

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL, : No. 3167 Disciplinary Docket No. 3  
:  
Petitioner : No. 75 DB 2024  
:  
v. : Attorney Registration No. 87739  
:  
WILLIAM E. VINSKO, JR., : (Luzerne County)  
:  
Respondent :

**ORDER**

**PER CURIAM**

**AND NOW**, this this 11<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2026, upon consideration of the Report and Recommendations of the Disciplinary Board and the Petition for Review, William E. Vinsko, Jr., is suspended from the practice of law in this Commonwealth for a period of one year. The request for oral argument is denied.

Respondent shall comply with all the provisions of Pa.R.D.E. 217 and pay costs to the Disciplinary Board. See Pa.R.D.E. 208(g).

A True Copy Nicole Traini  
As Of 05/11/2026

Attest: Nicole Traini  
Chief Clerk  
Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

BEFORE THE DISCIPLINARY BOARD OF THE  
SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL	:	No. 75 DB 2024
Petitioner	:	
	:	
v.	:	Attorney Registration No. 87739
	:	
WILLIAM E. VINSKO, JR.	:	
Respondent	:	(Luzerne County)

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF  
THE DISCIPLINARY BOARD OF THE  
SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

TO THE HONORABLE CHIEF JUSTICE AND JUSTICES  
OF THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA:

Pursuant to Rule 208(d)(2)(iii) of the Pennsylvania Rules of Disciplinary Enforcement, the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania (“Board”) herewith submits its findings and recommendations to your Honorable Court with respect to the above-captioned Petition for Discipline.

I. FINDINGS OF FACT

The Board makes the following factual findings:

1. Petitioner, the Office of Disciplinary Counsel (“ODC”), is authorized under Pa.R.D.E. 207 to investigate and prosecute matters involving alleged attorney misconduct in Pennsylvania.

2. Respondent, William E. Vinsko, Jr., was born in 1975 and was admitted to the bar in Pennsylvania in 2001. Vinsko is subject to the jurisdiction of the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

## Background

3. Following his admission to the bar in 2001, Vinsko practiced law for a short time with law firms in Allentown, Pennsylvania and Kingston, Pennsylvania. Vinsko opened a private law practice in Luzerne County in 2003. Around the same time, he was appointed assistant city attorney for the City of Wilkes-Barre, where he was employed for 15 years. 1/14/25 N.T. 176.

4. Between 2018 and 2024, Vinsko practiced law at his firm with two other lawyers and employed a number of support staff. *Id.*

5. On October 22, 2018, the Board approved a Joint Petition for Discipline on Consent and ordered that Vinsko be publicly reprimanded for making negative comments in his brief filed in the Third Circuit Court of Appeals about the integrity and qualifications of a District Court judge, in violation of RPC 8.2(a). The reprimand was imposed on January 7, 2019. During the reprimand, the Board cautioned Vinsko that any subsequent violation of the ethical rules could result in further discipline and more severe sanctions. ODC-M.

6. On May 12, 2020, ODC advised Vinsko that it was determined, after approval by a reviewing member, that he receive an informal admonition for misconduct involving incompetence, lack of diligence and poor communication in that he had failed to file written exceptions to preserve his client's interests with respect to a marital property valuation, failed to obtain a copy of the contempt hearing transcript resulting in its omission from the record on appeal, failed to reasonably communicate with his client, and failed to provide clear instructions regarding an order entered against his client. Vinsko's conduct violated RPC 1.1 (competence), 1.3 (diligence), 1.4(a)(2), (a)(3), (a)(4), (a)(5),

and 1.4(b) (communication), 3.1 (meritorious claims), 3.2 (expediting litigation), and 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice. ODC-N.

7. On January 18, 2022, the Board directed that Vinsko receive a public reprimand for his misconduct in one client matter involving incompetence, lack of diligence, communication deficiencies, and failure to expedite litigation, in violation of RPC 1.1, 1.3, 1.4(a)(2), (a)(3) and (a)(4), 1.4(b), and 3.2. The Board imposed the public reprimand on March 4, 2022, and warned Vinsko that his history of discipline was “troubling and should serve as notice to you that you must conduct your practice within the Rules of Professional Conduct.” ODC-O.

#### Roche Estate Matter

8. Edward P. Roche died intestate on December 14, 2017. Stip. ¶ 5.

9. He was survived by four children: Edward D. Roche, Robert Roche, James Roche, and Cheryl Roche Cupp. Stip. ¶ 6.

10. In or around October 2018, James Roche retained Constance Catherine Mihalick, Esquire, of Vinsko & Associates, P.C., to open the estate and have himself appointed administrator. Stip. ¶ 7.

11. Letters of Administration were granted to James Roche by the Register of Wills of Luzerne County on November 27, 2018. Stip. ¶ 8.

12. Attorney Mihalick was primarily responsible for the Roche Estate until she departed the Vinsko firm in September 2019. Stip. ¶ 9.

13. Following Attorney Mihalick’s departure, Vinsko became the attorney primarily responsible for the administration of the Roche Estate. Stip. ¶ 10.

14. In early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic caused the closure of Vinsko's physical office and disruption to regular court operations. Stip. ¶ 11; 1/14/25 N.T. 205-06.

15. On July 25, 2020, Edward D. Roche, one of the four heirs, passed away. Stip. ¶ 12.

16. On August 3, 2020, Cheryl Cupp executed a Family Settlement Agreement prepared by Vinsko's office. Stip. ¶ 15.

17. On November 20, 2020, Thomas A. O'Connor, Esquire sent a letter to Vinsko informing him that O'Connor and Thomas Patrick Hogan, Esquire had been retained on behalf of Alice Roche (the spouse of deceased heir Edward D. Roche), Robert Roche, and Cheryl Roche Cupp, and requested the status of the Roche Estate. Stip. ¶ 17.

18. Vinsko promised to provide the information requested on two occasions—via a November 23, 2020, letter and a December 4, 2020 email—but failed to do so. ODC-I, Bates 46, 47-48.

19. On January 25, 2021, Attorneys Hogan and O'Connor filed a Petition to Compel an Accounting. Stip. ¶ 18.

20. Four days later, on January 29, 2021, Vinsko emailed Attorney O'Connor with a draft answer and a request for more information regarding firearms and a gun safe that heirs had recently claimed belonged to the estate. Stip. ¶ 19.

21. On February 5, 2021, Vinsko formally filed his Answer to the Petition to Compel an Accounting. Stip. ¶ 20.

22. Judge Richard Hughes issued a Rule Returnable on February 16, 2021, setting a deadline for Vinsko's compliance. Stip. ¶ 21.

23. On April 14, 2021, Vinsko sent Attorney Hogan a follow-up email regarding a gun safe and firearms issues to which Attorney Hogan replied on April 21, 2021. Stip. ¶ 22.

24. Judge Hughes held a hearing and entered an Order on April 27, 2021, directing Vinsko to file an informal accounting by May 31, 2021, and a formal accounting by June 30, 2021, if the matter remained unresolved. Stip. ¶ 23.

25. Vinsko failed to file the informal accounting by May 31, 2021, in direct violation of the court's order. Stip. ¶ 24.

26. On June 30, 2021, Vinsko filed a First and Final Account with the court. Stip. ¶ 25.

27. On July 19 and July 29, 2021, Vinsko sent emails to Attorney Hogan requesting confirmation that the accounting was acceptable to his clients. Stip. ¶ 26.

