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**Jun 2, 2026**  
VIRGINIA STATE BAR  
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VIRGINIA:

BEFORE THE FIFTH DISTRICT, SECTION I SUBCOMMITTEE  
OF THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR

IN THE MATTER OF  
RYAN MICHAEL RAFFERTY

VSB Docket No. 25-051-135616

SUBCOMMITTEE DETERMINATION  
(PUBLIC REPRIMAND WITH TERMS)

On May 6, 2026, a meeting in this matter was held before a duly convened Fifth District, Section I Subcommittee consisting of Andrea Catherine Weiss Bryk, Esq, Chair; Tara Jeannine Mooney, Esq., Member; and Jennifer L. Neel, Lay Member. During the meeting, the Subcommittee voted to approve an agreed disposition for a Public Reprimand with Terms pursuant to Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-15.B.4. of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia. The agreed disposition was entered into by the Virginia State Bar, by Richard W. Johnson Jr., Assistant Bar Counsel, and Ryan Michael Rafferty ("Respondent"), pro se.

WHEREFORE, the Fifth District, Section I Subcommittee of the Virginia State Bar hereby serves upon Respondent the following Public Reprimand with Terms:

I. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Respondent was admitted to the Virginia State Bar ("VSB") in 2003. At all relevant times, Respondent was a member of the VSB.
2. On May 22, 2025, the Court of Appeals of Virginia ("CAV") notified the Virginia State Bar ("VSB") of three appellate procedural dismissals wherein Respondent was counsel of record.  
*Nicole Boler v. Fairfax County Department of Social Services*
3. In 2023, Respondent was appointed to represent Nicole Boler ("Boler") in her appeal of an adverse ruling in a Termination of Parental Rights matter. Respondent filed a notice of appeal but failed to submit an opening brief.
4. Respondent stated to VSB Investigator Damon Thompson ("Investigator Thompson") that he filed a notice of appeal to protect Boler's rights and then spoke with Boler. Respondent

stated that Boler instructed him not to appeal. Based upon Boler's instructions, Respondent told Investigator Thompson that he did not submit an opening brief.

5. Respondent did not notify the CAV that he was not pursuing Boler's appeal.<sup>1</sup>
6. On August 25, 2023, the CAV dismissed Boler's appeal for failing to file an opening brief.

*J.G.C. v. Commonwealth of Virginia*

7. Respondent represented J.G.C.<sup>2</sup> in Winchester Circuit Court in criminal matters. J.G.C. was convicted of juvenile misdemeanors and sentenced to ten to thirteen months incarceration.
8. On June 21, 2024, Respondent filed a notice of appeal on behalf of J.G.C.
9. On August 7, 2024 On October 30, 2024, Respondent moved for an extension of time to file an opening brief. The CAV granted Respondent's motion and the opening brief was due on December 4, 2024.
10. Respondent stated to Investigator Thompson that he had difficulty locating J.G.C. after the convictions. Respondent indicated that when he located J.G.C., he instructed Respondent not to pursue the appeal because his release date was approaching.
11. Respondent did not notify the CAV that he was not pursuing J.G.C.'s appeal.
12. On December 23, 2024, the CAV dismissed J.G.C.'s appeal for failure to file an opening brief.

*Drew John Steiner v. Commonwealth of Virginia*

13. On February 9, 2024, the Fairfax Circuit Court appointed Respondent to represent Dr. Drew John Steiner ("Steiner") at his sentencing on multiple felony convictions. On June 24, 2024, the Fairfax Circuit Court sentenced Steiner to 30 years<sup>3</sup> incarceration.
14. Following the sentencing, Respondent visited Steiner at the Fairfax Detention Center.
15. Respondent did not discuss Steiner's appellate rights or the appellate process with Steiner. Based upon previous criminal matters, Steiner expected an "appeal team" to visit him and coordinate his appeal. Steiner instructed Respondent to maintain contact with his sister, Lynne Steiner ("Lynne") about his appeal and update her about the status of his appeal.
16. On or about July 2, 2024, Respondent filed a notice of appeal on behalf of Steiner.

