BEFORE THE PRESIDING DISCIPLINARY JUDGE

IN THE MATTER OF A SUSPENDED MEMBER OF THE STATE BAR OF ARIZONA **PEDRO A. SIMPSON** **Bar No. 016306,** **Respondent.**	**PDJ 2025-9104** **AMENDED** **FINAL JUDGMENT AND ORDER** [State Bar No. 25-1347] **FILED APRIL 16, 2026**

The hearing panel rendered its Decision and Order Imposing Sanctions on March 19, 2026. No timely appeal was filed.

IT IS ORDERED that **PEDRO A. SIMPSON, Bar No. 016306**, is Suspended for a period of six (6) months and one (1) day for his conduct in violation of the Arizona Rules of Professional Conduct **and the Arizona Rules of the Supreme Court**, effective March 19, 2026.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, pursuant to Rule 72 Ariz. R. Sup. Ct., Respondent shall immediately comply with the requirements relating to notification of clients and others.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent shall pay the costs and expenses of the State Bar of Arizona in the amount of $2,063.28 within 30 days. There are no costs or expenses incurred by the Office of the Presiding Disciplinary Judge in these proceedings.

DATED this 16th day of April, 2026.

Lisa A. VandenBerg
Hon. Lisa A. VandenBerg
Presiding Disciplinary Judge

Copy of the foregoing emailed (and mailed to Mr. Simpson's last known address) this 16th day of April, 2026, to:

James D. Lee
LRO@staff.azbar.org

Pedro A. Simpson
Pasimpson_esq@hotmail.com
Law Offices of Pedro A. Simpson, PLLC
957 South Nielson Street
Gilbert, AZ 85296-3668

by: CLopez

BEFORE THE PRESIDING DISCIPLINARY JUDGE

IN THE MATTER OF A SUSPENDED MEMBER OF THE STATE BAR OF ARIZONA **PEDRO A. SIMPSON** **Bar No. 016306,** **Respondent.**	**PDJ 2025-9104** **FINAL JUDGMENT AND ORDER** [State Bar No. 25-1347] **FILED APRIL 9, 2026**

The Presiding Disciplinary Judge having accepted the parties' Agreement for Discipline by Consent ("Agreement") submitted pursuant to Rule 57(a), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct.,

IT IS ORDERED that **PEDRO A. SIMPSON, Bar No. 016306**, is Suspended for a period of six (6) months and one (1) day for his conduct in violation of the Arizona Rules of Professional Conduct, effective March 19, 2026.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, pursuant to Rule 72 Ariz. R. Sup. Ct., Respondent shall immediately comply with the requirements relating to notification of clients and others.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent shall pay the costs and expenses of the State Bar of Arizona in the amount of $2,063.28 within 30 days. There are no costs or expenses incurred by the Office of the Presiding Disciplinary Judge in these proceedings.

DATED this 9th day of April, 2026.

Lisa A. VandenBerg
Hon. Lisa A. VandenBerg
Presiding Disciplinary Judge

Copy of the foregoing emailed (and mailed to Mr. Simpson's last known address) this 9th day of April, 2026, to:

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by: CLopez

BEFORE THE PRESIDING DISCIPLINARY JUDGE

IN THE MATTER OF A SUSPENDED[1] MEMBER OF THE STATE BAR OF ARIZONA, **PEDRO A. SIMPSON** **Bar No. 016306,** Respondent.	**PDJ 2025-9104** **DECISION AND ORDER IMPOSING SANCTIONS** [State Bar No. 25-1347] **FILED MARCH 18, 2026**

The State Bar of Arizona filed a One (1) Count Complaint against Respondent Pedro A. Simpson ("Respondent") on December 30, 2025. On January 5, 2026, the Complaint was served on Mr. Simpson by certified, delivery-restricted mail, and by regular first-class mail, pursuant to Rules 47(c) and 58(a)(2), Arizona Rules of the Supreme Court ("Ariz. R. Sup. Ct.")[2]. A notice of default and entry of default issued on February 3, 2026[3], due to Mr. Simpson's failure to file an answer or otherwise defend against the complaint's allegations. Mr. Simpson did not cure the deficiency, and

