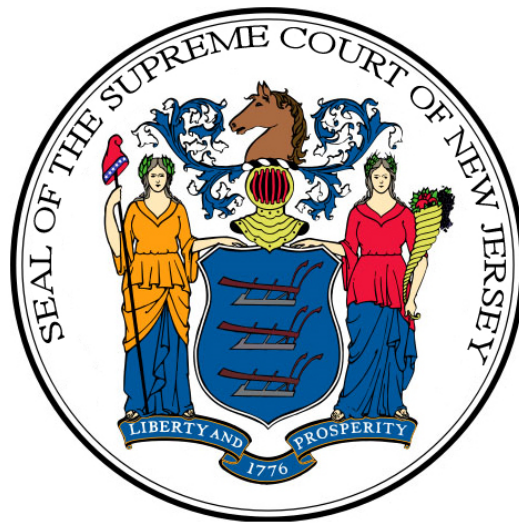


Disciplinary Review Board of the Supreme Court of New Jersey



Annual Report

January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025

To the Honorable Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of New Jersey:

I am pleased to present to the Supreme Court the 2025 Annual Report of the Disciplinary Review Board (the Board).

In 2025, the Board adjudicated 315 matters, docketed 327 new matters, and transmitted to the Court 133 disciplinary decisions (including disposition letters in consent matters) for final disposition. Additionally, the Office of Board Counsel (the OBC) collected \$210,017.31 in disciplinary costs assessed against attorneys, pursuant to R. 1:20-17.

Regarding technology and access, the OBC further developed the Board's public-facing website portal, with a specific focus on improving Americans with Disabilities Act functionality.

As we turn to 2026, the Board remains steadfast in its commitment to delivering prompt and fair disciplinary decisions intended to uphold the integrity of the New Jersey legal profession and protect the public interest. The OBC will continue to support the Board in that important mission while incorporating all guidance provided by the Supreme Court.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Timothy M. Ellis

Timothy M. Ellis
Chief Counsel

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History of the Board

The Disciplinary Review Board (the Board) serves as the intermediate appellate level of New Jersey's attorney regulatory and disciplinary system. The Office of Attorney Ethics (the OAE) exercises statewide jurisdiction over complex and emergent matters while overseeing District Ethics Committees (DECs), which investigate, prosecute, and make recommendations in most disciplinary matters. In certain cases, the Supreme Court appoints Special Ethics Adjudicators (SEAs) to hear more complex disciplinary matters.

The Board reviews all recommendations for discipline issued by DEC hearing panels and SEAs. The Board's decisions are subject to the Supreme Court's review and confirming Order. However, the Board's determinations of both appeals from dismissals of ethics grievances and appeals from Fee Arbitration Committee rulings are final (not subject to appeal).

The Supreme Court created the Board in 1978 and the Office of Board Counsel (the OBC) in 1984. In mid-1994, the Supreme Court eliminated all private discipline and made public all disciplinary proceedings subsequent to the filing and service of a formal ethics complaint. R. 1:20-9.

As part of the attorney regulatory and disciplinary system, the Board and the OBC are funded exclusively by the annual assessments paid by New Jersey attorneys. In 2025, New Jersey attorneys admitted in their fifth to forty-ninth year of practice were assessed \$267 to fund various components of the regulatory and disciplinary system. Attorneys in their third and fourth years of practice were assessed \$238. Attorneys in their second year of admission were assessed \$35. Attorneys in their first year of admission and attorneys practicing fifty or more years were not assessed a fee.

All Board Members are volunteers. However, OBC staff are New Jersey Judiciary employees. The 2025 budget for the disciplinary system, as approved by the Supreme Court, allocated \$2,879,609 to fund salaries and benefits for OBC employees and an additional \$194,900 to cover the Board's operating costs.

Functions of the Board

The Board reviews disciplinary and fee cases de novo on the record, with oral argument held in the Board's discretion. The Board's practice is to hear oral argument in all cases in which a DEC hearing panel or a SEA issues a report recommending discipline greater than an admonition. On occasion, the Board will remand a matter for further proceedings.

In addition to discipline, the Board may impose certain conditions or restrictions upon an attorney's continued practice of law, such as a proctorship; continuing legal education requirements; proof of fitness certified by a medical doctor; periodic submissions of trust account reconciliations; periodic audits of trust account records; disgorgement of unearned fees; establishment or continuation of psychological or substance treatment; the requirement that an attorney practice with a firm; and, occasionally, community service.

