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<b>State Bar Court of California</b> <b>Hearing Department</b> <b>Los Angeles</b> <b>STAYED SUSPENSION</b>		
<b>Counsel For The State Bar</b>  Charles T. Calix Deputy Trial Counsel 1149 S. Hill Street Los Angeles, CA 90015 (213) 765-1000  Bar # 146853	<b>Case Number(s):</b> 11-O-15095	<b>For Court use only</b>  <div style="text-align: center;"> <b>FILED</b>  MAR 01 2012 <i>HC</i>  STATE BAR COURT  CLERK'S OFFICE  LOS ANGELES </div>
<b>In Pro Per Respondent</b>  Rene Chavez Nunez 225 Rosemont Boulevard San Gabriel, CA 91775 (626) 230-9640  Bar # 226171	<div style="text-align: center;"> <b>PUBLIC MATTER</b> </div>	
<b>In the Matter of:</b> Rene Chavez Nunez  Bar # 226171  A Member of the State Bar of California (Respondent)	<b>Submitted to: Assigned Judge</b>  STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION AND ORDER APPROVING  <b>STAYED SUSPENSION; NO ACTUAL SUSPENSION</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> PREVIOUS STIPULATION REJECTED	

**Note: All information required by this form and any additional information which cannot be provided in the space provided, must be set forth in an attachment to this stipulation under specific headings, e.g., "Facts," "Dismissals," "Conclusions of Law," "Supporting Authority," etc.**

#### **A. Parties' Acknowledgments:**

- (1) Respondent is a member of the State Bar of California, admitted July 24, 2003.
- (2) The parties agree to be bound by the factual stipulations contained herein even if conclusions of law or disposition are rejected or changed by the Supreme Court.
- (3) All investigations or proceedings listed by case number in the caption of this stipulation are entirely resolved by this stipulation and are deemed consolidated. Dismissed charge(s)/count(s) are listed under "Dismissals." The stipulation consists of 12 pages, not including the order.
- (4) A statement of acts or omissions acknowledged by Respondent as cause or causes for discipline is included under "Facts."



- (5) Conclusions of law, drawn from and specifically referring to the facts are also included under "Conclusions of Law".
- (6) The parties must include supporting authority for the recommended level of discipline under the heading "Supporting Authority."
- (7) No more than 30 days prior to the filing of this stipulation, Respondent has been advised in writing of any pending investigation/proceeding not resolved by this stipulation, except for criminal investigations.
- (8) Payment of Disciplinary Costs—Respondent acknowledges the provisions of Bus. & Prof. Code §§6086.10 & 6140.7. (Check one option only):
- ☒ Costs are added to membership fee for calendar year following effective date of discipline.
  - ☐ Costs are to be paid in equal amounts prior to February 1 for the following membership years: (Hardship, special circumstances or other good cause per rule 5.132, Rules of Procedure). If Respondent fails to pay any installment as described above, or as may be modified by the State Bar Court, the remaining balance is due and payable immediately.
  - ☐ Costs are waived in part as set forth in a separate attachment entitled "Partial Waiver of Costs".
  - ☐ Costs are entirely waived.

**B. Aggravating Circumstances [for definition, see Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct, standard 1.2(b)]. Facts supporting aggravating circumstances are required.**

- (1) ☐ **Prior record of discipline** [see standard 1.2(f)]
- (a) ☐ State Bar Court case # of prior case
  - (b) ☐ Date prior discipline effective
  - (c) ☐ Rules of Professional Conduct/ State Bar Act violations:
  - (d) ☐ Degree of prior discipline
  - (e) ☐ If Respondent has two or more incidents of prior discipline, use space provided below or a separate attachment entitled "Prior Discipline."
- (2) ☐ **Dishonesty:** Respondent's misconduct was surrounded by or followed by bad faith, dishonesty, concealment, overreaching or other violations of the State Bar Act or Rules of Professional Conduct.
- (3) ☐ **Trust Violation:** Trust funds or property were involved and Respondent refused or was unable to account to the client or person who was the object of the misconduct for improper conduct toward said funds or property.
- (4) ☐ **Harm:** Respondent's misconduct harmed significantly a client, the public or the administration of justice.
- (5) ☐ **Indifference:** Respondent demonstrated indifference toward rectification of or atonement for the consequences of his or her misconduct.
- (6) ☐ **Lack of Cooperation:** Respondent displayed a lack of candor and cooperation to victims of his/her misconduct or to the State Bar during disciplinary investigation or proceedings.

