investigation.

35. On April 1, 2026, the Administrator issued a subpoena that required Respondent's appearance for a sworn statement via Microsoft Teams and the production of documents on April 16, 2026, regarding the three investigations pending against him.

36. On April 1, 2026, the Administrator served Respondent via email with the Administrator's subpoena.

37. On April 16, 2026, Respondent did not appear for his sworn statement, nor did he contact counsel for the Administrator to request that his appearance be rescheduled. Respondent's appearance has never been rescheduled for a date thereafter, nor has it been waived or excused.

38. As of the filing of this complaint before the Hearing Board, Respondent has not provided any written response or documentation of any kind to the Administrator about the above referenced investigations.

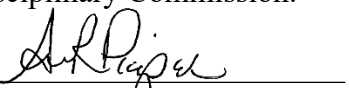
39. By reason of the conduct described above, Respondent has engaged in the following misconduct:

a. failing to respond to a lawful demand for information from a disciplinary authority, by not responding to the Administrator's requests for a response and for the production of documents, as well as for failing to appear on April 16, 2026, pursuant to the Administrator's subpoena, requiring Respondent's appearance for a sworn statement, in violation of Rule 8.1(b) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010).

WHEREFORE, the Administrator requests that this matter be assigned to a panel of the Hearing Board, that a hearing be held, and the panel make findings of fact, conclusions of fact and law, and a recommendation for such discipline as is warranted.

Respectfully submitted,

Lea Gutierrez, Administrator
Attorney Registration and
Disciplinary Commission.

By: 
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