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<sup>1</sup> Court of Appeals Rule 5A:36: "When a case has been settled or the appeal withdrawn at any time after the notice of appeal has been filed, it is the duty of counsel to notify the clerk of this Court by filing a written notice that the case has been settled or the appeal withdrawn."

<sup>2</sup> J.G.C was a minor at the time of his initial convictions.

<sup>3</sup> Steiner is also serving an active ten-year sentence for previous offenses.

17. On July 2, 2024, Respondent sent an email to Lynne updating her on the status of Steiner's appeal. The email included Steiner's Notice of Appeal and Respondent's order of appointment. Respondent's email stated that he was providing the information to Lynne "in accordance with the instructions of your brother, my client, Drew John Steiner, M.D."
18. On July 22, 2024, Lynne sent an email to Respondent expressing Steiner's concerns about the status of the appeal. Respondent replied to the email, again noting that the Notice of Appeal had been filed.
19. On September 12, 2025, Lynne sent an email to Respondent:

**Drew Steiner appeal**

1 message

Lynne P. Steiner <lynne@steiner@gmail.com>  
 To: Ryan Rafferty <ryanr@p@gmail.com>

Thu, Sep 12, 2024 at 8:35 AM

Good morning Mr Rafferty,  
 We have not heard anything about the assignment of an appeal attorney or any kind of appeal for Drew Steiner. How can we learn if there has been an attorney review or any progress. Drew is in the process of being assigned to a prison and has not heard anything.

Thank you,  
 Lynne Steiner

20. Respondent did not reply to Lynne's email.
21. On November 8, 2024, Lynne sent another email to Respondent:

**Drew Steiner appeal 1108-24-4**

1 message

Lynne P. Steiner <lynne@steiner@gmail.com>  
 To: Ryan Rafferty <ryanr@p@gmail.com>

Mon, Nov 18, 2024 at 11:19 AM

Good morning Mr Rafferty,  
 I have contacted The Fairfax County Appeal Department of the Courthouse this morning and they have not received an opening brief for the case yet. The records were not requested until 10.2.24 and the clerk was unable to tell me who requested them. She stated that I need to speak with counsel to determine the status of the appeal. Please help me determine the status of the appeal and who is responsible for the next steps.

Thank you,  
 Lynne Steiner

22. Respondent did not communicate with Steiner following the November 8, 2024 email from Lynne.
23. On December 6, 2024, the CAV dismissed Steiner's appeal for failure to file an opening brief.
24. Respondent did not inform Steiner that the CAV dismissed his appeal or the availability of a delayed appeal.<sup>4</sup> Following their initial meeting at the Fairfax Detention Center, Respondent did not communicate with Steiner again.

<sup>4</sup> A delayed appeal in Virginia allows a criminal defendant to appeal a conviction even after standard deadlines have passed, generally under Va. Code§ 19.2-321.1 (Court of Appeals) or Va. Code§ 19.2-321.2 (Supreme Court).

## NATURE OF MISCONDUCT

Such conduct by Respondent constitutes misconduct in violation of the following provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct:

### **RULE 1.3 Diligence**

(a) A lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.

*By failing to advise the CAV that Boler and J.G.C. were no longer pursuing their appeals after a notice of appeal had been filed; by failing to file an opening brief on behalf of Steiner; by failing to prosecute Steiner's appeal in the CAV, including failing to file a motion for delayed appeal, Respondent violated Rule 1.3(a) of the Rules of Professional Conduct.*

### **RULE 1.4 Communication**

(a) A lawyer shall keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information.

*By failing to communicate to Steiner that he had not filed an opening brief or otherwise prosecuted Steiner's appeal; by failing to respond to Lynne's emails about the status of Steiner's matter after Steiner instructed Respondent to update Lynne; by failing to advise Steiner that the CAV dismissed his appeal, Respondent violated Rule 1.4(a) of the Rules of Professional Conduct.*

### **RULE 1.4 Communication**

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(b) A lawyer shall explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation.