- (7) ☐ **Multiple/Pattern of Misconduct:** Respondent's current misconduct evidences multiple acts of wrongdoing or demonstrates a pattern of misconduct.
- (8) ☒ **No aggravating circumstances** are involved.

**Additional aggravating circumstances**

**C. Mitigating Circumstances [see standard 1.2(e)]. Facts supporting mitigating circumstances are required.**

- (1) ☐ **No Prior Discipline:** Respondent has no prior record of discipline over many years of practice coupled with present misconduct which is not deemed serious.
- (2) ☐ **No Harm:** Respondent did not harm the client or person who was the object of the misconduct.
- (3) ☒ **Candor/Cooperation:** Respondent displayed spontaneous candor and cooperation with the victims of his/her misconduct and to the State Bar during disciplinary investigation and proceedings. Respondent has displayed candor and cooperation with the State Bar during the investigation and in stipulating to this discipline.
- (4) ☐ **Remorse:** Respondent promptly took objective steps spontaneously demonstrating remorse and recognition of the wrongdoing, which steps were designed to timely atone for any consequences of his/her misconduct.
- (5) ☐ **Restitution:** Respondent paid \$ \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ in restitution to \_\_\_\_\_ without the threat or force of disciplinary, civil or criminal proceedings.
- (6) ☐ **Delay:** These disciplinary proceedings were excessively delayed. The delay is not attributable to Respondent and the delay prejudiced him/her.
- (7) ☐ **Good Faith:** Respondent acted in good faith.
- (8) ☐ **Emotional/Physical Difficulties:** At the time of the stipulated act or acts of professional misconduct Respondent suffered extreme emotional difficulties or physical disabilities which expert testimony would establish was directly responsible for the misconduct. The difficulties or disabilities were not the product of any illegal conduct by the member, such as illegal drug or substance abuse, and Respondent no longer suffers from such difficulties or disabilities.
- (9) ☐ **Severe Financial Stress:** At the time of the misconduct, Respondent suffered from severe financial stress which resulted from circumstances not reasonably foreseeable or which were beyond his/her control and which were directly responsible for the misconduct.
- (10) ☐ **Family Problems:** At the time of the misconduct, Respondent suffered extreme difficulties in his/her personal life which were other than emotional or physical in nature.
- (11) ☐ **Good Character:** Respondent's good character is attested to by a wide range of references in the legal and general communities who are aware of the full extent of his/her misconduct.
- (12) ☐ **Rehabilitation:** Considerable time has passed since the acts of professional misconduct occurred followed by convincing proof of subsequent rehabilitation.

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(13) ☐ **No mitigating circumstances** are involved.

**Additional mitigating circumstances**

Respondent has been an attorney since July 24, 2003, and has no record of prior discipline.

## D. Discipline:

(1) ☒ **Stayed Suspension:**

- (a) ☒ Respondent must be suspended from the practice of law for a period of one (1) year.
- i. ☐ and until Respondent shows proof satisfactory to the State Bar Court of rehabilitation and present fitness to practice and present learning and ability in the law pursuant to standard 1.4(c)(ii), Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct.
  - ii. ☐ and until Respondent pays restitution as set forth in the Financial Conditions form attached to this stipulation.
  - iii. ☐ and until Respondent does the following:

The above-referenced suspension is stayed.

(2) ☒ **Probation:**

Respondent is placed on probation for a period of three (3) years, which will commence upon the effective date of the Supreme Court order in this matter. (See rule 9.18 California Rules of Court.)

