

(Do not write above this line.)

State Bar Court of California Hearing Department Los Angeles ACTUAL SUSPENSION		
Counsel For The State Bar Drew Massey Deputy Trial Counsel 845 South Figueroa Street Los Angeles, CA 90017-2525 Tel: (213) 765-1204 Bar # 244350	Case Number(s): 15-O-11109	For Court use only <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">PUBLIC MATTER</div> <div style="text-align: center;"> FILED JUN 16 2015 STATE BAR COURT CLERK'S OFFICE LOS ANGELES </div>
In Pro Per Respondent Thomas Turner 23052-H Alicia Parkway #311 Mission Viejo, CA 92962 Bar # 175969	Submitted to: Assigned Judge STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION AND ORDER APPROVING ACTUAL SUSPENSION <input type="checkbox"/> PREVIOUS STIPULATION REJECTED	
In the Matter of: THOMAS PAUL TURNER Bar # 175969 A Member of the State Bar of California (Respondent)	Submitted to: Assigned Judge STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION AND ORDER APPROVING ACTUAL SUSPENSION <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 **March 13, 1995**.
- (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 **11** 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".



nyh

(Do not write above this line.)

- (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):
- ☐ Until costs are paid in full, Respondent will remain actually suspended from the practice of law unless relief is obtained per rule 5.130, Rules of Procedure.
 - ☒ Costs are to be paid in equal amounts prior to February 1 for the following membership years: **three billing cycles following the effective date of the Supreme Court order in this matter.** (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 [Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct, standards 1.2(f) & 1.5]. Facts supporting aggravating circumstances are required.

- (1) ☐ **Prior record of discipline**
- (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.
- (2) ☐ **Dishonesty:** Respondent's misconduct was intentional, 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) ☐ **Restitution:** Respondent failed to make restitution.
- (9) ☒ **No aggravating circumstances** are involved.

Additional aggravating circumstances:

C. Mitigating Circumstances [see standards 1.2(g) & 1.6]. 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, the public, or the administration of justice.
- (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.
- (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 with a good faith belief that was honestly held and reasonable.
- (8) ☐ **Emotional/Physical Difficulties:** At the time of the stipulated act or acts of professional misconduct Respondent suffered extreme emotional difficulties or physical or mental 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 the difficulties or disabilities no longer pose a risk that Respondent will commit misconduct.
- (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 extraordinarily 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.
- (13) ☐ **No mitigating circumstances** are involved.

Additional mitigating circumstances:

Pre-filing stipulation and absence of prior discipline. See attachment, pages 7-8.

D. Discipline:

(1) ☒ **Stayed Suspension:**

(a) ☒ Respondent must be suspended from the practice of law for a period of **one 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 1.2(c)(1) 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:

(b) ☒ The above-referenced suspension is stayed.

(2) ☒ **Probation:**

Respondent must be placed on probation for a period of **one year**, which will commence upon the effective date of the Supreme Court order in this matter. (See rule 9.18, California Rules of Court)

(3) ☒ **Actual Suspension:**

(a) ☒ Respondent must be actually suspended from the practice of law in the State of California for a period of **thirty days**.

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 1.2(c)(1), 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:

E. Additional Conditions of Probation:

(1) ☐ If Respondent is actually suspended for two years or more, he/she must remain actually suspended until he/she proves to the State Bar Court his/her rehabilitation, fitness to practice, and learning and ability in the general law, pursuant to standard 1.2(c)(1), Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct.

(2) ☒ During the probation period, Respondent must comply with the provisions of the State Bar Act and Rules of Professional Conduct.

(3) ☒ 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.

- (4) ☒ 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.
- (5) ☒ 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.

- (6) ☐ 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.
- (7) ☒ 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.
- (8) ☒ 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 Ethics School, and passage of the test given at the end of that session.
- ☐ No Ethics School recommended. Reason: .
- (9) ☐ 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.
- (10) ☐ 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 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 during the period of actual suspension or within one year, whichever period is longer. **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: .

(Do not write above this line.)

- (2) ☐ **Rule 9.20, California Rules of Court:** Respondent must comply with the requirements of rule 9.20, California Rules of Court, and perform the acts specified in subdivisions (a) and (c) of that rule within 30 and 40 calendar days, respectively, after the effective date of the Supreme Court's Order in this matter.
- (3) ☐ **Conditional Rule 9.20, California Rules of Court:** If Respondent remains actually suspended for 90 days or more, he/she must comply with the requirements of rule 9.20, California Rules of Court, and perform the acts specified in subdivisions (a) and (c) of that rule within 120 and 130 calendar days, respectively, after the effective date of the Supreme Court's Order in this matter.
- (4) ☐ **Credit for Interim Suspension [conviction referral cases only]:** Respondent will be credited for the period of his/her interim suspension toward the stipulated period of actual suspension. Date of commencement of interim suspension:
- (5) ☐ **Other Conditions:**

ATTACHMENT TO
STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION

IN THE MATTER OF: THOMAS PAUL TURNER

CASE NUMBER: 15-O-11109

FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW.

