

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

In the Matter of:

LISA M. STAUFF,

Attorney-Respondent,

No. 6275980.

Commission No. 2026PR00011

**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE HEARING BOARD
DEFAULT PROCEEDING**

The hearing in this matter was held by videoconference on September 14, 2026, before a hearing panel consisting of Jose A. Lopez, Jr., chair, Shavon M. Wesley, and Gerald M. Crimmins. Ann R. Pieper appeared on behalf of the Administrator. Respondent appeared and represented herself, and indicated that she understood the nature of the proceeding. The Administrator requested that respondent be suspended for 60 days and until further order of the court. We agree with the Administrator's request and recommend that respondent be suspended for 60 days and until further order of the court.

The Administrator filed a two-count complaint on February 19, 2026. On February 20, 2026, an ARDC investigator personally served a copy of the complaint and other documents on respondent's husband, who accepted service on behalf of respondent, at their residence. Respondent failed to file an answer to the complaint or participate in a pre-hearing conference on April 7, 2026. The Administrator filed a motion to deem the allegations of the complaint admitted pursuant to Commission Rule 236, to which respondent failed to respond, and which the hearing panel chair granted in an order dated May 7, 2026. Respondent also failed to participate in a second pre-hearing conference on June 1, 2026.

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September 23, 2026

ARDC CLERK

We have considered the Administrator's complaint, a copy of which is attached as Exhibit 1, as well as the order entered on May 7, 2026, deeming the allegations and charges of the complaint admitted, a copy of which is attached as Exhibit 2. The allegations deemed admitted establish that, in a matter in which respondent represented the plaintiff, respondent failed to act with reasonable diligence and promptness by never properly serving the summons and complaint; failed to keep her client reasonably informed about the status of the lawsuit; made false statements to the client about the status of the lawsuit; failed to make reasonable efforts to expedite the litigation; prejudiced the administration of justice; and failed to respond to the Administrator's lawful demands for information. By that conduct, respondent violated Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct 1.3, 1.4(a)(3), 1.4(a)(4), 3.2, 8.1(b), 8.4(c), and 8.4(d).

In mitigation, we consider respondent's sworn testimony in which she fully accepted responsibility for and acknowledged the wrongfulness of her conduct, and expressed genuine remorse for it. Respondent also testified about mental health challenges she was facing at the time of her misconduct and for which she has been receiving treatment, which we commend. Respondent acknowledged that she owes restitution to her client and intends to make restitution to him within 30 days of the hearing. We further consider that respondent practiced law for 25 years without discipline. In aggravation, respondent's actions harmed her client, whose lawsuit was dismissed for want of prosecution. In addition, while respondent appeared at her hearing, she otherwise failed to participate in her disciplinary proceedings.

Based upon respondent's candid testimony about her past and ongoing mental health issues, we agree with the Administrator that, in order to protect the public, the legal profession, and respondent herself, respondent should be required to successfully petition for reinstatement pursuant to Illinois Supreme Court Rule 767 before she may return to practice. We therefore recommend that she be suspended for 60 days and until further order of the court. Based on

respondent's acknowledgement that she owes restitution to her client, we recommend that she be required to demonstrate restitution as a condition of reinstatement.¹

Accordingly,

1. Respondent was served with the complaint on February 20, 2026, when her husband accepted service on her behalf. A copy of the affidavit of service pursuant to Commission Rule 214 is attached as Exhibit 3.
2. The allegations and charges of the complaint were deemed admitted in an order entered on May 7, 2026. A copy of that order is attached as Exhibit 2.
3. In consideration of the order deeming the allegations and charges of the complaint admitted, this panel finds that respondent committed the misconduct charged in the complaint.
4. Given respondent's misconduct, the aggravation and mitigation present, and the relevant case law submitted by the Administrator, we recommend that respondent be suspended for 60 days and until further order of the court, and required to demonstrate restitution to her client as a condition of reinstatement.
5. The panel has concluded that this report format will adequately and appropriately communicate its recommendation to the court.

Respectfully submitted,

Jose A. Lopez, Jr.
Shavon M. Wesley
Gerald M. Crimmins

¹ Respondent's client, R.R., was present as an observer during respondent's remote hearing. Despite being advised that, as an observer, he was required to remain muted with his video turned off and despite being directed to exit the hearing when it concluded, R.R. initiated communication with the hearing panel about the issue of restitution after the hearing ended and the parties had exited the hearing. The hearing panel did not consider any of R.R.'s communication in its deliberative process or recommendation.