[1] While the Complaint's caption in December of 2025 reflected Mr. Simpson as a "Member" of the State Bar, this caption reflects the administrative suspension status that occurred in January of 2026.
[2] By way of avowal, Bar Counsel Lee confirmed that the mailing address (Law Offices of Pedro A. Simpson, PLLC, 957 South Nielson Street, Gilbert, AZ 85296-3668), while identified at Mr. Simpson's law office, was an address where Petra Simpson signed for certified mail on behalf of Mr. Simpson in January of 2026.
[3] The Disciplinary Clerk sent the Notice to Mr. Simpson's last known email address, pasimpson_esq@hotmail.com, but received a response "Delivery has failed…the recipient's mailbox is full and can't accept messages now." AO2024-63 provides for delivery of filings via email by the Disciplinary Clerk.

effective entry of default was entered on February 18, 2026, at which time notice of an aggravation/mitigation hearing was sent to all parties.

On March 13, 2026, Bar Counsel filed a Notice of Lodging of Proposed Order. The State Bar sent Mr. Simpson notice via email on March 13, 2026, but Mr. Simpson's email box was full. No responsive pleadings have been received.[4]

The Aggravation/Mitigation hearing was conducted via Zoom on March 18, 2026. Senior Bar Counsel James D. Lee was present on behalf of the State Bar. Mr. Simpson did not appear either virtually or physically in Conference Room 109. A hearing panel comprised of Presiding Disciplinary Judge (PDJ) Lisa A. VandenBerg, attorney member Stephen L. Weiss and public member Maria I. Moreno, considered information presented by Bar Counsel. Exhibits 1-17[5] were received into evidence.

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[4] Pursuant to Rule 32(c)(4)(iii), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct. requires all bar members to provide the State Bar Office a current email, address and telephone number. Bar Counsel Lee avowed that State Bar Investigator Yvette Penar attempted to call Mr. Simpson but was unable to leave a message.

[5] The following exhibits are sealed: in their entirety 10, 11, 12, 17 and portions of 13 (Bates 036-38) and 14 (Bates 043-45).

The PDJ granted Bar Counsel Lee's motion to strike from the Complaint the allegation of violation of Rule 43(a), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct., on page 10.

Due to Mr. Simpson's default, the pending allegations of the Complaint have been deemed admitted, as reflected in the following findings of fact:

FINDINGS OF FACT[6]

1. Mr. Simpson was a lawyer licensed to practice law in the state of Arizona, having been first admitted to practice in Arizona on May 20, 1995.

2. On January 23, 2026, Mr. Simpson was summarily suspended for failing to comply with the requirements of Mandatory Continuing Legal Education.

COUNT ONE (File No. 25-1347/State Bar of Arizona)

Underlying Charge (State Bar File No. 23-2438)

1. On July 9, 2015, in the U.S. District Court for the District of

[6] The factual listed below, with the exception of the reference to Mr. Simpson's summary suspension (regarding which this Hearing Panel takes judicial notice), were set forth in the SBA's complaint and were deemed admitted based on Mr. Simpson's default.

Indiana, Drula Fields was convicted of healthcare fraud (she defrauded Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Indiana out of $814,854.34 by submitting false claims while operating a medical billing company for physicians).

2. Drula Fields received a 30-month prison sentence and was ordered to pay restitution to three physicians, totaling $1,001,704.03.

3. On March 22, 2016, a criminal restitution lien was filed in the Maricopa County Recorder's Office.

4. On February 11, 2022, Drula Fields was in a motor vehicle traveling to Mesa, Arizona when her vehicle was "rear-ended" by another motor vehicle.

5. Drula Fields suffered serious injuries in the automobile accident, including a severe concussion.

6. Nationwide Insurance ("Nationwide"), the at-fault driver's insurance carrier, denied Drula Field's claim.

7. At an unknown time, Mr. Simpson began hiring (on a contract basis) disbarred attorney Scott Richardson to provide services for his firm.