28. Attorney Hogan replied on or about July 30, 2021, that he was awaiting client feedback. Stip. ¶ 27.

29. On October 13, 2021, Attorney Hogan followed up with an email referencing a "crypt agreement" and inquiring whether Vinsko had located the necessary documents. Stip. ¶ 28.

30. Vinsko did not respond until November of 2021, when he and Attorney Hogan spoke by phone. Attorney Hogan indicated he had not yet spoken to his clients. Stip. ¶ 29.

31. On December 20, 2021, Attorney Hogan emailed Vinsko again with his clients' position on the crypt transfer and asked for an amended accounting. Stip. ¶ 30.

32. Vinsko did not respond. 1/14/25 N.T. 114.

33. On February 1, 2022, Attorney Hogan emailed Vinsko again asking for a status update and sent draft crypt transfer documents. Stip. ¶¶ 31.

34. Vinsko did not respond. 1/14/25 N.T. 114.

35. On February 17, 2022, Attorney Hogan emailed Vinsko again asking for a status update. Stip. ¶¶ 32.

36. Vinsko did not respond. 1/14/25 N.T. 114.

37. On March 16, 2022, Vinsko finally emailed Attorneys Hogan and O'Connor with a revised Family Settlement Agreement and Crypt Transfer Agreement signed by James Roche. Vinsko stated he had retained \$1,000 from the estate funds to cover any final costs. Stip. ¶ 33.

38. The following day, Attorney Hogan responded to Vinsko that the agreements contained errors, including an incorrect date of death and misidentification of an heir. He asked that they be corrected and requested information about the release of the remaining funds. Stip. ¶ 34.

39. Vinsko responded the same day and agreed to make the corrections and re-send the agreements. Stip. ¶ 35.

40. By email to Vinsko dated March 24, 2022, Attorney Hogan noted that they were still waiting for Vinsko's corrections. Stip. ¶ 36.

41. By April 4, 2022, Attorney Hogan had made the changes himself and asked Vinsko to confirm his approval. Stip. ¶ 37.

42. Vinsko acknowledged receipt of the corrected documents and promised to review the changes and get back to Attorney Hogan the next morning. Stip. ¶ 38.

43. Vinsko did not get back to Attorney Hogan as promised. Stip. ¶ 39.

44. On April 7, 13, 19, and 25, 2022, Attorney Hogan sent follow-up emails requesting finalization and distribution. Vinsko did not reply to any of Attorney Hogan's requests. Stip. ¶¶ 40-45.

45. On May 2, 2022, Alice Roche contacted Vinsko via Facebook noting that they had yet to receive corrected documents from him. Stip. ¶ 46.

46. That same day, Vinsko replied to Attorney Hogan and stated he believed Attorney Hogan had made the necessary changes. Vinsko also stated that the checks were ready. Stip. ¶ 47.

47. On May 3, 2022, Attorney Hogan replied to Vinsko via e-mail stating that his concern was that the documents were under Vinsko's firm's name and that was why he continued to ask for Vinsko's approval for the past few weeks. Stip. ¶ 48.

48. Attorney Hogan sent another e-mail on May 3, 2022, asking if Vinsko could release Cheryl Cupp's check as she had already signed the agreement with the initial errors. Stip. ¶ 49.

49. On May 10, 2022, Attorney Hogan again inquired whether Vinsko had approved the documents, asked that Cheryl Cupp's check be sent, and asked Vinsko to contact Attorney Hogan that day. Stip. ¶ 50.

50. Vinsko failed to respond to Attorney Hogan. 3/10/25 N.T. 340.

51. On June 1, 2022, Vinsko emailed Attorney Hogan offering to arrange delivery of the checks. Stip. ¶ 51.

52. Vinsko and Attorney Hogan spoke by phone on June 2. Stip. ¶ 52.

53. Attorney Hogan followed up with an email that same day enclosing Cheryl Cupp's signed documents and asking for delivery of the check and crypt paperwork. Stip. ¶ 53.

54. On June 13, 2022, Attorney Hogan emailed Vinsko that he had all the heirs' signatures and asked that the distributions be finalized. Stip. ¶ 54.

55. On June 15, 2022, Attorney Hogan notified Vinsko that one of the checks was incorrectly made out and needed to be reissued. Vinsko replied that he would correct it "right now." Stip. ¶¶ 55-56.

56. Vinsko failed to reissue the check or follow up. Between June 22 and August 4, 2022, Attorney Hogan sent three additional emails requesting updates. Vinsko did not reply. Stip. ¶¶ 57-62.

57. On August 8, 2022, Attorney Hogan filed a Motion for Sanctions and Surcharge. Stip. ¶ 63.

58. Judge Tarah C. Toohil issued a Rule Returnable the following day, scheduling a hearing for October 19, 2022. Stip. ¶ 64.

59. On August 19, 2022, Vinsko sent Attorney Hogan interrogatories, requests for production of documents, and the corrected check. Stip. ¶ 65.

60. On September 2, 2022, Attorney Hogan withdrew the Motion for Sanctions. Stip. ¶ 66.

61. On December 20, 2022, Attorney Hogan emailed Vinsko asking if the estate had been closed and the status of the remaining \$1,000. ODC-I at 1.

62. On December 21, 2022, Vinsko mailed the final checks, which were received on December 28, 2022. Stip. ¶ 67.

63. Two of the checks were dated September 21, 2022, and one was dated November 12, 2022. Petition for Discipline & Answer at ¶ 73.

64. Vinsko was in possession of the two checks dated September 21, 2022 in September but failed to forward them to Attorney Hogan until December 21, 2022. 3/10/25 N.T. 344.

65. Vinsko was in possession of the check dated November 12, 2022 in mid-November but failed to forward it to Attorney Hogan until December 21, 2022. 3/10/25 N.T. 344-45.

66. Vinsko did not charge for the original Family Settlement Agreement, the 2020 Accounting, the subsequent accountings, the filed First and Final Account, the court hearing, responsive pleadings, communications with opposing counsel, meetings with the Administrator, postage, etc., from 2020 through 2022, all at a savings to the Roche Estate. D-26; 1/14/25 N.T. 216.

67. Vinsko's firm was paid \$1,750.00 and \$1,500 on August 30, 2019. D-26 at 2; 1/14/25 N.T. 216.

68. From those fees, Vinsko directed his firm to cover \$111.02 for the Inheritance Tax Payment, \$155 for the *Citizens' Voice* Legal Ad, and \$95 for the *Luzerne Legal Register* Legal Ad. 1/14/25 N.T. 216.

#### The Secor Matter

69. On November 20, 2021, Mary and David Secor retained Vinsko in connection with a vacant parcel of land they owned, located at Birch Street, Harvey's Lake Borough in Luzerne County. Stip. ¶ 68.

70. That same day, Ms. Secor signed a fee agreement and paid Vinsko a \$2,500 retainer via credit card. Stip. ¶ 69.

71. On March 21, 2022, Vinsko provided notice of a claim to First American Title Insurance ("First American"). Stip. ¶ 70.