## E. Additional Conditions of Probation:

- (1) ☒ During the probation period, Respondent must comply with the provisions of the State Bar Act and Rules of Professional Conduct.
- (2) ☒ Within ten (10) days of any change, Respondent must report to the Membership Records Office of the State Bar and to the Office of Probation of the State Bar of California ("Office of Probation"), all changes of information, including current office address and telephone number, or other address for State Bar purposes, as prescribed by section 6002.1 of the Business and Professions Code.
- (3) ☒ Within thirty (30) days from the effective date of discipline, Respondent must contact the Office of Probation and schedule a meeting with Respondent's assigned probation deputy to discuss these terms and conditions of probation. Upon the direction of the Office of Probation, Respondent must meet with the probation deputy either in-person or by telephone. During the period of probation, Respondent must promptly meet with the probation deputy as directed and upon request.
- (4) ☒ Respondent must submit written quarterly reports to the Office of Probation on each January 10, April 10, July 10, and October 10 of the period of probation. Under penalty of perjury, Respondent must state whether Respondent has complied with the State Bar Act, the Rules of Professional Conduct, and all conditions of probation during the preceding calendar quarter. Respondent must also state whether there are any proceedings pending against him or her in the State Bar Court and if so, the case number and current status of that proceeding. If the first report would cover less than 30 days, that report must be submitted on the next quarter date, and cover the extended period.

In addition to all quarterly reports, a final report, containing the same information, is due no earlier than twenty (20) days before the last day of the period of probation and no later than the last day of probation.

- (5) ☐ Respondent must be assigned a probation monitor. Respondent must promptly review the terms and conditions of probation with the probation monitor to establish a manner and schedule of compliance. During the period of probation, Respondent must furnish to the monitor such reports as may be requested, in addition to the quarterly reports required to be submitted to the Office of Probation. Respondent must cooperate fully with the probation monitor.

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- (6) ☐ Subject to assertion of applicable privileges, Respondent must answer fully, promptly and truthfully any inquiries of the Office of Probation and any probation monitor assigned under these conditions which are directed to Respondent personally or in writing relating to whether Respondent is complying or has complied with the probation conditions.
- (7) ☒ Within one (1) year of the effective date of the discipline herein, Respondent must provide to the Office of Probation satisfactory proof of attendance at a session of the State Bar Ethics School, and passage of the test given at the end of that session.
- ☐ No Ethics School recommended. Reason: .
- (8) ☐ Respondent must comply with all conditions of probation imposed in the underlying criminal matter and must so declare under penalty of perjury in conjunction with any quarterly report to be filed with the Office of Probation.
- (9) ☒ The following conditions are attached hereto and incorporated:
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Substance Abuse Conditions | <input type="checkbox"/> Law Office Management Conditions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Conditions         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Financial Conditions  |

**F. Other Conditions Negotiated by the Parties:**

- (1) ☒ **Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination:** Respondent must provide proof of passage of the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination ("MPRE"), administered by the National Conference of Bar Examiners, to the Office of Probation within one year. **Failure to pass the MPRE results in actual suspension without further hearing until passage. But see rule 9.10(b), California Rules of Court, and rule 5.162(A) & (E), Rules of Procedure.**
- ☐ No MPRE recommended. Reason: .
- (2) ☐ **Other Conditions:**

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## Financial Conditions

### a. Restitution

- ☒ Respondent must pay restitution (including the principal amount, plus interest of 10% per annum) to the payee(s) listed below. If the Client Security Fund ("CSF") has reimbursed one or more of the payee(s) for all or any portion of the principal amount(s) listed below, Respondent must also pay restitution to CSF in the amount(s) paid, plus applicable interest and costs.

Payee	Principal Amount	Interest Accrues From
Juan Carlos Frigerio	\$790.00	September 13, 2010

- ☒ Respondent must pay above-referenced restitution and provide satisfactory proof of payment to the Office of Probation not later than the first quarterly report filed with the Office of Probation following the effective date of the Supreme Court order.