8. Mr. Simpson agreed to represent Drula Fields regarding the motor vehicle accident.

9. On March 29, 2023, Drula Fields electronically signed Mr. Simpson's ER 1.5(b) writing via Dropbox (a second ER 1.5(b) writing between Mr. Simpson and Drula Fields was dated August 14, 2023, but was unsigned).

a) Mr. Simpson's March 29, 2023 ER 1.5(b) writing did *not* include a fee arbitration provision.

b) Mr. Simpson's March 29, 2023 ER 1.5(b) writing included a 33-1/3% contingency fee, but noted that fees related to Nationwide would increase to 40% if litigation became necessary.

c) Mr. Simpson's March 29, 2023 ER 1.5(b) writing stated that his fee for representing Drula Fields regarding a claim against Safeco Insurance Company of America ("Safeco"), her underinsured motorist carrier, would be re-evaluated if the matter was not resolved through arbitration.

d) Mr. Simpson's March 29, 2023 ER 1.5(b) writing failed to reflect whether his fee was based on settlement, litigation or appeal.

10.Mr. Simpson hired Scott Richardson to provide services related to his representation of Drula Fields.

11.On March 31, 2023, Mr. Simpson sent a demand letter to Nationwide on Drula Fields' behalf.

a) That letter itemized $47,535.31 in medical bills incurred by Drula Fields and requested payment of the policy limits of $25,000.

12.On May 19, 2023, Mr. Simpson sent a demand letter to Safeco on Drula Fields' behalf.

a) In that demand letter, Mr. Simpson requested payment of the policy limits of $500,000.

b) That demand letter itemized $56,481.30 in medical bills incurred by Drula Fields, and included an estimate of $989,337.90 for future medical care.

13.Mr. Simpson never filed a personal injury complaint on Drula Fields' behalf.

14.In July 2023, Nationwide sent a policy limits check to Mr. Simpson for $25,000, which he deposited into his client trust account.

15.Beginning in or about July, 2023, Medicare began sending letters to Drula Fields requesting payment for medical expenses that had arisen as a result of the motor vehicle accident.

16. On or about September 14, 2023, Safeco sent a policy limits check to Mr. Simpson for $500,000, which he deposited into his client trust account.

a) On October 19, 2023, a Safeco "Resolution Specialist" sent an email message to Drula Fields, stating that Simpson had submitted a settlement demand letter, but that "[t]here was no negotiation in this matter."

17. Based on the federal restitution lien against Drula Fields, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona had to approve Drula Fields' expenditure of the settlement funds she received from Nationwide and Safeco.

18. Assistant United States Attorney (AUSA) Vincent Crete authorized the disbursement of all settlement funds, after Mr. Simpson's attorney's fees were deducted, to pay Drula Fields' medical bills.

19. On September 22, 2023, Mr. Simpson issued two checks to pay two medical bills on Drula Fields' behalf, totaling just over $6,100.

20. Upon information and belief, Mr. Simpson provided Drula

Fields with settlement funds on four occasions to pay for prescription medication or other medical expenses.

21.Drula Fields was scheduled to undergo surgery at St. Joseph's Medical Center on September 25, 2023.

22.On September 25, 2023, Mr. Simpson issued a check to St. Joseph's Medical Center in the amount of $271,178.50 for payment of Drula Fields' surgery on that date, and a knee replacement once Drula Fields was sufficiently healthy to have it performed.

23.St. Joseph's Medical Center never negotiated the $271,178.50 trust account check issued by Mr. Simpson.

24.On or about October 5, 2023, Mr. Simpson understood, through Drula Fields' action, that she had discharged him as her attorney.

25.On October 11, 2023, Mr. Simpson sent a letter to Drula Fields stating she had discharged him on October 5, 2023, and that he understood she was in the process of attempting to hire another attorney.

a) Mr. Simpson further stated in that letter that he could not continue to represent Drula Fields because she had placed numerous restrictions on his work.

26.Mr. Simpson charged Drula Fields a fee of $175,000 for settling with Nationwide and Safeco.