72. Via e-mail dated April 7, 2022, Vinsko provided Ms. Secor with an invoice to illustrate the amount of work completed but made clear that he was not asking for payment. Vinsko confirmed with Ms. Secor the strategy they previously agreed upon and confirmed that he had consulted with Appraiser Alan Rosen who “will get us an estimate of value.” Vinsko further added that he “would be happy to arrange a conference call with him and you at your convenience to have him answer any questions once he does his review on value.” Stip. ¶ 71.

73. Vinsko also informed Ms. Secor that Alan Rosen would not be giving any type of appraisal until the claim is “confirmed with First American,” and thus, the valuation is “not required yet.” D-48.

74. In a second April 7, 2022, email, Vinsko sent Ms. Secor a detailed billing invoice and confirmed that his goal was to have his fees paid from the insurance company. D-49; 1/14/25 NT 62-63.

75. Ms. Secor confirmed that she knew from the April 7, 2022, email that the \$2,500.00 retainer was exhausted and there was a balance of \$1,359 that Vinsko was not collecting. D-49; 1/14/25 N.T. 62-64.

76. Via e-mail dated April 12, 2022, Vinsko notified Ms. Secor that First American acknowledged his filing. Stip. ¶ 72.

77. Upon the claim being acknowledged with First American, Vinsko failed to obtain an estimate of value from Mr. Rosen, as promised. 1/14/25 N.T. 27-28.

78. Via e-mail dated July 5, 2022, Vinsko notified Ms. Secor that First American responded, stating they had assigned an investigator. Stip. ¶ 75.

79. In that e-mail, Vinsko stated that he would “likely have closure to this shortly.” Stip. ¶ 74.

80. On July 12, 2022, Ms. Secor asked Vinsko whether she had to hire an appraiser. Stip. ¶ 75.

81. Vinsko did not respond to Ms. Secor's July 12, 2022 e-mail. Stip. ¶ 76.

82. Via e-mail dated October 7, 2022, Vinsko stated to Ms. Secor that he "didn't forget [her] and [would] have a status report to [her] by Monday." Stip. ¶ 77.

83. Vinsko did not provide a status report by the date indicated. Stip. ¶ 78.

84. Via e-mail to Vinsko dated October 31, 2022, Ms. Secor asked for a status update. Stip. ¶ 79.

85. Vinsko did not respond. Stip. ¶ 80.

86. Via e-mail to Vinsko dated November 28, 2022, Ms. Secor asked for a status update. Stip. ¶ 81.

87. Vinsko responded the same day stating that he was close to a resolution and, if First American did not accept responsibility, he would file a Writ of Summons. Stip. ¶ 82.

88. In his response, Vinsko also stated that he would have an outline to Ms. Secor by the end of the week. Stip. ¶ 83.

89. Vinsko did not provide Ms. Secor with the outline. Stip. ¶ 84.

90. Despite First American not accepting responsibility, Vinsko failed to file the Writ of Summons. 3/10/25 N.T. 303-04.

91. Via e-mail to Vinsko dated January 3, 2023, Ms. Secor asked whether he had filed a Writ of Summons. Stip. ¶ 85.

92. Vinsko did not respond. He had not heard back from First American Title Insurance Company. Stip. ¶ 86.

93. Via e-mail to Vinsko dated January 30, 2023, Ms. Secor again asked whether Vinsko filed a Writ of Summons and asked that he send the outline mentioned in his November 28, 2022 e-mail. Stip. ¶ 87.

94. That same day, Vinsko stated to Ms. Secor that he would send the outline, send her an additional outline detailing next steps, and report back to her later that day. Stip. ¶ 88.

95. Vinsko did not send Ms. Secor an outline as indicated in his e-mail. Stip. ¶ 89.

96. Vinsko failed to respond to Ms. Secor's question regarding the filing of a Writ of Summons. ODC-F at 47.

97. Via e-mail to Vinsko dated March 28, 2023, Ms. Secor again requested a status update and stated that she was available to meet to "see and review the outline [Vinsko] emailed about in November." Stip. ¶ 90.

98. Via e-mail dated April 6, 2023, Vinsko asked Ms. Secor whether she was "available Monday or Tuesday for a status call to finalize the matters." Stip. ¶ 91.

99. The next day, Ms. Secor responded stating that either day was fine. Stip. ¶ 92.

100. Vinsko did not respond. Stip. ¶ 93.

101. Ms. Secor called Vinsko's office several times attempting to speak with him. ODC-F at 42.

102. On April 14, 2023, Ms. Secor sent Vinsko a letter in which she:

- a. expressed frustration with the lack of progress on her matter;
- b. stated that she had made several calls to Vinsko's office which had gone unreturned;

c. noted that she had been unable to speak on the phone with Vinsko since April 2022;

d. stated that she had requested an appointment to meet with Vinsko and the receptionist told her it was not possible; and

e. asked for a status update on her matter.

Stip. ¶ 94.

103. Vinsko failed to respond. 1/14/25 N.T. 36.

104. On May 18, 2023, Vinsko spoke with Ms. Secor over the telephone. Stip. ¶ 95.

105. Via e-mail dated that same day, Vinsko stated to Ms. Secor that he would be in touch and provide her with a detailed outline as promised. Stip. ¶ 96.

106. Vinsko did not provide Ms. Secor with an outline. Stip. ¶ 97.

107. Via e-mail to Vinsko dated May 22, 2023, Ms. Secor stated that she checked with the Luzerne County courthouse and a Writ of Summons had not been filed and asked Vinsko whether there was a problem. Stip. ¶ 98.

108. Vinsko responded to Ms. Secor via e-mail the same day stating, "It will show up today or tomorrow on the site. I will also send you a copy. No problem." Stip. ¶ 99.

109. This statement was untrue because Vinsko had not yet filed a Writ of Summons. 3/10/25 N.T. 305.

110. Via e-mail to Vinsko dated May 25, 2023, Ms. Secor stated that she spoke with the Luzerne County Prothonotary and there was no Writ of Summons on file and asked him if there was a problem filing it. Stip. ¶ 100.

111. Vinsko replied to Ms. Secor that same day stating, "Not at all. I will email you copies shortly." Stip. ¶ 101.

112. Via e-mail dated May 25, 2023, Vinsko forwarded to Ms. Secor a draft Writ of Summons, to be filed. Stip. ¶ 102.

113. In that same e-mail, Vinsko stated that his staff was doing a “bringdown” on the property to ensure there were no title changes and again assured Ms. Secor a Writ of Summons would be filed and she would receive the timestamped copy shortly. Stip. ¶ 103.

114. Via e-mail to Vinsko dated June 1, 2023, Ms. Secor asked whether the “bringdown” was complete and when he would be filing a Writ of Summons. Stip. ¶ 104.

115. Vinsko replied to Ms. Secor the same day stating that the “bringdown” was completed the previous day, a Writ would be filed that day (June 1), and copies would be sent to her later that day. Stip. ¶ 105.

116. The Writ of Summons was not filed until June 5, 2023. 3/10/25 N.T. 307.

117. Via e-mail dated June 5, 2023, Vinsko sent Ms. Secor a timestamped Writ of Summons and stated that he would be sending it out for service that week. Stip. ¶ 106.

118. Via e-mail to Vinsko dated June 27, 2023, Ms. Secor stated that she spoke to the Sheriff’s Office and they had not received the necessary paperwork and fees to serve the Writ of Summons. Stip. ¶ 107.