CERTIFICATION

I, Michelle M. Thome, clerk of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission of the Supreme Court of Illinois and keeper of the records, hereby certifies that the foregoing is a true copy of the Report and Recommendation of the Hearing Board, approved by each panel member, entered in the above entitled cause of record filed in my office on September 23, 2026.

/s/ Michelle M. Thome

Michelle M. Thome, Clerk of the
Attorney Registration and Disciplinary
Commission of the Supreme Court of Illinois

Exhibit 1

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

In the Matter of:	)	
	)	
LISA M. STAUFF,	)	
	)	Commission No. 2026PR00011
Attorney-Respondent,	)	
	)	
No. 6275980.	)	

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 Lisa M. Stauff, who was licensed to practice law in Illinois on November 1, 2001, and alleges that Respondent has engaged in the following conduct which subjects her to discipline pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 770:

COUNT I

(Lack of Diligence, Failure to Inform a Client About the Status of the Matter, False Statement to a Client, and Failure to Expedite Litigation – R.R. Matter)

1. At all times alleged in this complaint, Respondent was a sole practitioner in Chicago who primarily represented plaintiffs in employment law matters.
2. On November 21, 2022, an individual with the initials “R.R.” filed a discrimination charge against his employer, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (“DCEO”), with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (“EEOC”).
3. In or around December 2022, Respondent and R.R. agreed that Respondent would represent R.R. in the ongoing matter pending before the EEOC relating to his former employment with DCEO. Respondent and R.R. agreed that R.R. would pay Respondent a fee of \$250 per

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month to handle the matter. Beginning in December 2022 and continuing until January 2024, R.R. paid Respondent a total of \$3,250 in connection with his dispute with DCEO.

4. On January 16, 2024, the EEOC closed its investigation of the charge against DCEO and issued R.R. a right to sue letter permitting R.R. to bring his case against DCEO in federal court.

5. On April 15, 2024, Respondent filed an appearance and complaint in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois on behalf of R.R. against DCEO. The complaint alleged that DCEO had failed to accommodate R.R.'s disability and had retaliated against him for asserting his rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act, both alleged violations of the Act.

6. Pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(m), Respondent then had 90 days to complete service of the complaint on DCEO at which point the summons would need to be re-issued. In the event that the complaint and summons are not timely served, the Court may dismiss the matter for want of prosecution.

7. As of May 3, 2024, the first status date set by the Court, Respondent had not taken any action to serve DCEO with the summons and complaint she filed on R.R.'s behalf. The court set a subsequent status hearing on June 18, 2024 at 9:45 a.m.

8. Respondent took no action between May 3, 2024 and June 18, 2024 to serve the complaint on DCEO. Respondent appeared in court on June 18, 2024. At that hearing, Respondent reported that she had not yet served DCEO with the complaint and that she would report back to the court in a month on the issue of service. The court set the matter for a third status hearing on July 12, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.

9. Respondent took no action between June 18, 2024 and July 12, 2024 to serve the complaint on DCEO. On July 12, 2024, Respondent appeared in court and reported that she had been unable to serve DCEO. The court set the matter for a fourth status hearing on August 12, 2024 at 9:45 a.m.

10. Respondent took insufficient action to effectuate service on DCEO between July 12, 2024 and August 12, 2024. On August 12, 2024, Respondent appeared in court and reported that she attempted to serve DCEO with a copy of the complaint, summons, and a service waiver, by U.S. and priority mail but she had not used the correct address for DCEO. Respondent told the court that she re-sent the documents to DCEO using the correct address, but she had not yet received a response. Respondent told the court that she would contact the State Attorney General to determine whether DCEO had received the complaint and summons and whether they were willing to waive personal service of the complaint. Respondent believed that the Attorney General would be an appropriate contact to speak for the DCEO because the DCEO is an administrative agency of the State of Illinois and the Attorney General's office functions as the agency's attorney. The court set the matter for a fifth status hearing on October 16, 2024.