In matters where the Board recommends disbarment, the Supreme Court schedules an Order to Show Cause, requiring the respondent's appearance. In all other instances, the Board's determination that discipline is warranted is deemed final, subject to the attorney's or the OAE's right to file a petition for review prior to the Supreme Court's entry of a corresponding Order. Occasionally, the Supreme Court, on its own motion, schedules oral argument in non-disbarment cases.

When a trier of fact recommends an admonition, the Board reviews the matter on the written record, without oral argument. If an admonition is appropriate, the Board issues a letter of admonition without Supreme Court review. Alternatively, the Board may schedule the matter for oral argument, if it appears that greater discipline is warranted, or may dismiss the complaint. R. 1:20-15(f)(3) further allows the Board to issue a letter of admonition, without Supreme Court review, in those cases where a DEC or a SEA recommends a reprimand but the Board determines that an admonition is the more appropriate form of discipline.

When an attorney has been convicted of a crime or has been disciplined in another jurisdiction, the OAE may file with the Board a motion for final discipline (R. 1:20-13(c)) or a motion for reciprocal discipline (R. 1:20-14), respectively. Following receipt of briefs, holding oral argument, and the completion of the Board's deliberations, the OBC files the Board's decision with the Supreme Court.

Pursuant to R. 1:20-10, motions for discipline by consent are filed directly with the Board, without a hearing. Discipline by consent is not plea bargaining, which is not permitted in disciplinary matters. In such motions, the parties stipulate to the unethical conduct, the specific Rules of Professional Conduct violated, and the level of discipline supported by precedent. Following the Board's review of the motion on the written record, it may either grant the motion and file a letter decision with the Supreme Court, or deny the motion and remand the case to the OAE or the DEC for further proceedings.

If an attorney fails to timely file a verified, conforming answer to a formal ethics complaint, the OAE or DEC certifies the record directly to the Board for the imposition of discipline. R. 1:20-4(f)(2). The Board treats the matter as a default. If the attorney files a motion to vacate the default, the Board will review the motion simultaneously with the default case. If the Board vacates the default, the matter is remanded to the OAE or DEC for further proceedings. Otherwise, the Board will proceed with the review of the case, deeming the allegations of the complaint admitted. R. 1:20-4(f)(1). Thereafter, a decision is filed with the Supreme Court.

A disciplinary matter may also come before the Board in the form of a disciplinary stipulation. In these cases, the attorney and the ethics investigator jointly submit a statement of the attorney's conduct and a stipulation specifying the Rules of Professional Conduct that were violated. The Board may accept the stipulation and impose discipline by way of formal decision filed with the Supreme Court, or it may reject the stipulation and remand the matter either for a hearing or for other appropriate procedure.

In addition, the Board reviews cases, pursuant to R. 1:20-6(c)(1), in which the pleadings do not raise genuine disputes of material fact, the attorney does not request to be heard in mitigation, and the presenter does not request to be heard in aggravation. In those cases, the Board reviews the pleadings and a statement of procedural history in determining the appropriate discipline, if any, to be imposed.

The Board also reviews direct appeals from grievants who claim that an ethics investigator improperly dismissed their grievance after an investigation, or improperly dismissed their complaint after a hearing, and from parties (both clients and attorneys) to fee arbitration proceedings who contend that at least one of the four grounds for appeal set forth in R. 1:20A-3(c) exists.

The Board reviews petitions for reinstatement, pursuant to R. 1:20-21, filed by attorneys who have been suspended from the practice of law by the Supreme Court. Typically, the Board considers these petitions without oral argument and issues a recommendation to the Supreme Court regarding whether the attorney should be reinstated to the practice of law, and whether any conditions to reinstatement should be imposed.

Further, the Board reviews requests for the release of confidential documents in connection with a disciplinary matter, pursuant to R. 1:20-9, and requests for protective orders to prohibit the release of specific information. The Board also evaluates R. 1:20-12(b) motions for medical examination, as well as motions for reciprocal disability inactive status. Finally, the Board considers motions for temporary suspension filed by the OAE, in accordance with R. 1:20-15(k), following an attorney's failure to comply with a fee arbitration determination or a stipulation of settlement. In those cases, the Board recommends to the Supreme Court whether the attorney should be temporarily suspended until the fee and any monetary sanction imposed are satisfied.

Membership of the Board

The Board is composed of nine Members appointed by the Supreme Court who serve, without compensation, for a maximum of twelve years (four three-year appointments). Three appointees are nonlawyer, public Members; one Member is customarily a retired judge of the Appellate Division or of the Superior Court; and the remaining five Members are attorneys. In 2025, the Honorable Mary Catherine Cuff, P.J.A.D. (Ret.), served as Chair. Peter J. Boyer, Esq., served as Vice-Chair. The Supreme Court designated that the current Chair and Vice-Chair continue to serve for terms lasting through March 31, 2026.