119. In Vinsko’s reply e-mail that same day, he stated to Ms. Secor that he sent the fee to the Sheriff’s Office and was going to the Sheriff to confirm. Stip. ¶ 108.

120. In a subsequent e-mail that same day, Vinsko forwarded to Ms. Secor a corrected Writ of Summons because when the Writ was filed, the Prothonotary made a clerical error by not including a docket number within the case caption. On June 27, 2023, Vinsko’s office corrected the issue. Following the correction, all service fees were paid. Stip. ¶ 109.

121. In an e-mail dated June 27, 2023, Vinsko also provided three names of real estate agents with their contact numbers. Ms. Secor acknowledged speaking with the second recommended real estate agent/appraiser, Tom Leighton, and that “he is providing me with the necessary information. They are very professional; thank you for the contact.” Stip. ¶ 110.

122. Via e-mail dated June 30, 2023, Vinsko’s office informed Ms. Secor that the Sheriff’s Office needed more time to perfect service and he would be filing a Praecipe to Reissue a Writ of Summons. Stip. ¶ 111.

123. Via e-mail dated that same day, Vinsko assured Ms. Secor that the “timeline for the complaint copy remain[ed] the same – by the end of next week” and he would be in contact before then. Stip. ¶ 112.

124. Via e-mail to Vinsko dated July 24, 2023, Ms. Secor asked for an update. Stip. ¶ 113.

125. Vinsko promptly responded stating that things had been progressing and she would hear from him that day or the next morning. Stip. ¶ 114.

126. Vinsko did not contact Ms. Secor July 24, 2023, or July 25, 2023. Stip. ¶ 115.

127. Via e-mail to Vinsko dated August 2, 2023, Ms. Secor noted that she had not received any update from him on July 24 or 25, 2023. Stip. ¶ 116.

128. Vinsko replied that same day stating that he was waiting on confirmation that certain information was submitted to the insurance company and he would follow up and get back to her. Stip. ¶ 117.

129. On that same day, Vinsko stated: “Let me know if you would prefer to move in a different direction. Otherwise, I will follow up and get back to you.” ODC-F at 28, D-69.

130. On August 3, 2023, Ms. Secor replied to Vinsko stating that she would get confused when he stated that he would update her but then he failed to do so and she had to contact him a week later for an update. Stip. ¶ 118.

131. Vinsko replied that same day saying he was staying on top of it. Stip. ¶ 119.

132. Via e-mail dated August 8, 2023, Vinsko notified Ms. Secor that an attorney for Old Republic Title Insurance had called and would be the point of contact going forward. Stip. ¶ 120.

133. Via letter dated September 15, 2023, Vinsko stated to Ms. Secor that after leaving several messages for the insurance company’s attorney he would not be waiting on her any longer and would have a draft of the Complaint ready for Ms. Secor’s approval and submission on or before the following Wednesday. Stip. ¶ 121.

134. On September 17, 2023, Ms. Secor e-mailed Vinsko:

- a. expressing concern that Vinsko had not addressed the value of the property, and she was worried she would owe him more than the property was worth;
- b. noting she had not received monthly invoices showing how much was left of her retainer;
- c. stating that Vinsko’s secretary told her she had to talk to the billing department; and
- d. asking for the billing department’s phone number. ODC-F at 22.

135. In a response e-mail dated September 17, 2023, Vinsko stated that he would send Ms. Secor an invoice that week. Stip. ¶ 122.

136. In that same email, Vinsko stated that he would call the appraiser that week to follow up and that he would “not commit to anything on value until [Ms. Secor] approve[s] and we have a strong basis for the number.” ODC-F at 22.

137. Vinsko did not send to Ms. Secor an invoice or a draft of the Complaint. Stip. ¶ 123.

138. On September 29, 2023, Ms. Secor sent an e-mail to Vinsko, noting that she had not received the invoice or a follow up from the realtor, as promised. Stip. ¶ 124.

139. Vinsko did not provide Ms. Secor with an updated invoice. Stip. ¶ 125.

140. Via e-mail to Ms. Secor dated October 2, 2023, Vinsko stated that he had been playing phone tag with the insurance company’s attorney and, that if he did not have a meaningful conversation with the insurance company’s attorney, he would send the Complaint to Ms. Secor in the next few days. Stip. ¶ 126.

141. Vinsko did not send a Complaint to Ms. Secor. Stip. ¶ 127.

142. Via e-mail dated October 20, 2023, Vinsko stated to Ms. Secor that the insurance company’s attorney had been very unresponsive, he would be in touch with Ms. Secor that day, and he would “have the complaint documents by the end of the day today.” Stip. ¶ 128.

143. Vinsko did not send the Complaint by the end of the day. Stip. ¶ 129.

144. Via e-mail dated October 30, 2023, Vinsko updated Ms. Secor on his conversation with the insurance company’s attorney (Katelyn Sadowski) and told Ms. Secor that he would follow up with her by mid-next week. Vinsko also confirmed that he forwarded Attorney Sadowski documents that supported the Secors’ case and that the

“[title company] may require [them] to file a Complaint, and if [they do] we will do so....”

Stip. ¶ 130.

145. Ms. Secor emailed Vinsko on November 7, 2023:

- a. expressing her frustration with the lack of resolution to her matter;
- b. noting she had asked for the property value several times and had not received any information;
- c. stating she had requested an updated bill because she was unsure whether she could cover Vinsko’s bill; and
- d. asking for an update on a potential timeline. ODC-F at 15.

146. Vinsko replied to Ms. Secor that same day:

- a. acknowledging the delay;
- b. stating he was only giving the insurance company’s attorney one week and would be sending out the Complaint;
- c. stating he would be sending Ms. Secor an invoice;
- d. noting he was aware he had to get a valuation; and
- e. giving Ms. Secor a time frame of end of January 2024 to have her matter resolved. ODC-F at 14.

147. On November 8, 2023, Ms. Secor emailed Vinsko and confirmed her husband’s recollection that Vinsko told them in 2021 that his fees would be paid by the insurance company and they would get their \$2,500 back. Stip. ¶ 133.

148. Vinsko answered Ms. Secor’s email of November 8, 2023 confirming “That has not changed.” Stip. ¶ 134.

149. Via e-mail to Vinsko dated November 13, 2023, Ms. Secor asked him if he had filed the Complaint. Vinsko replied to Ms. Secor's email that day, stating ["not yet"]. Stip. ¶ 135.

150. Via e-mail to Vinsko dated December 5, 2023, Ms. Secor stated: "As per our phone conversation we should have received the complaint yesterday, we did not. Let's get this over with already." ODC-F at 11.

151. Vinsko replied to Ms. Secor the same day and assured Ms. Secor that he did not forget about her and that he would get the Complaint over to her shortly. Stip. ¶ 137.

152. Via e-mail to Vinsko dated December 8, 2023, Ms. Secor expressed frustration with him, stating, in part, "This I'll get it to you short[ly] is not an acceptable answer anymore. I know you are extremely busy and that we are not a priority. We figured that the first year with you. So what's it going to be? Are you dropping us? It seems like that is where we are headed." ODC-F; Stip. ¶ 138; 1/14/25 N.T. 56.

