

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

In the Matter of:

PAUL NELSON BERARD,  
  
Attorney-Respondent,  
  
No. 6307434.

Commission No. 2026PR00037

COMPLAINT

Lea S. Gutierrez, Administrator of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission, by her attorney, Tammy L. Evans, pursuant to Supreme Court Rules 753(b) and 761(c), complains of Respondent, Paul Nelson Berard, who was licensed to practice law in Illinois on December 13, 2011, and alleges that Respondent has engaged in the following conduct which subjects him to discipline pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 770:

COUNT I

*(Convictions for Domestic Battery and Driving Under the Influence)*

1. Pursuant to 720 ILCS 5/12-3/2(a)(2), a person commits domestic battery if he or she knowingly without legal justification by any means makes physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature with any family or household member.
2. Pursuant to 625 ILCS 5/11-501(a)(1), a person shall not drive or be in actual physical control of any vehicle within this State while the alcohol concentration in the person's blood, other bodily substance, or breath is .08 or more based on the definition of blood and breath units in Section 11-501.2.

FILED  
5/5/2026 9:08 AM  
ARDC Clerk

3. In 2016, Respondent and a woman with the initials “K.B.” were married. During the marriage, Respondent and K.B. had two children. In 2023, K.B. filed a petition for dissolution of the marriage, and in July 2024, the court entered a judgment for dissolution.

4. On February 13, 2024, Respondent and K.B. appeared in court for a hearing on Respondent’s motion to sell marital property. K.B. objected to Respondent’s motion, and the trial court subsequently denied the motion.

5. At or around 3:30 p.m. on February 13, 2024, K.B. went to Respondent’s house to pick up their two minor children. Respondent and K.B. got into a verbal altercation outside of Respondent’s house, and when Respondent noticed that K.B. had begun recording their conversation, he attempted to take K.B.’s cell phone out of her hand, causing both he and K.B. to fall to the ground. As a result, K.B. injured her wrist and thumb. Respondent then took K.B.’s cell phone and went back into his house. K.B. called 911 from a neighbor’s home, and Deputy Megan O’Meara from the McLean County Sheriff’s Department and Sergeant Nathan Wilkins from the Leroy Police Department were dispatched to Respondent’s address. Deputy O’Meara and Sergeant Wilkins spoke to K.B. and her minor children and completed an incident report. After Respondent exited his house, Deputy O’Meara took Respondent into custody and transported him to the McLean County Detention Center.

6. On February 14, 2024, the McLean County State’s Attorney filed an information charging Respondent with two counts of domestic battery/physical contact, and one count of disorderly conduct, based on the incident described in paragraph five, above. The matter was docketed as *People of the State of Illinois v. Paul Nelson Berard*, case number 2024DV36.

7. On September 1, 2024, at or before 7:00 p.m., K.B. went to Respondent’s house to drop off their minor children pursuant to the custody agreement but Respondent was not at home.

When K.B. called Respondent on his cell phone, Respondent answered and told her that he was on his way back from Chicago and that he would be at his house in two hours. Respondent then ended the call. A few minutes later, Respondent called K.B. and told her that he would be at his house in an hour. When K.B. asked Respondent if he had been drinking, Respondent ended the call. K.B. then called 911 and requested that a deputy be present for the custodial exchange.

8. At approximately 8:32 p.m., on September 1, 2024, Deputy Jonathan Gardner from the McLean County Sheriff's Department was dispatched to Respondent's address. While in route to Respondent's house, dispatch informed Deputy Gardner that K.B. had called back and reported that Respondent and a man with the initials "J.S.," who K.B. identified as her boyfriend, were engaged in a physical altercation.

9. Upon arrival at Respondent's house, Deputy Gardner observed Respondent get into his gray Toyota, put the vehicle in reverse and back out of the driveway, stop for a moment in the roadway, put the vehicle in drive, and pull back into the driveway. Respondent then got out of his vehicle and approached Deputy Gardner. While talking to Respondent about the altercation, Deputy Gardner smelled the odor of alcohol on Respondent and noticed that his eyes were bloodshot and glassy and that he was slurring his speech. Deputy Gardner asked Respondent if he would perform standardized field sobriety tests and Respondent said that he would. Respondent was unable to complete the tests because he could not keep his eyes on the object that the deputy was holding in front of his nose and moving horizontally from one side to another and he was swaying back and forth. Respondent initially agreed to provide a voluntary breath sample to Deputy Gardner but later refused to do so.

10. A short time later, Illinois State Trooper William Burns arrived at Respondent's house to assist Deputy Gardner. Respondent provided Trooper Burns with an evidentiary breath

sample of .212 (approximately three times the legal limit of .08) on the Alcosensor XVL, a handheld microprocessor-driven alcohol testing instrument. When Trooper Burns conducted an inventory of Respondent's vehicle, he found a cooler which contained unopened cans of Bud Light beer. Trooper Burns placed Respondent under arrest, transported him to the McLean County Detention Facility, and issued him a citation for driving under the influence of alcohol and a citation for driving under the influence of alcohol with a breath alcohol concentration of .08 or more.

11. On September 6, 2024, the McLean County State's Attorney filed a second information against Respondent charging him with one count of domestic battery/bodily harm and one count of domestic battery/physical contact, and those charges along with the two citations for driving under the influence of alcohol were docketed as *People of the State of Illinois v. Paul Nelson Berard*, case number 2024DT420.

12. On July 8, 2025, Respondent pled guilty to one count of domestic battery/physical contact, a Class A Misdemeanor, in case number 2024DV36. On the same date, and in exchange for his guilty plea, the State's Attorney agreed to dismiss the disorderly conduct charge and other domestic battery charge. The court sentenced Respondent to 90 days of imprisonment in the McLean County Jail, stayed, and conditional discharge for a period of 24 months with conditions. The court also ordered Respondent to pay a fine and costs totaling \$1,015.

13. On July 8, 2025, Respondent pled guilty to one count of driving under the influence of alcohol with a breath alcohol concentration of .08 or more. On the same date, and in exchange for Respondent's guilty plea, the State's Attorney agreed to dismiss the remaining charges of driving under the influence, battery causing bodily harm, and battery making physical contact. The court sentenced Respondent to a 24-month period of conditional discharge and 30 days in the

McLean County jail but stayed the 30-day sentence pending the successful completion of the 24-month period of conditional discharge. Additionally, the court ordered Respondent to pay all court costs and fees by June 8, 2027, and ordered him to complete 100 hours of community service and accident prevention and victim impact classes.

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

- a. committing criminal acts that reflects adversely on his honesty, trustworthiness or fitness as a lawyer in other respects, by committing the criminal offense of domestic battery, in violation of 720 ILCS 5/12-3.2(a)(2), and driving under the influence of alcohol with a blood alcohol content over .08, in violation of 625 ILCS 5/11-501(a)(1), and in violation of Rule 8.4(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 S. Gutierrez, Administrator  
Attorney Registration and  
Disciplinary Commission

By: /s/ Tammy L. Evans  
Tammy L. Evans

Tammy L. Evans  
Counsel for Administrator  
3161 West White Oaks Drive, Suite 301  
Springfield, Illinois 62704  
Telephone: (217) 546-3523  
Email: [ARDCeService@iadc.org](mailto:ARDCeService@iadc.org)  
Email: [tevans@iadc.org](mailto:tevans@iadc.org)  
4912-8886-5890, v. 1