### b. Installment Restitution Payments

- ☐ Respondent must pay the above-referenced restitution on the payment schedule set forth below. Respondent must provide satisfactory proof of payment to the Office of Probation with each quarterly probation report, or as otherwise directed by the Office of Probation. No later than 30 days prior to the expiration of the period of probation (or period of reprobation), Respondent must make any necessary final payment(s) in order to complete the payment of restitution, including interest, in full.

Payee/CSF (as applicable)	Minimum Payment Amount	Payment Frequency

- ☐ If Respondent fails to pay any installment as described above, or as may be modified by the State Bar Court, the remaining balance is due and payable immediately.

### c. Client Funds Certificate

- ☐ 1. If Respondent possesses client funds at any time during the period covered by a required quarterly report, Respondent must file with each required report a certificate from Respondent and/or a certified public accountant or other financial professional approved by the Office of Probation, certifying that:
- Respondent has maintained a bank account in a bank authorized to do business in the State of California, at a branch located within the State of California, and that such account is designated as a "Trust Account" or "Clients' Funds Account";

b. Respondent has kept and maintained the following:

- i. A written ledger for each client on whose behalf funds are held that sets forth:
  1. the name of such client;
  2. the date, amount and source of all funds received on behalf of such client;
  3. the date, amount, payee and purpose of each disbursement made on behalf of such client; and,
  4. the current balance for such client.
- ii. a written journal for each client trust fund account that sets forth:
  1. the name of such account;
  2. the date, amount and client affected by each debit and credit; and,
  3. the current balance in such account.
- iii. all bank statements and cancelled checks for each client trust account; and,
- iv. each monthly reconciliation (balancing) of (i), (ii), and (iii), above, and if there are any differences between the monthly total balances reflected in (i), (ii), and (iii), above, the reasons for the differences.

c. Respondent has maintained a written journal of securities or other properties held for clients that specifies:

- i. each item of security and property held;
- ii. the person on whose behalf the security or property is held;
- iii. the date of receipt of the security or property;
- iv. the date of distribution of the security or property; and,
- v. the person to whom the security or property was distributed.

2. If Respondent does not possess any client funds, property or securities during the entire period covered by a report, Respondent must so state under penalty of perjury in the report filed with the Office of Probation for that reporting period. In this circumstance, Respondent need not file the accountant's certificate described above.

3. The requirements of this condition are in addition to those set forth in rule 4-100, Rules of Professional Conduct.

d. **Client Trust Accounting School**

- ☐ Within one (1) year of the effective date of the discipline herein, Respondent must supply to the Office of Probation satisfactory proof of attendance at a session of the Ethics School Client Trust Accounting School, within the same period of time, and passage of the test given at the end of that session.



**ATTACHMENT TO**  
**STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION**

**IN THE MATTER OF:**                      **RENE CHAVEZ NUNEZ - 226171**

**CASE NUMBER:**                      **11-O-15095**

**FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW.**

**Facts.**

1. On or about September 13, 2010, Juan Carlos Frigerio ("Frigerio") hired Respondent to represent him in a bankruptcy under Chapter 7. Frigerio agreed to pay Respondent \$500 to begin the bankruptcy, \$250 at the 341(a) Meeting, and \$250 within 30-days after the 341(a) Meeting. Frigerio made the \$500 payment to Respondent.
2. On or about September 27, 2010, Respondent met with Frigerio to have Frigerio sign, *inter alia*, the "Voluntary Petition of Bankruptcy" ("Voluntary Petition") and "Declaration re: Limited Scope of Appearance Pursuant to Local Bankruptcy Rule 2090-1" ("Declaration") prepared by Respondent. The Declaration stated, *inter alia*, that Respondent would prepare the Petition and Schedules, represent Frigerio at the 341(a) Meeting, and represent Frigerio at the final discharge hearing.
3. On or about September 29, 2010, Frigerio obtained his Certificate of Counseling and emailed the Certificate to Respondent. Respondent received the Certificate.
4. On or about October 8, 2010, Frigerio made a payment of \$290 in cash to Respondent for filing fees. Altogether, Frigerio paid \$790 to Respondent.
5. On or about October 29, 2010, Respondent filed, *inter alia*, the Voluntary Petition and Declaration in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Central District of California ("Bankruptcy Court"), in the matter titled *In the Matter of Juan C. Frigerio*, Bankruptcy Petition No: 6:10-bk-45227-CB ("*In re Frigerio*").
6. On or about October 31, 2010, the Bankruptcy Court filed and served on Respondent and Frigerio the following documents in *In re Frigerio*: (A) an "Order to Comply with Bankruptcy Rule 1007 and Notice of Intent to Dismiss Case"; (B) a "Case Commencement Deficiency Notice"; and (C) a "Notice of Requirement to File a Statement of Course In Personal Financial Management." The Order stated that Respondent failed to file Schedules A through J and that the Bankruptcy Court would dismiss the matter if Respondent did not file those schedules within 14-days. The Deficiency Notice listed nine deficiencies. The Notice of Requirement notified Respondent that he must file Frigerio's Certificate of Completion with 45 days of the 341(a) Meeting. Respondent and Frigerio received the order and notices.