153. Via e-mail dated December 11, 2023, Vinsko sent Ms. Secor a draft of the Complaint and exhibits. Stip. ¶ 139.

154. Ms. Secor responded the next day stating that everything in the Complaint was correct. Stip. ¶ 140.

155. On December 13, 2023, Vinsko filed the Complaint. Stip. ¶ 141.

156. On January 5, 2024, Vinsko forwarded the entry of appearance of the insurance company counsel and discussed the strategy of a requested extension of time for a response by opposing counsel. Stip. ¶ 142.

157. On January 16, 2024, Vinsko forwarded the Defendant's Answer, New Matter and Counterclaim, and a second email with the draft Reply to New Matter, Answer

to Counterclaim and New Matter to the Counterclaim for the Secors' approval and executed Verification. Stip. ¶ 143.

158. The Secors executed the Verifications to the Reply to New Matter, Answer to Counterclaim and New Matter to the Counterclaim which were filed of record with the Prothonotary. Stip. ¶ 144.

159. On January 19, 2024, Vinsko emailed Mr. and Mrs. Secor a copy of the timestamped Reply to New Matter, Answer to Counterclaim and New Matter to the Counterclaim for their records. Stip. ¶ 145.

160. Vinsko failed to provide Ms. Secor with an updated invoice, as promised. 3/10/25 N.T. 298-99.

161. On January 19, 2024, Vinsko received a DB-7 letter from ODC as the result of a complaint filed by Ms. Secor. D-96.

162. That same day, after learning of Ms. Secor's complaint, Vinsko terminated his representation due to a conflict of interest on advice of counsel. 3/10/25 NT 287-88.

163. Vinsko never asked the Secors to pay additional fees beyond the original retainer. D-49; 1/14/25 NT 63-64, 93-94.

#### The Disciplinary Proceedings at No. 75 DB 2024

164. On July 23, 2024, ODC filed a Petition for Discipline against Vinsko charging him with violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct related to his representation in the Roche Estate and the Secor matter.

165. On September 6, 2024, Vinsko, through counsel, filed an Answer to Petition for Discipline, contesting portions of ODC's allegations.

166. On December 13, 2024, the Hearing Committee Chair conducted a prehearing conference.

167. The parties entered into Stipulations on January 13, 2025, which were filed on March 10, 2025.

168. The Hearing Committee held a disciplinary hearing on January 14 and March 10, 2025.<sup>1</sup> ODC presented the testimony of Mary Secor and Thomas Hogan, Esquire, and offered exhibits into evidence. Vinsko was represented by counsel.<sup>2</sup> He testified on his own behalf and presented the testimony of nine character witnesses. He offered exhibits into evidence.

169. Ms. Secor's testimony is credible. 1/14/25 N.T. 20-97.

170. Prior to retaining Vinsko, Ms. Secor had never been involved in any legal matters except for her will. 1/14/25 N.T. 25.

171. Ms. Secor testified to her frustration with Vinsko's failure to provide items to her as promised, and that she and her husband felt "so lost" in their case and did not know what was going on. 1/14/25 N.T. 37, 54. She testified to her overall perception of the legal system and lawyers that "there is no accountability" and her feeling that she cannot trust an attorney. 1/14/25 N.T. 60.

172. Attorney Hogan provided credible testimony as to his interactions with Vinsko in the Roche Estate matter. 1/14/25 N.T. 98-173.

173. Vinsko testified on his own behalf.

174. Vinsko "wishe[d] he was more responsive to" Ms. Secor, took full responsibility, apologized to Ms. Secor, and expressed remorse. 3/10/25 N.T. 295-97, 452.

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<sup>1</sup> The hearing scheduled on January 15, 2025, was continued to March 10, 2025 on request of Vinsko's counsel for personal reasons.

<sup>2</sup> On January 3, 2025, Vinsko entered his appearance. He cross-examined Ms. Secor at the January 14, 2025 hearing.

175. Vinsko testified that “I feel bad that it happened that way and I’ve changed my practice a complete 180 because of this because I don’t ever want this to happen again.” 3/10/25 N.T. 297.

176. Vinsko testified he has “revamped” his entire practice. He explained that he had a problem saying “no” to people and he has now “scaled back” his practice and become “very selective” and only takes cases where he can get back to people very quickly. 3/10/25 N.T. 440, 441, 443, 444.

177. Vinsko testified that the “communication issue” “will never ever, ever happen again.” 3/10/25 N.T. 442. He stated that he would make “triple the effort, ten times the effort to ensure communication is better.” 3/10/25 N.T. 452. Vinsko indicated he carries an iPad around to log every call and returns calls within seven days at the longest. 3/10/25 N.T. 453.

178. Vinsko was questioned about his prior incidents of discipline that occurred in 2018, 2020, and 2022. He testified that he changed his practice after each one but did not detail these changes. 3/10/25 N.T. 448.

179. Vinsko explained that his disciplinary matter was front page news in Luzerne County and affected him negatively, and was “embarrassing.” He further testified, “This is tough, having my family go through it, my kids.” 3/10/25 N.T. 442, 443.

180. Vinsko presented the testimony of nine character witnesses: Gary Zingaretti, who owns a consulting firm and has known Vinsko since 2007 (3/10/25 N.T. 367-376); Gregory Barrouk, a real estate agent and former city administrator for the City of Wilkes-Barre who has known Vinsko for over 20 years (3/10/25 N.T. 377-385); Dorothy Grilli, a real estate broker and Vinsko’s client and friend who has known him since 2005 (3/10/25 N.T. 386-393); Joseph J. Masi, a federal employee and friend of Vinsko’s since

2008 (3/10/25 N.T. 394-403); Susan Smith, who was involved with a non-profit with Vinsko and has known him since 2009 (3/10/25 N.T. 406-409); Rhonda Clark Carlson, a business owner and Vinsko's client who has known him since 2019 (3/10/25 N.T. 410-415); Samuel A. Falcone, Jr., Esquire, a lawyer licensed in Pennsylvania since 2002 who has known Vinsko for over 15 years (3/10/25 N.T. 416-420); Michael Mey, Esquire, a lawyer licensed in Pennsylvania since 1984 who has known Vinsko since 2006 (3/10/25 N.T. 421-426); and Pastor Adam McGahee of the Moving River Ministries Church in Wilkes-Barre who has known Vinsko for many years (3/10/25 N.T. 427-432).

181. These witnesses constituted a cross-section of community members, lawyers, friends, and Vinsko's clients. They confirmed that Vinsko has deep roots in his community and that he is a person with a good reputation for honesty and truthfulness, and is hard-working and knowledgeable in the law.

182. Vinsko presented six character letters on his behalf. D101-106.

183. On April 29, 2025, ODC filed its post-hearing brief to the Committee. ODC sought a one year and one day suspension based on Vinsko's misconduct coupled with his extensive prior discipline.

184. On June 13, 2025, Vinsko filed his post-hearing brief to the Committee. He argued that certain rule violations did not apply in the context of where a complaint is filed by a non-client and ODC did not meet its burden on any of the Roche Estate violations. Vinsko conceded a technical violation of RPC 1.4(a)(4) in Secor. Vinsko further argued that there is a lack of direct connection between his prior discipline and the instant matters, he accepted responsibility in the Secor matter and put forth uncontradicted character evidence, and if any sanction is warranted, it should not exceed a public censure.