11. Respondent took insufficient action to effectuate service on DCEO between August 12, 2024 and October 21, 2024. On October 21, 2024, Respondent appeared in court and reported that she had mailed the complaint, summons, and waiver of service paperwork to the State Attorney General, but she had not received confirmation that the Attorney General accepted service of the complaint on DCEO's behalf. The court set the matter for an in-person status hearing on November 4, 2024 at 9:45 a.m.

12. Respondent took the minimal action of calling the Illinois Attorney General's office and speaking to an assistant Attorney General from October 21, 2024 through November 4, 2024,

but did not follow through with effectuating personal service on DCEO. On November 4, 2024, Respondent appeared in court and reported that she had re-mailed the complaint, summons, and waiver of service paperwork to DCEO with a letter of explanation. She also reported that she had spoken with the State Attorney General who had advised her to serve DCEO with the complaint. The court set the matter for an in-person status hearing on December 18, 2024 at 1:30 p.m.

13. Respondent did not do anything to effectuate personal service of the complaint and summons on DCEO as required by the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Rule 4, even though she heard nothing from DCEO after sending her letter and accompanying documents in November. On December 18, 2024, Respondent appeared in court and reported that DCEO had not filed an appearance or an answer to the complaint. On that date, the court entered an order setting a deadline of January 17, 2025 for Respondent to file a proof of service of the complaint on DCEO and set a status date for January 27, 2025. The court warned Respondent that if she failed to meet this deadline, the court would dismiss the case for want of prosecution.

14. Respondent did not arrange for DCEO to be personally served with the complaint and summons by process server between December 18, 2024 and January 17, 2025 to ensure proper service under Rule 4 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. On January 27, 2025, Respondent had not filed proof that she had served the complaint on DCEO. On that date, the court extended the deadline for Respondent to file the proof of service until February 3, 2025 and again warned Respondent that it would dismiss the case if Respondent failed to file the proof of service. As of February 3, 2025, Respondent had not filed the proof of service with the court nor had she, at any point, arranged for personal service to DCEO as is proper under Rule 4 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

15. On February 5, 2025, the court terminated the case and dismissed the complaint against DCEO for want of prosecution because Respondent had not filed a proof of service. As counsel of record, Respondent received a copy of the court's order dismissing the matter as soon as that order was filed via her email contact through PACER, the federal court's online portal.

16. At no time prior to February 5, 2025 had Respondent had DCEO properly served with the summons and complaint. In addition, at no time prior to February 5, 2025 had DCEO accepted service or agreed to waive service of the summons or complaint.

17. On February 14, 2025, Respondent and R.R. spoke on the phone. During that call, Respondent told R.R. that she was in the process of "filing things" in his case against DCEO. Respondent did not tell R.R. that his case had been dismissed nine days earlier.

18. Respondent knew that her statement about "filing things" in R.R.'s case was false because at the time she made the statement she had received notice from the court on February 5, 2025 advising her that the case had been terminated and the complaint had been dismissed. Further, Respondent knew that there was nothing that she could file into the case but a motion to vacate the dismissal which would not be possible without attaching a proof of service, a document she did not have because she had not had the complaint and summons properly served on DCEO.

19. Respondent refused to communicate with R.R. after February 14, 2025. R.R. sent Respondent text messages on March 10, March 19, April 2, April 3, April 4, April 7, April 8 and April 9, 2025. Respondent did not respond to any of the texts.

20. R.R. checked the PACER system in April of 2025 and realized that his case was dismissed on February 5, 2025. R.R. tried to call Respondent from April through June of 2025 and Respondent did not return his calls.

21. On June 26, 2025, R.R. called the court and left a voicemail stating that he had not been in contact with Respondent and that he was “trying to reopen the case.” The court’s clerk set the matter for an in-person status hearing on July 14, 2025 at 10:15 a.m. Notice of the hearing was posted to PACER. Respondent received the notice through the PACER online portal system.

22. On July 14, 2025, R.R. appeared in court *pro se* for the status hearing and Respondent did not appear. The Court set the matter for a telephone status hearing on July 17, 2025 at 9:45 a.m. and posted the Order setting the subsequent status hearing to the PACER system. The PACER system sent Respondent a copy of the order setting the hearing.