7. In or about early November 2010, Frigerio spoke with Respondent about the order and notices. Respondent told Frigerio that Respondent would file the schedules, correct the deficiencies, and file the Certificate of Completion. Respondent did not file the schedules, correct the deficiencies, or file the Certificate of Completion.

8. On or about November 18, 2010, the Bankruptcy Court filed and served on Respondent an "Order and Notice of Dismissal for Failure to File Schedules, Statements and/or Plan" that dismissed *In re Frigerio*. Respondent received the order.

9. On or about January 20, 2011, Frigerio filed a complaint with the State Bar concerning Respondent's handling of *In re Frigerio*. Respondent received notice of the complaint from the State Bar.

10. On or about March 17, 2011, the State Bar closed Frigerio's complaint after assisting the parties in reaching the agreement that Respondent would file a motion to reopen *In re Frigerio*, pay for the cost of the motion, and obtain the discharge in *In re Frigerio*. Respondent was aware of the agreement and consented to it.

11. On or about March 23, 2011, Frigerio sent an email to Respondent that confirmed the agreement that Respondent would file a motion to reopen *In re Frigerio*, pay for the cost of the motion, and obtain the discharge in *In re Frigerio*. Respondent received the email, and Respondent and Frigerio met to discuss the bankruptcy.

12. Between in or about April 2011 and in or about June 2011, Frigerio repeatedly spoke with or emailed Respondent to request that Respondent either file a motion to reopen *In re Frigerio* or file a new bankruptcy petition. Respondent repeatedly told or emailed Frigerio that Respondent would either file a motion to reopen *In re Frigerio* or file a new bankruptcy petition.

13. Respondent did not did not file a motion to reopen *In re Frigerio* or a new bankruptcy petition, and has not communicated with Frigerio since on or about June 2, 2011.

14. Respondent provided no legal services of value to Frigerio. Respondent did not earn any of the advance fees and costs paid by Frigerio. At no time did Respondent refund any portion of the \$790 paid by Frigerio.

### **Conclusions of Law**

15. By failing to file the proper pleadings in *In re Frigerio*, permitting *In re Frigerio* to be dismissed, failing to file the motion to reopen *In re Frigerio*, and failing to file a new bankruptcy petition, Respondent intentionally, recklessly or repeatedly failed to perform legal services of competence in wilful violation of Rules of Professional Conduct ("rule"), rule 3-110(A),

16. By not refunding the \$790 to Frigerio, Respondent failed to refund promptly any part of a fee paid in advance that has not been earned in wilful violation of rule 3-700(D)(2).

### **PENDING PROCEEDINGS.**

The disclosure date referred to, on page 2, paragraph A(7), was February 2, 2012.

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## **AUTHORITIES SUPPORTING DISCIPLINE.**

Standard 1.3 of the "Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct" ("Standard") provides guidance as to the imposition of discipline and interpretation of specific Standards. It states that the primary purpose of discipline is the protection of the public, the courts and the legal profession.