185. By Report filed on September 10, 2025, the Committee concluded that ODC met its burden to establish that Vinsko violated RPC 1.3, 1.4(a)(4) and 1.15(e) in the Roche matter and RPC 1.3, 1.4(a)(3) and 1.4(a)(4) in the Secor matter. The Committee found aggravating factors concerning Vinsko's record of discipline, his repeated broken promises to clients and opposing counsel, and his pattern of misconduct. In mitigation, the Committee found that Vinsko expressed "some" remorse during his testimony and conceded that he should have responded more promptly to Ms. Secor, and presented credible testimony from numerous character witnesses. Considering the nature of the misconduct and the aggravating and mitigating circumstances, the Committee recommended that Vinsko be suspended for one year.

186. On September 29, 2025, Vinsko filed a brief on exceptions to the Committee's Report and recommendation. Vinsko contended the Committee erred in concluding that he violated RPC 1.3 in the Secor matter and violated RPC 1.3, 1.4(a)(4) and 1.15(e) in the Roche Estate matter. Vinsko argued that if any sanction should be imposed, it should not exceed a public censure. Vinsko requested oral argument before the Board.

187. ODC filed a brief opposing exceptions on October 16, 2025. ODC requested that the Board adopt the Committee's findings and recommend to the Court that Vinsko be suspended for one year.

188. A three-member Board panel held oral argument on January 13, 2026.

189. The Board adjudicated this matter at the meeting on January 22, 2026.

II. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. By his conduct as set forth above, Vinsko violated the following Rules of Professional Conduct in the Roche Estate Matter:

- a. RPC 1.3 – A lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.
- b. RPC 1.4(a)(4) – A lawyer shall promptly comply with reasonable requests for information.
- c. RPC 1.15(e) – A lawyer shall promptly deliver to the client or third person any property, including but not limited to Rule 1.15 Funds, that the client or third person is entitled to receive and, upon request by the client or third person, shall promptly render a full accounting regarding the property.

2. By his conduct as set forth above, Vinsko violated the following Rules of Professional Conduct in the Secor Matter:

- a. RPC 1.4(a)(3) – A lawyer shall keep the client reasonably informed about the status of the matter.
- b. RPC 1.4(a)(4) – A lawyer shall promptly comply with reasonable requests for information.

3. ODC did not meet its burden of proof to establish that Vinsko violated RPC 1.1 (competence) and 1.4(a)(3) (communication of case status to client) in the Roche Estate matter.

4. ODC did not meet its burden of proof to establish that Vinsko violated RPC 1.1 (competence) and 1.3 (diligence) in the Secor matter.

### III. DISCUSSION

This matter comes before the Board following oral argument on exceptions filed by Vinsko to the Committee's Report and unanimous recommendation that Vinsko be suspended for one year for his violation of Rules of Professional Conduct ("RPC") 1.3, 1.4(a)(4) and 1.15(e) in the Roche Estate Matter and violation of RPC 1.3, 1.4(a)(3) and 1.4(a)(4) in the Secor Matter.

In attorney discipline matters, ODC bears the burden of proving professional misconduct by clear and convincing evidence. *Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Anonymous Attorney*, 331 A.3d 523 (Pa. 2025). Upon our independent review of this matter pursuant to Pa.R.D.E. 208(d)(2), we conclude that Vinsko violated RPC 1.3, 1.4(a)(4) and 1.15(e) in the Roche Estate Matter and RPC 1.4(a)(3) and 1.4(a)(4) in the Secor Matter. For the reasons that follow, we recommend that Vinsko be suspended for a period of one year.

Addressing the Roche Estate matter first, we initially discuss Vinsko's contention that RPC 1.3 and 1.15(e) do not apply to his conduct because the complaint that triggered ODC's investigation was lodged by Alice Roche, a non-client and the wife of a deceased beneficiary. Vinsko's theory is that since his own client did not complain of harm, *ergo* Vinsko cannot be found to have violated those specific rules.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Following the presentation of the parties' cases-in-chief and prior to the aggravating and mitigating phase of the disciplinary hearing, Vinsko argued to the Committee that he did not violate RPC 1.1, 1.3, 1.4(a)(3), and 1.15(e) in the Roche Estate matter as Alice Roche, the complainant, was not Vinsko's client. Vinsko did not raise this argument to the Committee as to RPC 1.4(a)(4) and we find that he waived it. See 3/10/25 N.T. 348-350. After the close of the record, the Committee directed that the parties' briefs address the issue of whether "that rule" is applicable to non-clients. While ODC believes that Vinsko waived the issue as to both RPC 1.4(a)(4) and RPC 1.15(e) (see 1/13/26 N.T. 18), it appears that Rule 1.15(e) was included in Vinsko's argument and the parties were generally directed to brief the issue of the applicability of the rules Vinsko highlighted to non-clients. See 3/10/25 N.T. 455-456.

Vinsko relies on *Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Anonymous Attorney*, 327 A.3d 192 (Pa. 2024), which discusses, *inter alia*, the application of RPC 1.5(a) (excessive fees) in a case where an attorney representing the insured party sought attorney's fees from the insurance company after a finding that the insurance company acted in bad faith. *Id.*, 327 A.3d at 195-202. Therein, the Court observed that Rule 1.5(a) is contained in Chapter One of the conduct rules, which governs the client-lawyer relationship. The Court then analyzed the language of RPC 1.5(a) and found that its aim is to protect clients from being charged clearly excessive fees and that the rule governed fee agreements between the attorney and the client, charges made to a client by the attorney and collection of fees by an attorney from a client. The Court held that RPC 1.5 does not apply where an attorney files a fee petition seeking to recover fees on behalf of a client from an adverse party. *Id.*, 327 A.3d at 202.

Here, Vinsko argues that similar to Rule 1.5(a), RPC 1.3 and 1.15(e) fall within the body of rules governing client-lawyer relationships. By extension, Vinsko argues that his client did not file the underlying complaint and there is no evidence to support a finding that Vinsko engaged in conduct that harmed his own client. In our view, Vinsko has misread *Anonymous Attorney*, which is distinguishable from the instant matter. The Court's analysis focused exclusively on the language and application of RPC 1.5(a) under the specific facts of that matter and does not suggest a broader application to other rules that govern the client-lawyer relationship. Here, the Roche Estate matter does not involve: RPC 1.5(a); an allegation of excessive fees; an attempt to recover fees from a non-client; or a situation where a client is not directly affected by a respondent's conduct.

Generally speaking, the complaint process is open to the public and designed to protect the public. ODC receives complaints from many sources, including clients,

family members of clients, opposing parties, judges, and other lawyers, and has the power and duty under Pa.R.D.E. 207(b)(1) to investigate the complaints. There is no threshold requirement that the complainant must be the client before ODC fulfills its duty to investigate. In the instant matter, Vinsko had a duty to comply with the Rules of Professional Conduct in the Roche Estate matter. He was retained by James Roche, a beneficiary of the estate, in Mr. Roche's capacity as administrator of the estate. Vinsko's professional obligations in handling the estate were triggered by and flowed from his attorney-client relationship. Vinsko is not excused from the consequences of a failure to comply with his duties of diligence and prompt distribution of property to clients and third parties during his representation of the administrator of the Roche Estate merely because the complainant in the matter was not his client.