*By failing to advise Steiner of the appellate process; by failing to communicate to Steiner that he had not filed an opening brief or otherwise prosecuted Steiner's appeal; by failing to explain to Steiner the availability of a delayed appeal or a writ for habeas corpus, Respondent violated Rule 1.4(b) of the Rules of Professional Conduct.*

## **III. PUBLIC REPRIMAND WITH TERMS**

Accordingly, it is the decision of the Subcommittee to impose a Public Reprimand with Terms. The terms are:

1. On or before July 6, 2026, Respondent will complete three (3) hours of continuing legal education credits by attending courses approved by the Virginia State Bar in the

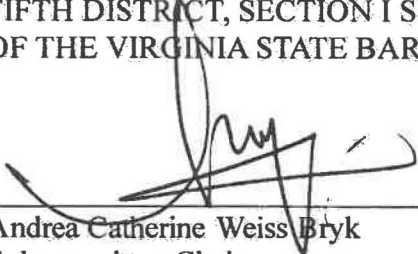
subject matter of criminal appeals and/or legal ethics. Respondent's Continuing Legal Education attendance obligation set forth in this paragraph will not be applied toward his Mandatory Continuing Legal Education requirement in Virginia or any other jurisdictions in which Respondent may be licensed to practice law. Respondent will certify his compliance with the terms set forth in this paragraph by delivering a fully and properly executed Virginia MCLE Board Certification of Attendance form (Form 2) to Bar Counsel, promptly following his attendance of each such CLE program(s).

2. For a period of two (2) years following the entry of this Subcommittee Determination, Respondent will not engage in any conduct that violates the provisions of the Virginia Rules of Professional Conduct, including any amendments thereto, and/or which violates any analogous provisions, and any amendments thereto, of the disciplinary rules of another jurisdiction in which Respondent may be admitted to practice law. The terms contained in this paragraph will be deemed to have been violated when any ruling, determination, judgment, order, or decree has been issued against Respondent by a disciplinary tribunal in Virginia or elsewhere, containing a finding that Respondent has violated one or more provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct, provided, however, that the conduct upon which such finding was based occurred within the period referenced to above, and provided, further, that such ruling has become final.

If any of the terms are not met by the time specified, pursuant to Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-15.F of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, the District Committee shall hold a hearing and Respondent shall be required to show cause why a Certification for Sanction Determination should not be imposed. Any proceeding initiated due to failure to comply with terms will be considered a new matter and an administrative fee and costs will be assessed.

Pursuant to Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-9.E. of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, the Clerk of the Disciplinary System shall assess costs.

FIFTH DISTRICT, SECTION I SUBCOMMITTEE  
OF THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR



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Andrea Catherine Weiss Bryk  
Subcommittee Chair

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on June 2, 2026, a true and complete copy of the foregoing Subcommittee Determination was sent to Ryan Michael Rafferty, Respondent, by certified mail at 4441 George Mason Blvd, #220, Fairfax, VA 22030, Respondent's last address of record with the Virginia State Bar, and by email to ryanaxp@gmail.com.



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Richard W. Johnson Jr.  
Assistant Bar Counsel

**VIRGINIA:**

**BEFORE THE FIFTH DISTRICT, SECTION I SUBCOMMITTEE  
OF THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR**

**IN THE MATTER OF  
RYAN MICHAEL RAFFERTY**

**VS** **Docket No. 25-051-135616**

**AGREED DISPOSITION  
PUBLIC REPRIMAND WITH TERMS**

Pursuant to the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, Part 6, Section IV, Paragraph 13-15.B.4, the Virginia State Bar, by Richard W. Johnson Jr., Assistant Bar Counsel, and Ryan Michael Rafferty, Respondent, pro se, enter into the following agreed disposition arising out of this matter.

**I. STIPULATIONS OF FACT**

1. Respondent was admitted to the Virginia State Bar (“VSB”) in 2003. At all relevant times, Respondent was a member of the VSB.
2. On May 22, 2025, the Court of Appeals of Virginia (“CAV”) notified the Virginia State Bar (“VSB”) of three appellate procedural dismissals wherein Respondent was counsel of record.