27.On March 11, 2024, Attorney Barry Becker, at Mr. Simpson's direction, (a) filed in interpleader in the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona (*Law Offices of Pedro A. Simpson, PLLC v. Drula Faye Fields, United States of America and PROVE Legal Funding, PLLC,* No. 2:24-cv-00517-ROS) and (b) deposited $331,808.48 with the Court (all the funds belonging to Drula Fields that Mr. Simpson still had in his possession). The interpleader was necessary because of the federal government's restitution lien.

28.On August 21, 2025, following disclosure and discovery, the U.S. District Court entered an order regarding distribution of the funds based on the parties' stipulation: (a) $181,808.48 to the United States of America (for its lien based on the government's criminal restitution lien that arose from Drula Fields' criminal conviction); (b) $135,000 to Drula Fields; (c) $15,000 to PROVE Legal Funding, LLC (arising from a lien based on funds loaned to the complainant/client during the litigation); and (d) $8,850 to Mr. Simpson for attorney's fees and costs related to the interpleader.

Mr. Simpson's Failure to Comply with the Terms of Diversion

29. On March 14, 2025, Mr. Simpson entered into a Diversion Agreement with the State Bar in File No. 23-2438 (based on the facts set forth above).

30. The Diversion Agreement included the following terms: (a) a one-time consultation with the State Bar's Law Office Management Assistance Program (LOMAP); (b) completion of the State Bar's Trust Account – Ethics Enhancement Program; and (c) participation in fee arbitration through the State Bar's Fee Arbitration Program if Drula Fields filed a petition within 60 days of notice of the diversion agreement, and payment within 60 days of the entry of a fee arbitration award.

31. On March 17, 2025, Drula Fields was informed by the State Bar that Mr. Simpson had entered into a Diversion Agreement and that the Diversion Agreement included a term that required her to file a Petition for Fee Arbitration with the State Bar's Fee Arbitration Program within 60 days if she wished to participate in fee arbitration with Mr. Simpson.

32. On March 20, 2025, the State Bar's Compliance Monitor sent an

email message to Mr. Simpson, discussing the requirements of diversion and possible dates for his initial consultation with LOMAP.

33. Mr. Simpson failed to respond to that email message and failed to participate in the one-time LOMAP consultation.

34. On or before April 3, 2025, Drula Fields submitted a completed Petition for Fee Arbitration to the State Bar's Fee Arbitration Program.

35. On April 3, 2025, the State Bar's Fee Arbitration Coordinator mailed a copy of Drula Fields' Petition for Fee Arbitration (with exhibits) to Mr. Simpson's law office on file with the State Bar.

36. Mr. Simpson's fee arbitration response was due by April 28, 2025.

37. The envelope addressed to Mr. Simpson containing the Petition for Fee Arbitration was not returned to the State Bar by the U.S. Postal Service as undeliverable.

38. On April 30, 2025, the State Bar's Compliance Monitor sent another email message to Mr. Simpson regarding diversion, but it was returned as undeliverable.

39. The State Bar's Compliance Monitor sent a second email message

to Mr. Simpson and it, too, was returned as undeliverable.

40. As of May 8, 2025, Mr. Simpson had failed to submit a written response to the Petition for Fee Arbitration.

41. Based on Mr. Simpson's failure to file a response to the Petition for Fee Arbitration and consent to its jurisdiction, the Fee Arbitration Coordinator closed Drula Fields' fee arbitration file.

42. On May 30, 2025, the State Bar's Compliance Monitor called Mr. Simpson at his telephone number on record with the State Bar, intending to discuss the terms of diversion.

43. No one answered her call, but she was unable to leave a voicemail message because Mr. Simpson's voice-mailbox was full.

44. Also on May 30, 2025, the State Bar's Compliance Monitor called another possible telephone number for Mr. Simpson and left a voicemail message.

a) The State Bar's Compliance Monitor directed Mr. Simpson to contact her and indicated that bar counsel may file a notice of noncompliance with the terms of diversion if he failed to comply with the terms of diversion.