23. On July 17, 2025, R.R. appeared in court for the status hearing and Respondent did not appear. R.R. moved to terminate Respondent as his counsel and moved to reinstate the case against DCEO *instantur*. The Court took R.R.’s motions under advisement.

24. On July 23, 2025, the court granted R.R.’s motion to terminate Respondent as his counsel but denied R.R.’s motion to reopen his case. R.R. attempted to appeal the court’s decision to close his case but was unsuccessful.

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

- a. failing to act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client, by conduct including never properly serving the summons and complaint filed on behalf of R.R. on DCEO, causing the court to dismiss the complaint, in violation of Rule 1.3 of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010);
- b. failing to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information, by conduct including not keeping R.R. reasonably informed about the status of his lawsuit against DCEO by not responding to R.R.’s emails, telephone calls, voicemails, and texts regarding the status of his lawsuit against DCEO, in violation of Rule 1.4(a)(3) and 1.4(a)(4) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010);

- c. failing to make reasonable efforts to expedite litigation consistent with the interests of the client, by conduct including never properly serving the summons and complaint filed on behalf of R.R. on DCEO, causing the court to dismiss the complaint, in violation of Rule 3.2 of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010); and
- d. engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation, by conduct including knowingly making a false statement to R.R. on February 14, 2025 when Respondent told him that she was in the process of making filings in the case against DCEO that had been dismissed, and by not telling him that his case had been dismissed, in violation of Rule 8.4(c) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010); and
- e. engaging in conduct that is prejudicial to the administration of justice, by conduct including failing to take steps to effectuate service of the complaint on DCEO resulting in the case being dismissed by the court, in violation of Rule 8.4(d) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010).

COUNT II

(Failure to Respond to a Lawful Demand for Information)

- 26. The Administrator realleges paragraphs one through twenty-four in Count I, above.
- 27. On May 8, 2025, Respondent received email communication from the ARDC that included a copy of the request for investigation submitted by R.R. and a request asking Respondent to provide a written response to the allegations within 14 days. As of June 20, 2025, Respondent had not provided a response.
- 28. On June 20, 2025, Respondent received a second letter advising Respondent that her failure to respond to R.R.'s allegations was inconsistent with Commission Rule 53 and Rule 8.1(b) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct. The letter requested that Respondent provide a written response within seven days. Respondent did not respond to the June 20, 2025 letter.

29. On July 22, 2025, the ARDC served Respondent with a subpoena via Federal Express. The subpoena commanded Respondent to appear for a remote sworn statement on August 21, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. and to produce her files related to Respondent's representation of R.R. Respondent did not produce any records, nor did she appear for her sworn statement on August 21, 2025. Her attendance was not excused or waived.

30. On September 16, 2025, an investigator from the ARDC personally served Respondent with a subpoena compelling her appearance for a sworn statement on October 31, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. On October 31, 2025 at 8:38 a.m., Respondent sent an email to the investigator advising him that she could not appear for the statement and asking that the statement be continued for 45 days. The ARDC investigator responded to her email and advised her that she should contact counsel for the Administrator directly. Respondent did not contact counsel for the Administrator, and her sworn statement proceeded at 10:00 a.m. because her attendance had not been waived or excused. Respondent did not appear for the sworn statement. During the sworn statement, counsel for the Administrator attempted to reach Respondent by calling both her business and home phone numbers. Respondent did not answer either call.

31. Counsel for the Administrator sent a letter to Respondent on November 3, 2025 advising her of her non-cooperation with the investigation. The letter requested that she provide a written response to R.R.'s allegations within seven days. As of February 17, 2026, the date that this matter was considered by an Inquiry Board of the ARDC, Respondent has not provided any written response.

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

- a. knowingly failing to respond to lawful demands for information from a disciplinary authority, by conduct

including failing to respond to the Administrator's letters requesting a written response to R.R.'s complaint and failing to appear for sworn statements, after being served with a subpoena, in violation of Rule 8.1(b) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010).

WHEREFORE, the Administrator requests that this matter be referred to a panel of the Hearing Board of the Commission, that a hearing be conducted, and that the Hearing 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: 
Ann R. Pieper

Ann R. Pieper
Counsel for Administrator
3161 W. White Oaks Drive, Suite 301
Springfield, IL 62704
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E-mail: apieper@iadc.org
4935-0088-4857, v. 1

Exhibit 2

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

In the Matter of:

LISA M. STAUFF,

Attorney-Respondent,

No. 6275980.