Turning to the sufficiency of the evidence in Roche, the record established that Vinsko violated RPC 1.3, which required him to act with reasonable diligence and promptness. Vinsko assumed primary responsibility for the Roche Estate in 2019 and by September 2020, he circulated a Family Settlement Agreement and accounting. The matter was not concluded until late 2022. During that two year period, according to the credible testimony of Attorney Hogan, who was opposing counsel, Attorney Hogan repeatedly followed up with Vinsko in an effort to have Vinsko correct errors, finalize documents, or release checks. While Vinsko attributed delays to courthouse limitations due to the COVID pandemic, disputes among heirs, and the fact that the estate administrator controlled the checkbook, the record demonstrated that Vinsko did not respond with reasonable promptness to repeated inquiries and permitted avoidable periods of inactivity that delayed the resolution of the matter.

The record established in Roche that Vinsko violated RPC 1.4(a)(4) by failing to promptly provide information in response to Attorney Hogan's reasonable requests for information regarding the administration and closure of the estate. After Vinsko circulated revised settlement documents in March 2022, Attorney Hogan soon thereafter identified errors and requested that Vinsko make corrections. Vinsko agreed to do so but did not return the corrected documents to Attorney Hogan, despite Attorney Hogan's efforts to touch base with Vinsko. After Vinsko failed to send the corrected documents or respond to Attorney Hogan's emails, Attorney Hogan made the edits himself in April 2022 and asked Vinsko to approve them, as he had concerns that the Family Settlement Agreement bore Vinsko's office's name. Vinsko never replied on that matter but in June 2022, Vinsko emailed Attorney Hogan offering to arrange delivery of the checks for distribution. Once the settlement documents were finally approved and executed, further delay occurred when Vinsko failed to promptly correct the error to a beneficiary's name on a distribution check and failed to promptly distribute the checks. Vinsko's dilatoriness delayed the closure of the estate.

Finally, the Roche record established that Vinsko violated RPC 1.15(e) by delaying in paying over checks to Roche Estate beneficiaries. During the administration of the estate, distribution checks were issued. Two of the checks were correctly made out to Cheryl Cupp and Robert Roche; a third check had an error and needed to be reissued. Though Vinsko indicated he would correct the error, he failed to promptly reissue the check or follow up. Vinsko explained he did not have the estate checkbook and it was in the possession of the estate administrator; nevertheless, there was delay in correcting the error so that the checks could be distributed. Attorney Hogan and Alice Roche made repeated inquiries seeking the status of the distributions and Attorney Hogan eventually

filed a Motion for Sanctions and Surcharge. Vinsko sent Attorney Hogan the corrected check and other documents approximately 11 days after Attorney Hogan filed his motion, which he later withdrew. The record established that the checks to the beneficiaries were provided only after extended delays. Vinsko admitted that despite no issues with the checks prepared for Cheryl Cupp and Robert Roche, he failed to promptly distribute them until further requests from Attorney Hogan. On December 21, 2022, Vinsko mailed the final checks, two of which were dated September 21, 2022, and one of which was dated November 12, 2022.

Moving to the Secor matter, the record established and Vinsko conceded that he violated RPC 1.4(a)(3) and 1.4(a)(4) by his failure to keep the Secors reasonably informed about the status of their matter and promptly comply with requests for information. See 3/10/25 N.T. 297-298 (“Q: Would you agree with me that there were multiple instances in which you didn’t respond to Ms. Secor? A. Yes.”). Ms. Secor’s emails to Vinsko and her credible testimony demonstrated her clear frustration, uncertainty of the status of her matter and distress over Vinsko’s deficient communication, which included her inability to speak personally with Vinsko on the phone for over one year. See ODC-F, Bates 42-44, letter to Vinsko dated April 14, 2023 (“We have not spoken on the phone since April 2022 ... I have considerable stress and anxiety about this situation and you not responding to me is adding to my distress”); *Id.* Bates 27 (“We just get confused when you say you are going to update either the same day or the next day. Then you don’t reach out.”); *Id.* Bates 11 (Let’s get this over with already.”)

On multiple occasions, Ms. Secor called Vinsko or sent correspondence, which Vinsko ignored. For months, Vinsko failed to communicate with Ms. Secor, leaving her with little understanding of what was happening in her case. On numerous dates, Vinsko

promised to provide to Ms. Secor outlines detailing the next steps in her case; however, despite multiple follow-up requests from Ms. Secor, Vinsko never provided the promised outlines. Additionally, Vinsko failed to provide updated invoices or information regarding whether he filed the Writ and the Complaint. Vinsko admitted that he promised to send Ms. Secor an updated invoice but failed to do so. See N.T. 3/10/25 298-299 (“Q: So you agree that you told Ms. Secor you’d send an updated invoice and you did not do so? ... A: Yea, after that I did not provide an invoice.”).

In addition to the communication violations, the Committee found that Vinsko violated RPC 1.3 (diligence). On this record, we find that ODC failed to meet its burden as to Rule 1.3. While Vinsko admittedly failed to keep Ms. Secor reasonably informed about the status of her case and promptly comply with her reasonable requests for information, the record shows that he filed pleadings consistent with litigation developments to move the case forward.

Having concluded that Vinsko engaged in professional misconduct, this matter is ripe for the determination of discipline. Disciplinary sanctions serve the dual purpose of protecting the public from unfit attorneys and maintaining the integrity of the legal system. *Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Robert Costigan*, 584 A.2d 296, 300 (Pa. 1990). In assessing the appropriate quantum of discipline, the Board must weigh any aggravating and mitigating circumstances. *Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Brian J. Preski*, 134 A.3d 1027, 1031 (Pa. 2016).

In aggravation, we consider that Vinsko is a recidivist offender who is facing discipline for a fourth time since 2018. Two of the past three disciplinary matters resulted in public discipline. This record of prior discipline reflects that Vinsko has a troubling inability to conform to ethical standards and has been undeterred by his prior discipline.

Review of Vinsko's extensive record reveals that his disciplinary history dates to 2018. On October 22, 2018, the Board approved a Joint Petition for Discipline on Consent and ordered that Vinsko be publicly reprimanded for making negative comments in his brief filed in the Third Circuit Court of Appeals about the integrity and qualifications of a District Court judge, in violation of RPC 8.2(a). During the imposition of the public reprimand on January 7, 2019, the Board cautioned Vinsko that any subsequent violation of the ethical rules could result in further discipline and more severe sanctions.

On May 12, 2020, less than two years after Vinsko received the public reprimand, ODC advised Vinsko that it had been determined, after approval by a reviewing Hearing Committee member, that he receive an informal admonition for misconduct involving incompetence, lack of diligence and poor communication in that he had failed to file written exceptions to preserve his client's interests with respect to a marital property valuation, failed to obtain a copy of the contempt hearing transcript resulting in its omission from the record on appeal, failed to reasonably communicate with his client, and failed to provide clear instructions regarding an order entered against his client. Vinsko's conduct violated RPC 1.1 (competence), 1.3 (diligence), 1.4(a)(2), (a)(3), (a)(4), (a)(5), and 1.4(b) (communication), 3.1 (meritorious claims, 3.2 (expediting litigation) and 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice).