45. Also on May 30, 2025, a legal secretary at the State Bar sent an email message to Mr. Simpson, which included two attachments: a copy of the initial screening letter (regarding his failure to comply with the terms of diversion) and a copy of the signed Diversion Agreement.

46. On June 26, 2025, a paralegal at the State Bar attempted to send a noncompliance letter to Mr. Simpson by email (because he had failed to submit a written response to the screening letter regarding his failure to submit a written response to the screening letter.

47. That June 26, 2025 email message to Mr. Simpson was returned as undeliverable because Mr. Simpson's email box was full.

48. As of the date this complaint was filed, Mr. Simpson had not submitted a written response to the screening investigation into his failure to comply with the terms of the Diversion Agreement he entered into with the State Bar.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Mr. Simpson failed to file an Answer or otherwise respond to the allegations in the State Bar's complaint. Default was properly entered on February 18, 2026, and the allegations are therefore deemed admitted pursuant to Rule 58(d), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct. Based upon the facts deemed admitted, the Panel finds by clear and convincing evidence that Mr. Simpson violated the following:

In Count One: Rule 42, Ariz. R. Sup. Ct., ER 1.5(a) (Agreement Charging Unreasonable Fees or Unreasonable Amount for Expenses), ER 1.5(b) (Failure to Communicate to Client in Writing the Scope of Representation and the Basis or Rate of the Fee and Expenses), ER 8.1(b) (Bar Admission and Disciplinary Matters); and Rules 54(d) (Violation of Any Obligation Pursuant to These Rules in a Disciplinary or Disability Investigation or Proceeding) and (e) (Violation of a Condition of Probation or Diversion), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct.

DISCUSSION

Sanctions imposed against lawyers are determined in accordance with the American Bar Association *Standards for Imposing Lawyer Sanctions* ("ABA *Standards*") and, if appropriate, a proportionality analysis.[7] In fashioning a sanction, the Panel considers: (a) the duty violated; (b) the lawyer's mental

[7] ***See*** Rule 58(k), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct.

state; (c) the actual or potential injury caused by the lawyer's misconduct; and (d) the existence of aggravating or mitigating factors.[8]

The Panel finds, based on the evidence admitted, the following:

Duties violated:

Mr. Simpson violated his duties to his client and the profession by violating ER 1.5(a) and (b), his duty to the legal profession by violating ER 8.1(b) and his duty to the legal system by violating Rule 54(d) and (e), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct.

Mental State:

Mr. Simpson acted *negligently* in charging Drula Fields an unreasonable fee (ER 1.5(a)) and failing to adequately set forth in his ER 1.5(b) writing the scope of representation and the basis or rate of the fee for which Drula Fields would be responsible (ER 1.5(b)). Mr. Simpson *knowingly* engaged in misconduct by failing to respond to bar counsel's inquiries into his conduct and failing to participate in diversion after signing a diversion agreement.

[8] ***See*** ABA *Standard* 3.0

<u>Actual or Potential Injury:</u>

Drula Fields potentially suffered a financial injury based on Mr. Simpson's unreasonable fee. She was unable to determine the extent of possible financial injury because Mr. Simpson failed to participate in fee arbitration through the State Bar's Fee Arbitration Program, as set forth in the Diversion Agreement, following Ms. Fields' submission of a Petition for Fee Arbitration.

<u>ABA *Standards* considered:</u>

The Panel finds that Mr. Simpson's misconduct implicates the following ABA *Standards*:

<u>ABA *Standard* 6.22</u>

> Suspension is generally appropriate when a lawyer knows that he or she is violating a court order or rule, and causes injury or potential injury to a client or a party, or causes interference or potential interference with a legal proceeding.

This *Standard* applies because Mr. Simpson failed to participate in fee arbitration with Drula Fields after agreeing to do so in the Diversion Agreement he signed. Also, he failed to participate in the State Bar's screening investigation into his failure to participate in diversion and failed to file an answer to the formal complaint filed against him by the State Bar.

ABA *Standard* 7.2

> Suspension is generally appropriate when a lawyer knowingly engages in conduct that is a violation of a duty owed as a professional and causes injury or potential injury to a client, the public, or the legal system.

