

THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

SUPREME COURT

ORDER

LD-2025-0008, In the Matter of Christopher R. Burns, Esquire

On December 18, 2025, the Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) filed an order recommending the disbarment of the respondent, Attorney Christopher R. Burns. The PCC's order further recommended that the Attorney Disciplinary Office (ADO) "immediately pursue interim suspension . . . while the Supreme Court considers the matter." On December 19, 2025, the ADO filed a motion for the immediate suspension or disbarment of Attorney Burns pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 37(16)(d) and (f).

Rule 37(16)(f) authorizes this court to suspend an attorney when it deems a suspension necessary for the protection of the public and the preservation of the integrity of the legal profession. When the court makes such a finding, the court may issue a temporary order of suspension, with or without a hearing. See Rule 37(16)(d).

In its order recommending disbarment, the PCC "adopt[ed] the Hearing Panel's analysis and conclusions" and found as follows:

Attorney Burns committed serious misconduct. He immediately began converting a client's funds for his own uses without ever earning it, depleting the funds in nine days. He failed to represent the client in any meaningful way, let alone with a minimum amount of competence or diligence, and then submitted falsely notarized interrogatories to opposing counsel, lied to his client over a period of months, caused a default judgment with costs to be entered against the client, and failed to respond to the disciplinary authority. Attorney Burns lied to the Committee and showed no remorse.

Based on the PCC's order and the ADO's motion, the court finds that Attorney Burns's immediate suspension from the practice of law is necessary to protect the public and to preserve the integrity of the legal profession. See Rule 37(16)(d) and (f). Accordingly, it is hereby ordered:

- (1) In accordance with Rule 37(16)(d) and (f), Attorney Christopher R. Burns is immediately suspended from the practice of law in New Hampshire pending further order of this court.

- (2) A copy of the PCC's order, the ADO's motion, and this order shall be served on Attorney Burns by first-class mail at the latest address that Attorney Burns provided to the New Hampshire Bar Association.
- (3) Attorney Burns is enjoined from further use of his IOLTA account. He is further enjoined from transferring, assigning, hypothecating, or in any manner disposing of or conveying any assets of clients, whether real, personal, beneficial or mixed.
- (4) On or before January 7, 2026, the PCC shall file, in accordance with Rule 37(16)(b), "the record of the proceedings with this court."
- (5) On or before January 7, 2026, Attorney Burns may request a non-evidentiary hearing on the issue of whether the interim suspension should be lifted. The hearing will be promptly scheduled. See Reiner's Case, 152 N.H. 163 (2005).
- (6) On or before December 30, 2025, Attorney Burns shall inform his clients in writing of his suspension from the practice of law and of his inability to act as an attorney, and shall advise them to seek other counsel. See Rule 37(13). Attorney Burns shall file an affidavit on or before January 22, 2026, stating that he has complied with this requirement. A copy of the affidavit shall be sent to the ADO.

Pursuant to Rule 37(17), the court appoints Attorney Andrea Q. Labonte, ADO Assistant General Counsel, to take immediate possession of the client files and trust and other fiduciary accounts of Attorney Burns, and to take the following actions:

- (1) Attorney Labonte shall notify all banks and other entities where Attorney Burns has trust or fiduciary accounts and operating accounts of Attorney Burns's suspension from the practice of law and of Attorney Labonte's appointment by the court.
- (2) Attorney Labonte shall, to the extent that she deems necessary, notify Attorney Burns's clients of his suspension, inform them of any scheduled hearings, advise them to obtain the services of other lawyers of their choice, and advise them how they or their new attorneys may obtain their files. Attorney Labonte shall not undertake the representation of any of Attorney Burns's clients, however.

- (3) Attorney Labonte shall, to the extent that she deems necessary, notify the courts in which any hearings are scheduled in the near future of Attorney Burns's suspension.
- (4) Attorney Labonte shall prepare an inventory of Attorney Burns's client files and shall file a copy of the inventory with the Supreme Court on or before February 6, 2026, together with a report of her actions taken under this order and recommendations as to what further actions should be taken.
- (5) If Attorney Burns was in possession of any client funds or property, Attorney Labonte may file an appropriate motion requesting authority to distribute them.

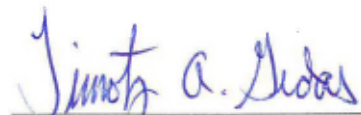
Attorney Burns is ordered to cooperate with Attorney Labonte in performing the tasks as directed by the court. The expenses of Attorney Labonte shall be paid in the first instance from the funds of the attorney discipline system, which may seek reimbursement from Attorney Burns.

Following the filing of the PCC's record of the proceedings, a further order shall be issued notifying the parties that the parties must, within 30 days of that order, identify any legal or factual issues concerning the PCC's disbarment recommendation that the parties wish this court to review. See Rule 37(16)(c).

MacDonald, C.J., and Donovan, Countway, and Gould, JJ., concurred.

DATE: December 23, 2025

ATTEST:


Timothy A. Gudas, Clerk

Distribution:

New Hampshire Professional Conduct Committee, #24-014

Sara S. Greene, Esq.

Christopher R. Burns, Esq.

Andrea Q. Labonte, Esq.

File