Commission No. 2026PR00011

ORDER

The Chair having considered the Administrator's Motion to Deem All Allegations and Disciplinary Charges of the Complaint Admitted Pursuant to Commission Rule 236 (Motion to Deem) and Respondent having filed no response,

IT IS ORDERED:

The Motion to Deem is granted. Respondent was served with the Administrator's Complaint on February 20, 2026. Since that time, she has not participated in this matter. She has not filed an answer, did not appear for the pre-hearing conference held on April 14, 2026, and did not file a response to the Motion to Deem. Accordingly, all factual allegations and disciplinary charges are deemed admitted, and no further proof is required. At hearing, the parties shall be limited to presenting evidence of aggravating and mitigating factors and argument regarding the form and amount of discipline to be imposed.

CERTIFICATION

I, Michelle M. Thome, Clerk of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission of the Supreme Court of Illinois and keeper of the records, certify that the foregoing is a true

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May 07, 2026

ARDC CLERK

copy of the order, approved by the Hearing Board Chair, entered in the above-entitled cause of record filed in my office on May 7, 2026.

/s/ Michelle M. Thome

Michelle M. Thome,
Clerk of the Attorney Registration and
Disciplinary Commission of the
Supreme Court of Illinois

4935-6254-9161, v. 1

PROOF OF SERVICE

I, Michelle M. Thome, hereby certify that I served a copy of this Order on the Attorney-Respondent listed at the addresses shown below by regular mail by depositing it with proper postage prepaid, by causing the same to be deposited in the U.S. Mailbox at One Prudential Plaza, 130 East Randolph Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60601 on May 7, 2026, at or before 5:00 p.m. At the same time, a copy of this Order was sent to Counsel for the Administrator by e-mail service.

Lisa M. Stauff
Attorney-Respondent
Law Offices of Lisa M Stauff
4633 W. Diversey Ave., #220
Chicago, IL 60639

Lisa M. Stauff
Attorney-Respondent
4040 N. Ottawa
Norridge, IL 60706-7223

Under penalties as provided by law pursuant to Section 1-109 of the Code of Civil Procedure, the undersigned certifies that the statements set forth in this instrument are true and correct, except as to matters therein stated to be on information and belief and as to such matters the undersigned certifies as aforesaid that she verily believes the same to be true.

/s/ Michelle M. Thome
Michelle M. Thome

Exhibit 3

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

In the Matter of:

LISA M. STAUFF,

Attorney-Respondent,

No. 6275980.

Commission No. 2026PR00011

AFFIDAVIT OF SERVICE
PURSUANT TO COMMISSION RULE 214

I, CARRIE ISER (“Affiant”), an agent of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission who is over the age of 18, being duly sworn, hereby state:

1. Affiant possesses firsthand knowledge of the facts presented in this Affidavit and, if called as a witness, Affiant will testify to the truth of the facts as presented in this Affidavit.
2. Affiant is an Investigator for the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission of the Supreme Court of Illinois (“the Commission”) and, as such, is authorized to serve process.
3. On Friday, February 20, 2026, at approximately 9:15 a.m., Affiant personally served a copy Complaint Service Letter, Complaint, Notice of Complaint, Order Assigning Chairperson of the Hearing Panel, ARDC Defense Attorney List, Filings and Procedures Memorandum and Rules of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission related to Commission Number 2026PR00011 upon Ken Hoxie (“Respondent’s husband”) at their residence, located at 4040 N. Ottawa Avenue, Norridge, IL 60706. Ken Hoxie opened the front door and stated that Lisa M. Stauff was his wife, that she was home and sleeping due to not feeling well. Ken Hoxie related he would accept service on behalf of Lisa M. Stauff.
4. Further Affiant Sayeth not.

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ARDC Clerk

Under penalties as provided by law pursuant to Section 1-109 of the Code of Civil Procedure, the undersigned certifies that the statements set forth in this instrument are true and correct, except as to matters therein stated to be on information and belief and as to such matters the undersigned certifies as aforesaid that she verily believes the same to be true.

/s/ Carrie Iser
Carrie Iser
Investigator

Dated: February 20, 2026