This *Standard* applies because Mr. Simpson failed to participate in the State Bar's screening investigation into his failure to participate in diversion and failed to file an answer to the formal complaint filed against him by the State Bar.

Therefore, ABA *Standards* 6.22 and 7.2 are applicable. The presumptive sanction is suspension.

The State Bar has requested that Mr. Simpson be suspended.

Aggravation/Mitigation:

The Panel finds that the following aggravating factors are supported by the record:

1. *Standard* 9.22(b) - Dishonest or selfish Motive,

- Mr. Simpson accepted a fee of $175,000 in a case that settled for $525,00 prior to the filing of a complaint, in which he failed to participate in negotiation with the opposing party;

2. *Standard* 9.22(d) - Multiple offenses,

    - Mr. Simpson committed several violations in the underlying case, and thereafter violated the terms of diversion;

3. *Standard* 9.22(e) – Bad faith obstruction of the disciplinary process by intentionally failing to comply with rules or orders of the disciplinary agency,

    - Mr. Simpson failed to participate in diversion, failed to participate in the screening investigation into his failure to comply with the terms of diversion, and failed to participate in the formal disciplinary proceeding;

4. *Standard* 9.22(i) – Substantial experience in the practice of law,

    - Mr. Simpson was admitted to practice law in Arizona on May 20, 1995.

The Panel finds that the following aggravating factor is supported by the record:

1. Standard 9.32(a) – Absence of a prior disciplinary record.

The Panel notes, Bar Counsel Lee discussed on the record the potential that Mr. Simpson may be suffering from a cognitive or memory-related health condition, describing efforts and ultimate inability to obtain reliable evidence in this regard. The Panel appreciated the additional information but finds that the record does not support the finding of any additional mitigating factors.

Having considered the matter thoroughly, the Panel finds that the presumptive sanction of suspension is appropriate.

CONCLUSION

The Supreme Court "has long held that 'the objective of disciplinary proceedings is to protect the public, the profession and the administration of justice and not to punish the offender.'" *In re Alcorn,* 202 Ariz. 62, 74, 41, P.3d 600, 612, (2002) (quoting *In re Kastensmith,* 101 Ariz. 291, 294, 419, P.2d 75, 78 (1966). Lawyer discipline is intended to deter future misconduct, *In re Fioramonti,* 176 Ariz. 182, 859 P.2d 1315 (1993), and protect and instill public confidence in the integrity of individual members of the SBA, *Matter of Horwitz,* 180 Ariz. 20, 881 P.2d 352 (1994).

The Panel has made the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, and determined an appropriate sanction based on the facts deemed admitted, the ABA *Standards for Imposing Lawyer Sanctions,* the applicable factors in aggravation and mitigation, and the goals of the attorney discipline system. The Panel finds that the length of this suspension provides appropriate protection for the public, given Mr. Simpson would need to present any application for reinstatement to a hearing panel and obtain the approval of the Arizona Supreme Court before he could return to the practice of law. Based on the foregoing, the Panel orders as follows:

1) PEDRO A. SIMPSON, Bar No. 016306, is suspended from the practice of law in Arizona for a period of six (6) months and one (1) day, **effective immediately**.
2) Pursuant to Rule 72, Ariz. R. Sup. Ct., Mr. Simpson shall immediately comply with the requirements relating to notification of clients and others.

3) Mr. Simpson shall pay all costs and expenses incurred by the State Bar of Arizona in this proceeding within thirty (30) days of entry of a final judgment and order.

A final judgment and order will follow.

DATED this 19th day of March, 2026.

/s/signature on file
Lisa A. VandenBerg, Presiding Disciplinary Judge

/s/ signature on file
Stephen L. Weiss, Attorney Member

/s/ signature on file
Maria I. Moreno, Public Member

Copy of the foregoing emailed (and mailed to Mr. Simpson's last known address) this 18th day of March, to:

Pedro A. Simpson
Pasimpson_esq@hotmail.com
Law Offices of Pedro A. Simpson, PLLC
957 South Nielson Street
Gilbert, AZ 85296-3668

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