Chair, Hon. Mary Catherine Cuff, P.J.A.D. (Ret.)

Mary Catherine Cuff was appointed to the Board in 2024 and designated as Chair. She served in the Judiciary for 28 years, from 1988 to 2016. She served in the Civil and Family Divisions of the Superior Court in Monmouth County, including two years as the Presiding Judge of the Family Division. In 1994, she commenced her service in the Appellate Division of the Superior Court and she was temporarily assigned to the Supreme Court between 2012 and 2016.

Vice-Chair, Peter J. Boyer, Esq.

Peter J. Boyer was appointed to the Board in 2015. He previously served as a member, Vice-Chair, and Chair of the District IV Ethics Committee, and presently serves as a member of the American Law Institute and of the Business Torts and Unfair Competition Committee of the Section of Litigation of the American Bar Association. Mr. Boyer regularly lectures on the topic of Ethics and Professional Responsibility. Mr. Boyer concentrated his practice on commercial and business litigation matters and pre-litigation counseling with respect to commercial disputes, most recently as a partner at Hyland Levin Shapiro, LLP. He is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and the Georgetown University Law Center, where he served as an editor of the American Criminal Law Review.

Jorge A. Campelo

Jorge A. Campelo was appointed to the Board in 2021. He previously served as a public member on the District IX Fee Arbitration Committee. Mr. Campelo is the owner and operator of BRISA Financial Services. The firm focuses on accounting, taxation, and management consulting for business and individual clients worldwide. He previously was a Director of Private Banking at American Express Company and Professor of accounting and business policy at Saint Peter's College/American Institute of Banking. Mr. Campelo is a graduate of Saint John's University (M.B.A.) and S.U.N.Y. Fredonia (B.S.), and is an E.A. and P.M.P.

Thomas J. Hoberman, CPA

Thomas J. Hoberman, CPA/ABV/CFF, was appointed to the Board in 2013. A graduate of the University of Maryland, Mr. Hoberman is the partner in charge of the Forensic and Valuation Services Department at the advisory, tax, and audit firm Withum Smith+Brown, PC.

Steven L. Menaker, Esq.

Steven L. Menaker was appointed to the Board in 2021. He is a partner at Chasan Lamparello Mallon & Cappuzzo, PC, in Secaucus. For almost two decades, he has been certified by the Supreme Court of New Jersey as a Civil Trial Attorney and concentrates his practice in business, commercial, and professional liability litigation. Mr. Menaker served as a member, Vice Chair, and Chair of the

District VI Ethics Committee, on the Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Professional Ethics, as Chair of the New Jersey State Bar Association Ethics Diversionary Committee, and as Chair of the Hudson County Bar Association Professionalism Committee. He is a graduate of Brooklyn College (City University of New York) and Rutgers University School of Law – Newark.

Peter Petrou, Esq.

Peter Petrou was appointed to the Board in 2019, following previous appointments as a SEA, a member of the Unauthorized Practice of Law Committee, and a member and former Chair of the District X Ethics Committee. Upon graduation from Duke Law School, where he was a member of the Duke Law Review, Mr. Petrou clerked for the Honorable Leo Yanoff, J.S.C. Mr. Petrou primarily practiced in the area of complex commercial litigation and commercial transactions. He also served as a court-appointed mediator and arbitrator for commercial disputes. His clients included many approved private schools for the developmentally disabled, leading to his current position as the Executive Director of ECLC of New Jersey, with administrative responsibility for its receiving schools, adult day programs, and agency providing job placement, supported employment, and support coordination services.

Lisa J. Rodriguez, Esq.

Lisa Rodriguez was appointed to the Board in 2023. She is Counsel at Dilworth Paxson LLP. Her law firm practice concentrates on complex litigation in the areas of securities fraud, antitrust, intellectual property, and consumer litigation. Ms. Rodriguez is a trustee of the Board of Governors of the Bar Association of the Third Circuit and is a member of the Lawyers Advisory Committee of the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey. She is a past president of the Association of the Federal Bar of New Jersey and a past Chair of the New Jersey Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection. She is a graduate of the George Washington University Law School.

Remi L. Spencer, Esq.