Standard 2.10 provides that culpability of a willful violation of any Rule of Professional Conduct not specified in these standards shall result in reproof or suspension according to the gravity of the offense or the harm, if any, to the victim, with due regard to the purposes of imposing discipline set forth in standard 1.3.

In *In re Morse* (1995) 11 Cal .4th 184, 206, the Supreme Court stated the purpose of disciplinary proceedings are the protection of the public, the courts, and the legal profession, the maintenance of high professional standards by attorneys, and the preservation of public confidence in the legal profession.

The Standards authorize reproof or suspension in this matter. Respondent's misconduct involved a single client matter and does not establish a pattern. He has stipulated that he failed to perform with competence and thereby cooperated with the State Bar in entering into this Stipulation. Given the extent of the misconduct and the degree of harm to the clients, the appropriate level of discipline is a suspension of one (1) year, stayed upon the condition that he be placed on probation for three (3) years.

## **COSTS OF DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS.**

Respondent acknowledges that the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel has informed Respondent that as of February 2, 2012, the prosecution costs in this matter are \$3,018.30. Respondent further acknowledges that should this stipulation be rejected or should relief from the stipulation be granted, the costs in this matter may increase due to the cost of further proceedings.

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In the Matter of:  
Rene Chavez Nunez - 226171

Case number(s):  
11-O-15095

### SIGNATURE OF THE PARTIES

By their signatures below, the parties and their counsel, as applicable, signify their agreement with each of the recitations and each of the terms and conditions of this Stipulation Re Facts, Conclusions of Law, and Disposition.

February 7, 2012

Date

  
Respondent's Signature

Rene Chavez Nunez

Print Name

Date

Respondent's Counsel Signature

Print Name

February 12, 2012

Date

  
Deputy Trial Counsel's Signature

Adriana M. Burger, for

Charles T. Calix

Print Name

(Do not write above this line.)

In the Matter of:  
Rene Chavez Nunez - 226171

Case Number(s):  
11-O-15095

### STAYED SUSPENSION ORDER

Finding the stipulation to be fair to the parties and that it adequately protects the public, IT IS ORDERED that the requested dismissal of counts/charges, if any, is GRANTED without prejudice, and:

- ☒ The stipulated facts and disposition are APPROVED and the DISCIPLINE RECOMMENDED to the Supreme Court.
- ☐ The stipulated facts and disposition are APPROVED AS MODIFIED as set forth below, and the DISCIPLINE IS RECOMMENDED to the Supreme Court.
- ☐ All Hearing dates are vacated.

The parties are bound by the stipulation as approved unless: 1) a motion to withdraw or modify the stipulation, filed within 15 days after service of this order, is granted; or 2) this court modifies or further modifies the approved stipulation. (See rule 5.58(E) & (F), Rules of Procedure.) **The effective date of this disposition is the effective date of the Supreme Court order herein, normally 30 days after file date. (See rule 9.18(a), California Rules of Court.)**

Date

02-24-12

Judge of the State Bar Court

RICHARD A. PLATEL

## CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

[Rules Proc. of State Bar; Rule 5.27(B); Code Civ. Proc., § 1013a(4)]

I am a Case Administrator of the State Bar Court of California. I am over the age of eighteen and not a party to the within proceeding. Pursuant to standard court practice, in the City and County of Los Angeles, on March 1, 2012, I deposited a true copy of the following document(s):

### STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION AND ORDER APPROVING

in a sealed envelope for collection and mailing on that date as follows:

- ☒ by first-class mail, with postage thereon fully prepaid, through the United States Postal Service at Los Angeles, California, addressed as follows:

RENE C. NUNEZ  
225 ROSEMONT BLVD.  
SAN GABRIEL, CA 91775

- ☒ by interoffice mail through a facility regularly maintained by the State Bar of California addressed as follows:

CHARLES CALIX, Enforcement, Los Angeles

I hereby certify that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed in Los Angeles, California, on March 1, 2012.



Angela Carpenter  
Case Administrator  
State Bar Court