

**DISCIPLINARY REVIEW BOARD**  
**OF THE**  
**SUPREME COURT OF NEW JERSEY**

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September 22, 2023

Heather Joy Baker, Clerk  
Supreme Court of New Jersey  
P.O. Box 970  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0962

Re: **In the Matter of John L. Conroy, Jr.**  
Docket No. DRB 23-142  
District Docket No. IV-2020-0002E

Dear Ms. Baker:

The Disciplinary Review Board reviewed the motion for discipline by consent (reprimand or such lesser discipline as the Board deems appropriate, with a condition) filed by the Office of Attorney Ethics (the OAE) in the above matter, pursuant to R. 1:20-10(b). Following a review of the record, we granted the motion and determined to impose an admonition for respondent's violation of RPC 1.5(b) (failure to set forth in writing the basis or rate of the legal fee). The Board also imposed the condition that respondent disgorge to the client, within thirty days of the date of this letter, the \$2,500 legal fee paid to him by the client.

Specifically, on or about March 6, 2018, respondent was retained by a client to assist with issues related to the client's relative's Medicaid benefits. Respondent, who had not regularly represented the client in the past, informed him verbally that the flat legal fee for the agreed-upon services would be \$2,500.

However, respondent failed to provide a written explanation of the basis or rate of that fee during the March 2018 meeting or at any later date.

On June 6, 2018, the client's spouse sent respondent an e-mail, acknowledging that the client had not yet paid the \$2,500 fee. Respondent replied, via e-mail, and requested that the payment be sent to his office. Thereafter, the client paid him \$2,500. Although this amount was consistent with the flat-fee arrangement that respondent had orally quoted to the client in March 2018, he continued to fail to provide a written communication memorializing the basis or rate of his fee.

As the OAE and respondent stipulated, respondent's actions violated RPC 1.5(b). In conjunction with the parties' stipulation, respondent agreed to make full restitution of the \$2,500 retainer fee to the client.

In imposing only an admonition with the agreed-upon condition, the Board weighed, in significant mitigation, respondent's forty-eight years at the bar. Although he was admonished, in 2015, for misconduct that included a similar violation of RPC 1.15(b), respondent's career is otherwise unblemished. The Board also weighed, in mitigation, that respondent entered into the present disciplinary stipulation, thereby accepting responsibility for his misconduct and conserving disciplinary resources, and agreed to fully reimburse the client.

Enclosed are the following documents:

1. Notice of motion for discipline by consent, dated May 3, 2023.
2. Stipulation of discipline by consent, dated May 30, 2023.
3. Affidavit of consent dated May 15, 2023.

4. Ethics history dated September 22, 2023.

Very truly yours,

*/s/ Timothy M. Ellis*

Timothy M. Ellis  
Acting Chief Counsel

TME/res

Enclosures

c: (w/o enclosures)

Hon. Maurice J. Gallipoli, A.J.S.C. (Ret.), Chair

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District IV Ethics Committee (e-mail and regular mail)

Ronald G. Lieberman, Esq., Presenter

District IV Ethics Committee (e-mail)

John L. Conroy, Jr., Esq., Respondent (e-mail and regular mail)

Steven Ackerman, Grievant (regular mail)