Respondent admits that the following facts are true and that he is culpable of violations of the specified statutes and/or Rules of Professional Conduct.

Case No. 15-O-11109 (State Bar Investigation)

FACTS:

1. In order to remain as an active member of the State Bar, Thomas Turner ("respondent") was required to complete twenty-five (25) hours of Minimum Continuing Legal Education ("MCLE") during the period beginning February 1, 2011 through January 31, 2014 (the "compliance period").
2. On February 13, 2014, respondent reported to the State Bar under penalty of perjury that he was in compliance with the MCLE requirement and in particular that he had completed the required MCLE hours during the compliance period.
3. In fact, respondent had not completed all of the required MCLE hours within the compliance period. Respondent had not completed any required MCLE hours during the compliance period.
4. Respondent states that at the time he affirmed his MCLE compliance he knew he was not in compliance, but believed he could complete the required MCLE hours over the summer of 2014.
5. Respondent completed the MCLE hours necessary to come into compliance after being contacted by the State Bar's Office of Member Records and Compliance regarding an audit of MCLE compliance. Respondent timely complied with the audit.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

6. By reporting to the State Bar, under penalty of perjury, that respondent had complied with all MCLE requirements when he knew that he had failed to complete the MCLE requirements, respondent made an intentional misrepresentation and committed an act of moral turpitude in willful violation of California Business and Professions Code section 6106.

ADDITIONAL FACTS RE MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES.

No Prior Discipline: Respondent was admitted to practice law in March 1995. Respondent had been discipline-free for approximately 19 years of practice from admission to the misconduct in January 2013. Therefore, respondent is entitled to significant mitigation. (*Hawes v. State Bar* (1990) 51 Cal.3d

587, 596 (over ten years of discipline free practice prior to the misconduct is entitled to significant weight in mitigation).)

Prefiling Stipulation: Respondent admitted to the misconduct and entered into this stipulation fully resolving this matter prior to the filing of disciplinary charges. Respondent's cooperation at this early stage will save the State Bar significant resources and time. Respondent's cooperation in this regard is a mitigating factor in this resolution (*Silva-Vidor v. State Bar* (1989) 49 Cal.3d 1071, 1079 (where mitigation credit was given for entering into a stipulation as to facts and culpability).)

AUTHORITIES SUPPORTING DISCIPLINE.

The Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct "set forth a means for determining the appropriate disciplinary sanction in a particular case and to ensure consistency across cases dealing with similar misconduct and surrounding circumstances." (Rules Proc. of State Bar, tit. IV, Stds. for Atty. Sanctions for Prof. Misconduct, std. 1.1. All further references to Standards are to this source.) The Standards help fulfill the primary purposes of discipline, which include: protection of the public, the courts and the legal profession; maintenance of the highest professional standards; and preservation of public confidence in the legal profession. (See std. 1.1; *In re Morse* (1995) 11 Cal.4th 184, 205.)

Although not binding, the standards are entitled to "great weight" and should be followed "whenever possible" in determining level of discipline. (*In re Silverton* (2005) 36 Cal.4th 81, 92, quoting *In re Brown* (1995) 12 Cal.4th 205, 220 and *In re Young* (1989) 49 Cal.3d 257, 267, fn. 11.) Adherence to the standards in the great majority of cases serves the valuable purpose of eliminating disparity and assuring consistency, that is, the imposition of similar attorney discipline for instances of similar attorney misconduct. (*In re Naney* (1990) 51 Cal.3d 186, 190.) If a recommendation is at the high end or low end of a Standard, an explanation must be given as to how the recommendation was reached. (Std. 1.1.) "Any disciplinary recommendation that deviates from the Standards must include clear reasons for the departure." (Std. 1.1; *Blair v. State Bar* (1989) 49 Cal.3d 762, 776, fn. 5.)

In determining whether to impose a sanction greater or less than that specified in a given standard, in addition to the factors set forth in the specific standard, consideration is to be given to the primary purposes of discipline; the balancing of all aggravating and mitigating circumstances; the type of misconduct at issue; whether the client, public, legal system or profession was harmed; and the member's willingness and ability to conform to ethical responsibilities in the future. (Stds. 1.7(b) and (c).)

