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9TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY



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Congress of the United States House of Representatives

October 3, 2019

Intake Office
Office of the Bar Counsel
Virginia State Bar
1111 East Main Street, Suite 700
Richmond, VA 23219-0026

To Whom It May Concern:

I write to file a complaint against William P. Barr, 950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20530-0001, an active attorney in current good standing with the Virginia State Bar. In his capacity as United States Attorney General, Mr. Barr has repeatedly violated the Virginia Rules of Professional Conduct. Therefore I request your office commence an immediate investigation of his behavior and consider sanctions for his conduct up to and including revocation of his license to practice law in your jurisdiction.

The Virginia Rules of Professional Conduct necessarily govern the actions of your licensed attorneys and ensure that attorneys in your jurisdiction “strive to attain the highest level of skill, to improve the law and the legal profession, and to exemplify the legal profession’s ideals of public service.”ⁱ Mr. Barr has violated Rule of Professional Conduct 1.3(c) which states that “[a] lawyer shall not intentionally prejudice or damage a client during the course of the professional relationship, except as required or permitted under Rule 1.6 and Rule 3.3.”ⁱⁱ Mr. Barr has violated Rule 8.2 which requires that “[a] lawyer shall not make a statement that the lawyer knows to be false or with reckless disregard as to its truth or falsity concerning the qualifications or integrity of a judge or other judicial officer.” Mr. Barr has also violated several precepts of Rule 8.4, of which Rule 8.4(a) covers professional misconduct “that violate[s] or attempt[s] to violate the Rules of Professional Conduct, knowingly assist or induce another to do so, or do so through the acts of another”; Rule 8.4(b) which sanctions an attorney that “commit[s] a criminal or deliberately wrongful act that reflects adversely on the lawyer’s honesty, trustworthiness or fitness to practice law”; and Rule 8.4(c) which forbids “engag[ing] in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation which reflects adversely on the lawyer’s fitness to practice law.”ⁱⁱⁱ

In less than a year on the job, the compendium of Mr. Barr’s bad acts in office is staggering. On March 24, 2019, Mr. Barr issued a letter claiming to summarize the Report On the Investigation Into Russian Interference In the 2016 Presidential Election by Special Counsel Robert S. Mueller, III, but it was badly slanted, issuing forth narrowly selected facts while seeking to obfuscate the report’s conclusions.^{iv} At an April 18, 2019 press conference, Barr continued this pattern of actively misrepresenting Special Counsel Mueller’s findings. There can be no doubt that Mr. Barr’s memo and press conference were designed to mislead the American public and the press.

In April 2019 testimony before Congress, Mr. Barr claimed that Special Counsel Mueller had no negative issue with his handling of the Report, but in a March 24, 2019 letter to the Attorney General, Special Counsel Mueller noted that Mr. Barr “did not fully capture the context, nature, and substance of this Office’s work and conclusions,”^v implying that Mr. Barr likely lied to Congress. It should be noted that in a July 8, 2019 interview, Mr. Barr in his capacity as Attorney General discouraged Special Counsel Mueller, then a private citizen, from testifying before public congressional hearing and thereby defying a subpoena.^{vi} And on July 17, 2019, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to hold Barr in contempt of Congress for ignoring a House subpoena probing Barr’s role in a scheme to corrupt the U.S. Census to disenfranchise minority Americans.^{vii}

Mr. Barr’s corruption of our U.S. Department of Justice into a bodyguard protectorate of the sitting chief executive’s political interests has accelerated. The explosive whistleblower’s letter released on September 26, 2019 indicated that Mr. Barr was an accomplice in Donald Trump’s scheme to extort the Ukrainian government to open an investigation of an American politician and interfere in the 2020 U.S. presidential election.^{viii} Incredibly, despite being named prominently in the whistleblower’s complaint, Mr. Barr refused to recuse himself from investigation of the complaint’s allegations and has still not recused himself.^{ix} Further reports suggest that Mr. Barr has worked at Mr. Trump’s behest to coordinate with other foreign governments to churn up dirt about Mr. Trump’s critics,^x and Mr. Barr has met with foreign government officials possibly to coax similar political materials advantageous to Mr. Trump. In May 1, 2019 testimony before the U.S. Senate, Mr. Barr denied that that the White House had ever asked him to investigate anyone at Trump’s political behest, making it likely that he lied to Congress again.^{xi}

In an address made exactly 57 years before that poisoned testimony, on Law Day, May 1, 1962, Mr. Barr’s predecessor observed that “[t]he glory of justice and the majesty of law are created not just by the Constitution – nor by the courts – nor by the officers of the law – nor by the lawyers – but by the men and women who constitute our society – who are the protectors of the law as they are themselves protected by the law.”^{xii} In the same speech, Attorney General Robert Kennedy reminded us that if “the rule of law is to survive in a democracy...it must be carried out by the other agencies of government...as well as by all our citizens in their daily lives.” As you know, holding a law license is a sacred responsibility. Mr. Barr’s pattern of lying and his corruption of the rule of law in America in service of one man is a betrayal of Attorney General Kennedy’s warnings and unprecedented in our national life. In carrying out that perversion, Mr. Barr has clearly violated the Virginia Rules of Professional Conduct he swore to uphold and should face the severest sanction your body can mete out: revocation of his law licensure.

It would be my pleasure to provide you with any other documentation I can proffer. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress

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- ⁱ <http://www.vsb.org/pro-guidelines/index.php/rules/preamble/>
- ⁱⁱ <https://www.vsb.org/pro-guidelines/index.php/rules/client-lawyer-relationship/rule1-3/>
- ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.vsb.org/pro-guidelines/index.php/rules/maintaining-the-integrity-of-the-profession/rule8-4/>
- ^{iv} <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/06/bill-barrs-dangerous-pursuit-executive-power/592951/>
- ^v <https://www.cnn.com/2019/05/01/politics/fact-check-william-barr-lie-to-congress/index.html>
- ^{vi} <https://www.apnews.com/413061794ba14c6eb15173251388fcbc>
- ^{vii} <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/17/us/politics/barr-ross-contempt-vote.html>
- ^{viii} <https://time.com/5687302/whistleblower-william-barr-impeachment-trump-justice/>
- ^{ix} <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-whistleblower-barr/house-judiciary-chief-call-on-barr-to-recuse-himself-from-ukraine-probes-idUSKBN1WA24K>
- ^x <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/30/us/politics/trump-australia-barr-mueller.html>;
- <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/barr-asked-trump-introductions-australia-italy-review-russia/story?id=65964849>
- ^{xi} <https://www.vox.com/2019/9/25/20883610/attorney-general-william-barr-trump-phone-call-volodymyr-zelensky-whistleblower-ukraine-scandal>
- ^{xii} <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/ag/legacy/2011/01/20/05-01-1962.pdf>