These two incidents of discipline did not induce Vinsko to avoid further encounters with the disciplinary system. Approximately 20 months after the informal admonition, by order dated January 18, 2022, the Board directed that Vinsko receive a public reprimand for his misconduct in one client matter involving incompetence, lack of diligence, communication deficiencies, and failure to expedite litigation. This conduct violated RPC 1.1 (competence), 1.3 (diligence), 1.4(a)(2), (a)(3) and (a)(4), 1.4(b)

(communication), and 3.2 (expediting litigation). This misconduct was very similar to the conduct Vinsko engaged in that resulted in his previous informal admonition. The Board imposed the public reprimand on March 4, 2022, and again warned Vinsko that his history of discipline was “troubling and should serve as notice to you that you must conduct your practice within the Rules of Professional Conduct.” ODC-O.

Although Vinsko asserted at the hearing that he changed his practice each time he was disciplined, the record contains no evidence of Vinsko’s remedial efforts after any of his previous three instances of discipline. On the contrary, his involvement with the disciplinary system continued on average of every two years. We glean from the record that Vinsko did not heed the repeated warnings to adhere to ethical standards, especially after two consecutive disciplines for violating fundamental rules involving competence, diligence and communication. The record demonstrated that Vinsko’s misconduct in the Roche Estate and Secor matters, which once again involved lack of diligence and communication problems, occurred during 2020-2024.

Vinsko attempted to downplay the significance of his lengthy disciplinary record by emphasizing that his misconduct that resulted in the 2018 public reprimand was dissimilar to the instant misconduct and the law practice areas involved in the 2020 informal admonition and the 2022 public reprimand were different than the instant matter. We find no support for these arguments in the precedent, which establishes that Vinsko’s extensive record of discipline is a significant and weighty aggravating factor that warrants more severe discipline. See *Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. William D. Hobson*, No. 154 DB 2019 & 3 DB 2020 (D. Bd. Rpt. 11/24/2021) (S. Ct. Order 2/11/2022). And, repeated violations of the same type call for enhanced sanctions to protect the public and deter

future misconduct. See *Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. William James Helzlsouer*, No. 197 DB 2018 (D. Bd. Rpt. 11/18/2019) (S. Ct. Order 1/23/2020).

Vinsko also claimed that he now has “revamped” his practice and changed it “a complete 180.” 3/10/25 N.T. 297. Vinsko testified that he will make “triple the effort, ten times the effort to ensure communication is better.” 3/10/25 N.T. 442. Concrete details of these changes are scarce beyond his testimony that he has an iPad to record calls, which he tries to respond to within a week at the latest, and has become “very selective” in his cases. 3/10/25 N.T. 442. We observe that Vinsko’s current efforts appear to have come only after multiple encounters with the disciplinary system.

We accord mitigation to Vinsko’s remorse in the Secor matter. He conceded that he should have responded more promptly to his client and apologized. We also give mitigating weight to the credible testimony of numerous character witnesses on Vinsko’s behalf composed of community members, lawyers, clients and friends, who attested to his integrity and dedication to clients and community service. Remorse and evidence of good character are properly considered as mitigating factors. See *Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Patrick O’Hare Regan*, No. 191 DB 2017 (D. Bd. Rpt. 10/21/2019) (S. Ct. Order 1/2/2020).

Precedent supports the Board’s recommendation for a one year suspension. We observe that Vinsko’s instant misconduct in two separate client matters consisting of communication deficiencies, lack of diligence, and failure to distribute estate property promptly standing alone, would not warrant a suspension from practice. See *Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Michael Bruce Goodman*, No. 46 DB 2025 (D. Bd. Order 5/13/25) (Goodman engaged in delay, neglect, and failure to communicate in two separate client matters; no prior discipline; Board imposed a public reprimand with condition); *Office of*

*Disciplinary Counsel v. Anonymous*, No. 129 DB 2016 (D. Bd. Order 1/9/2018) (attorney engaged in misconduct in one estate matter involving neglect, lack of diligence, failure to communicate, dishonesty, and engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice; the attorney had practiced law for 34 years without discipline; Board ordered a private reprimand with probation); *Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Anonymous*, No. 22 DB 2014 (D. Bd. Order 8/26/2015) (attorney engaged in misconduct when he failed to handle an estate competently and promptly, failed to communicate, commingled estate funds, and failed to properly supervise another; no prior discipline in a thirty-year legal career; other mitigation; Board imposed a private reprimand with condition). Notably, none of the cited cases involved a respondent with a history of prior discipline.

The reprimands imposed in the cited matters permitted the lawyers to keep their active law licenses. Here, Vinsko advocates for a sanction that would permit him to continue practicing law—a public censure, at most. We conclude that public censure, and indeed any sanction that allows Vinsko to keep his law license, is an inadequate response to the serious record before us and not supported by the precedent. Vinsko’s substantial history of public and private discipline demonstrates that he has not absorbed the lessons of his three past disciplinary experiences and never seriously attempted to change his law practice to conform to ethical standards. We conclude that the prior sanctions that allowed Vinsko to continue practicing law did not heighten his awareness of the importance of his ethical duties and had no positive effect on him.

On this record, suspension is warranted. The Court has suspended attorneys who have a history of multiple disciplines, reflecting that previous disciplinary offenders should receive progressively more severe sanctions. See *Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Joshua M. Briskin*, No. 72 DB 2021 (D. Bd. Rpt. 6/13/2023) (S. Ct. Order 8/4/2023) (the

Board considered Briskin's 2019 informal admonition and 2019 public reprimand when recommending a three year suspension, which the Court imposed); *Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. William D. Hobson*, Nos. 154 DB 2019 & 31 DB 2020 (D. Bd. Rpt. 11/24/2021) (S. Ct. Order 2/11/2022) (the Board weighed Hobson's 1997 disbarment on consent, 2016 informal admonition and 2018 private reprimand when recommending a suspension for five years, which the Court imposed); *Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Frank C. Arcuri*, No. 147 DB 2019 (D. Bd. Rpt. 8/20/20) (S. Ct. Order 10/6/2020) (the Board considered Arcuri's string of prior disciplines consisting of three private reprimands and a one year suspension on consent when recommending a one year and one day suspension, which the Court imposed); *Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Lawrence E. Brinkmann, Jr.*, No. 157 DB 2008 (D. Bd. Rpt. 12/15/2009) (S. Ct. Order 3/26/2010) (the Board noted Brinkmann's record of two prior informal admonitions and a prior public censure when recommending a one year and one day suspension, which the Court imposed).

Upon the totality of facts and circumstances, we find that Vinsko's misconduct in tandem with the significant aggravating circumstance of his extensive record of discipline demonstrates his unfitness to practice law and supports his removal from practice for one year as a means of deterrence. While the aggravating factor of Vinsko's lengthy record of discipline informs our decision that suspension is warranted, the countervailing mitigating factors of remorse and good character weigh in favor of a suspension that does not require a full reinstatement proceeding. This balanced approach is consistent with the goals of the disciplinary system to protect the public and preserve the integrity of the courts and the legal profession and will allow ample time for Vinsko to reflect on his actions and the changes that are necessary to forestall future acts of misconduct.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

The Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania unanimously recommends that the Respondent, William E. Vinsko, Jr., be Suspended for one year from the practice of law in this Commonwealth.

It is further recommended that the expenses incurred in the investigation and prosecution of this matter are to be paid by the Respondent.

Respectfully submitted,

THE DISCIPLINARY BOARD OF THE  
SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

By: /s/ Bryan S. Neft  
Bryan S. Neft, Member

Date: 02/23/2026

Member O'Donnell recused.