Pursuant to Standard 2.7, "disbarment or actual suspension is appropriate for an act of moral turpitude." Mere failure to review a member's records before the member affirms compliance with the MCLE requirements has been held to be gross negligence amounting to moral turpitude. (*In the Matter of Yee* (Review Dept. 2014) 5 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr. 330.) Thus, absent mitigating factors, the Standard would call for actual suspension at minimum.

Standard 1.7(c) indicates that mitigating factors should be considered and may demonstrate the need for a lesser sanction than called for by the Standards. Here, respondent has significant mitigation, but such is not particularly compelling – especially when viewed in light of the intentional nature of the misrepresentation. Respondent's nineteen year period of practice warrants significant mitigation, but the mitigating weight is reduced due to the serious nature of the misconduct. Further, while respondent has displayed candor and cooperation, he did so only after being selected for an MCLE audit, and being contacted by State Bar staff, and therefore his cooperation is not "spontaneous" as required by Standard

1.6(e). In addition, he has an independent duty to cooperate and therefore mitigation on that point is of little value. (Bus. & Prof. Code § 6068(i).) Still, respondent should receive mitigation for entering into this stipulation, recognizing his misconduct, and saving the State Bar time and resources. Although respondent's conduct is not surrounded by aggravating factors, the mitigation alone is insufficient to reduce the discipline below the standard.

Therefore, appropriate discipline would consist of a one year stayed suspension along with a one-year period of probation with conditions. Conditions of probation should include that respondent be actually suspended for the first thirty days of probation. That level of discipline would be sufficient to protect the public, the courts, and the legal profession; maintain the highest professional standards; and preserve public confidence in the legal profession. Not only is this the discipline recommended by the Standards, but it serves the purpose of maintaining high professional standards and preserving confidence in the profession.

Case law supports this recommendation. In *In the Matter of Yee, supra*, 5 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr. 330, the attorney misrepresented her MCLE compliance to the State Bar. She insisted that she believed she was in compliance at the time of the misrepresentation because she misremembered when she took her MCLE courses. The review department still found such conduct constituted gross negligence amounting to moral turpitude.

In mitigation, the *Yee* attorney had ten years of discipline free practice, good character references, displayed candor and cooperation, showed remorse, and instituted a change in law office procedures. No factors were found in aggravation. In recognition of the substantial mitigation, the review department imposed a public reproof.

This case, while based on similar misconduct, has a crucial distinction. While the *Yee* attorney's misrepresentation was grossly negligent, and the court found she had a basis for her belief, the same is not true here. Respondent has admitted that he was not in compliance and knew that information when he affirmed compliance. Although he insists he would have complied during the summer, the fact remains that he made a knowing and dishonest misrepresentation to the State Bar. This is more serious misconduct than at issue in *Yee*.

Discipline consisting of a one-year stayed suspension, a one-year period of probation with conditions including a 30-day actual suspension is sufficient to protect the public, the courts, and the legal profession; maintain the highest standards; and ensure public confidence in the profession.

COSTS OF DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS.

Respondent acknowledges that the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel has informed Respondent that as of May 13, 2015, the prosecution costs in this matter are \$3066. 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.

//
//
//
//
//
//

EXCLUSION FROM MCLE CREDIT


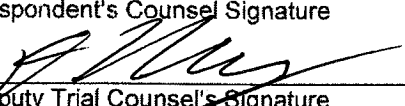
Pursuant to rule 3201, Respondent may not receive MCLE credit for completion of State Bar Ethics School. (Rules Proc. of State Bar, rule 3201.)

(Do not write above this line.)

In the Matter of: THOMAS PAUL TURNER	Case number(s): 15-O-11109
---	-------------------------------

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.

<u>5/27/15</u>		<u>Thomas Turner</u>
Date	Respondent's Signature	Print Name
<u>5-29-15</u>		<u>Drew Massey</u>
Date	Deputy Trial Counsel's Signature	Print Name

(Do not write above this line.)

In the Matter of:
THOMAS PAUL TURNER

Case Number(s):
15-O-11109

ACTUAL 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

6/16/15


DONALD F. MILES
Judge of the State Bar Court

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 June 16, 2015, 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:

THOMAS P. TURNER
23052-H ALICIA PKWY #311
MISSION VIEJO, CA 92692

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

DREW MASSEY, Enforcement, Los Angeles

I hereby certify that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed in Los Angeles, California, on June 16, 2015.



Rose M. Luthi
Case Administrator
State Bar Court