*Nicole Boler v. Fairfax County Department of Social Services*

3. In 2023, Respondent was appointed to represent Nicole Boler (“Boler”) in her appeal of an adverse ruling in a Termination of Parental Rights matter. Respondent filed a notice of appeal but failed to submit an opening brief.
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5. Respondent did not notify the CAV that he was not pursuing Boler’s appeal.<sup>1</sup>

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M.D.”

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## II. NATURE OF MISCONDUCT

Such conduct by Respondent constitutes misconduct in violation of the following provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct:

### **RULE 1.3 Diligence**

(a) A lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.

*By failing to advise the CAV that Boler and J.G.C. were no longer pursuing their appeals after a notice of appeal had been filed; by failing to file an opening brief on behalf of Steiner; by failing to prosecute Steiner's appeal in the CAV, including failing to file a motion for delayed appeal, Respondent violated Rule 1.3(a) of the Rules of Professional Conduct.*

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(b) A lawyer shall explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation.

*By failing to advise Steiner of the appellate process; by failing to communicate to Steiner that he had not filed an opening brief or otherwise prosecuted Steiner's appeal; by failing to explain to Steiner the availability of a delayed appeal or a writ for habeas corpus, Respondent violated Rule 1.4(b) of the Rules of Professional Conduct.*

## III. PROPOSED DISPOSITION

Accordingly, Assistant Bar Counsel and Respondent tender to a subcommittee of the Fifth District, Section I Committee for its approval the agreed disposition of a Public Reprimand

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These motions are filed when a timely appeal was missed or dismissed due to attorney error, negligence, or fault of the court. The motion must be filed within six months of the dismissal or final judgment.

with Terms as representing an appropriate sanction if this matter were to be heard through an evidentiary hearing by the Fifth District, Section I Committee. The terms must be met by July 6, 2026 and are as follows:

1. On or before July 6, 2026, Respondent will complete three (3) hours of continuing legal education credits by attending courses approved by the Virginia State Bar in the subject matter of criminal appeals and/or legal ethics. Respondent's Continuing Legal Education attendance obligation set forth in this paragraph will not be applied toward his Mandatory Continuing Legal Education requirement in Virginia or any other jurisdictions in which Respondent may be licensed to practice law. Respondent will certify his compliance with the terms set forth in this paragraph by delivering a fully and properly executed Virginia MCLE Board Certification of Attendance form (Form 2) to Bar Counsel, promptly following his attendance of each such CLE program(s).
2. For a period of two (2) years following the entry of this Subcommittee Determination, Respondent will not engage in any conduct that violates the provisions of the Virginia Rules of Professional Conduct, including any amendments thereto, and/or which violates any analogous provisions, and any amendments thereto, of the disciplinary rules of another jurisdiction in which Respondent may be admitted to practice law. The terms contained in this paragraph will be deemed to have been violated when any ruling, determination, judgment, order, or decree has been issued against Respondent by a disciplinary tribunal in Virginia or elsewhere, containing a finding that Respondent has violated one or more provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct, provided, however, that the conduct upon which such finding was based occurred within the period referred to above, and provided, further, that such ruling has become final.

If any of the terms are not met by July 6, 2026, Respondent agrees that the District Committee shall impose a Certification for Sanction Determination pursuant to Part 6, Section IV, Paragraph 13-15.F of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia. Any proceeding initiated due to failure to comply with terms will be considered a new matter, and an administrative fee and costs will be assessed pursuant to Part 6, Section IV, Paragraph 13-9.E of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia.

If the agreed disposition is approved, the Clerk of the Disciplinary System shall assess costs.

Pursuant to Part 6, Section IV, Paragraph 13-30.B of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, Respondent's prior disciplinary record shall be furnished to the subcommittee considering this agreed disposition.

VIRGINIA STATE BAR



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Richard W. Johnson Jr.  
Assistant Bar Counsel



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Ryan Michael Rafferty  
Respondent