

BEFORE THE HEARING BOARD
OF THE
ILLINOIS ATTORNEY REGISTRATION
AND
DISCIPLINARY COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

MAHDIS AZIMI,

Attorney-Respondent,

No. 6320242.

Commission No. 2023PR00003

COMPLAINT

Jerome Larkin, Administrator of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission, by his attorney, Rachel C. Miller, pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 753(b), complains of Respondent, Mahdis Azimi ("Respondent"), who was licensed to practice law in Illinois on November 5, 2015, and alleges that Respondent has engaged in the following conduct which subjects her to discipline pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 770:

COUNT I

*(Failure to diligently represent a client and
making false representations to a client)*

1. At all times related to this complaint, Respondent operated as a sole practitioner of Azimi Law LLC. She maintains an office in Chicago, and she concentrates her practice in the area of immigration law.

2. Prior to May 2019, Heartland Alliance, a non-profit advocacy organization based in Chicago, filed a petition for alien fiancé(e), also known as an I-129F application, on behalf of Nageswar Linga ("Linga") and his fiancée, Swarnlata Damor ("Damor"). At that time, Damor lived in India.

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3. Between May 2019 and November 2019, Respondent worked as a volunteer attorney at Heartland Alliance through its National Immigration Justice Center program, and the organization assigned her to assist Linga and Damor in the next steps in Damor's immigration process, including preparing a consular application and preparing for an immigration interview. Respondent prepared the consular application and prepared Linga and Damor for the immigration interview.

4. When Respondent's volunteer placement ended in November 2019, she provided her contact information to Linga in case he decided to retain her for additional legal services in the future.

5. On February 8, 2020, Damor entered the United States on a K-1 visa, which is also known as a "fiancé(e) visa."

6. On February 15, 2020, Linga and Damor married.

7. In March 2020, Linga contacted Respondent to discuss filing an I-485 application in order to adjust Damor's immigration status from a fiancée visa to a lawful permanent resident visa ("green card"). Respondent and Linga agreed that Linga would pay Respondent a flat fee of \$1,500 in exchange for representation in preparing and filing the I-485 application. Respondent and Linga also agreed that Linga would pay Respondent \$1,250 for the filing fee. Linga paid Respondent a total of \$2,750 for the retainer and the filing fee.

8. On March 10, 2020, Respondent, Linga and Damor met to prepare the I-485 application, as well as an I-131 application in order to obtain travel documents for Damor to leave the country. Respondent subsequently submitted the I-485 application and the I-131 application in June 2020 to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services ("USCIS").

9. Shortly after Respondent filed the applications, Linga told Respondent that Damor needed to return to India. Respondent informed Linga that an applicant generally may not leave the United States while an I-485 application is pending without first obtaining advance parole with an I-131 application. At that time, USCIS had not granted Damor's I-131 application.

10. On June 12, 2020, Damor returned to India.

12. After Damor left the United States, Respondent and Linga discussed the option of applying for a humanitarian parole for Damor.

13. In June 2021, Respondent and Linga agreed that Linga would pay Respondent a flat fee of \$1,500 to file a humanitarian parole application and also pay Respondent \$575 for the filing fee. Linga paid Respondent a total of \$2,075.

14. In June 2021, Respondent began preparing the humanitarian parole application for Damor, but she did not file the application.

15. On July 21, 2021, USCIS notified Damor that her I-485 application had been deemed abandoned due to her departure from the United States without prior approval of her I-131 application.

16. Between September 22, 2021 and November 1, 2021, Linga requested periodically requested that Respondent provide him with a copy of the application for humanitarian parole that she filed.

18. On September 28, 2021, Respondent sent Linga a text message and stated, "Hi, sir. I'm well, how are you? I haven't forgotten. I'm not in the office but when I get back I will send you a copy."

19. On October 14, 2021, Respondent sent Linga a text message and stated:

"I'm on a call. I got your message- I am on a call right now.
I'm sorry if you are frustrated but I have been ill and not

working as much in the office so when I go in today/tomorrow I will scan it in and send it to you. I appreciate your patience, just as I was patient with you.”

20. On November 1, 2021, Respondent send Linga a text message and stated, “Once we get a receipt number, I will put in an expedite [sic] request.”

21. Respondent’s representations in paragraphs 18, 19, and 20 were false, because she had not filed the humanitarian parole application.

22. Respondent knew at the time she made the representations in paragraphs 18, 19, and 20 that they were false.

23. By reason of the conduct described above, Respondent has engaged in the following misconduct:

- a. failing to act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client, by conduct including Respondent’s failure to file a humanitarian parole application, in violation of Rule 1.3 of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010); and
- b. engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation, by conduct including knowingly making the false statements described in paragraphs 18, 19, and 20, in violation of Rule 8.4(c) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010).

Respectfully submitted,

Jerome Larkin, Administrator
Attorney Registration and
Disciplinary Commission

By: /s/ Rachel C. Miller
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