Remi L. Spencer was appointed to the Board in 2024. She is a partner in the Criminal Defense and Investigations practices at Pashman Stein Walder Hayden P.C. A Chambers-ranked lawyer, she joined Pashman Stein in 2024 after nearly two decades leading her own boutique litigation firm. She previously served as Vice-Chair of the New Jersey Supreme Court Ethics Fee Arbitration Committee,

District V-A. She is a board member of the Seton Hall University School of Law Board of Visitors, a trustee for the Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, New Jersey Chapter, and a founding member of both the New Jersey Chapter of the Women's White Collar Defense Association and the Women's Leadership Advisory Committee at Seton Hall University School of Law. Additionally, she is an active member of the New Jersey State Bar Association and the Essex County Bar Association. Remi is a graduate of Seton Hall University School of Law and Boston College.

Sophia A. Modu

Sophia A. Modu was appointed to the Board in 2024. She was a public member of the District VI and VA Ethics Committees before her service on the Board. She was employed until 2019 as Dean, Academic Advisement at Berkeley College. Sophia graduated from Rutgers University, earning a B.A., then attended Wagner College, obtaining her M.B.A. in their Executive Program. Sophia is the Estate Manager and owner of the Chi Modu Collection Inc.

Office of Board Counsel

The OBC is responsible for all administrative functions of the Board, including docketing; case processing; calendaring; distribution of decisions; and records retention. Additionally, the OBC acts as a cost assessment and collection agency, invoicing disciplined attorneys for administrative and actual costs, recording payments, and enforcing assessments by filing judgments and seeking temporary suspensions for non-payment, as applicable. Moreover, the OBC functions as in-house counsel to the Board, providing legal research, memoranda, and advising on all matters adjudicated by the Board.

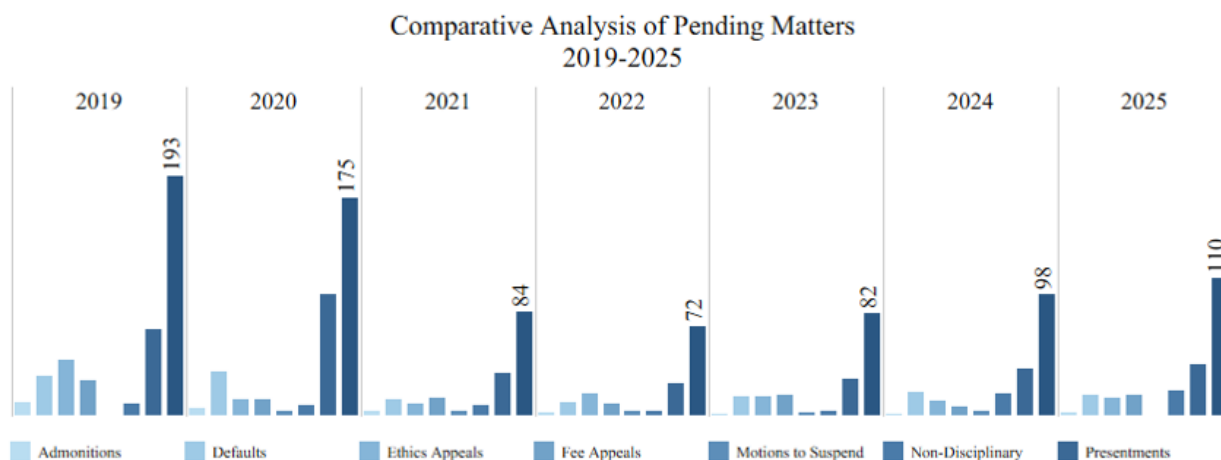
Since 1991, the OBC has furnished pre-hearing memoranda to the Board in serious disciplinary cases, motions for consent to discipline greater than an admonition, and matters containing novel legal or factual issues. To provide greater assistance in connection with the Board's case review function, this policy was modified. In mid-2003, the OBC began supplying the Board with memoranda on all matters scheduled for consideration, except motions for temporary suspension. These extremely detailed memoranda set out the facts relevant to the issues raised; the applicable law; a pertinent analysis of both; and a recommendation regarding the appropriate quantum of discipline, if any, to be imposed.

In 2025, the OBC was comprised of eight attorneys (Chief Counsel, First Assistant Counsel, Deputy Counsel, and five staff attorneys) and eight administrative support staff members, including a dedicated technical support professional. Additionally, one Attorney 1 departed for a promotional opportunity, and one Attorney 2 vacancy was filled. One Administrative Specialist 1, one Administrative Specialist 3, and one Administrative Specialist 4 vacancies were filled.

The Board's Caseload

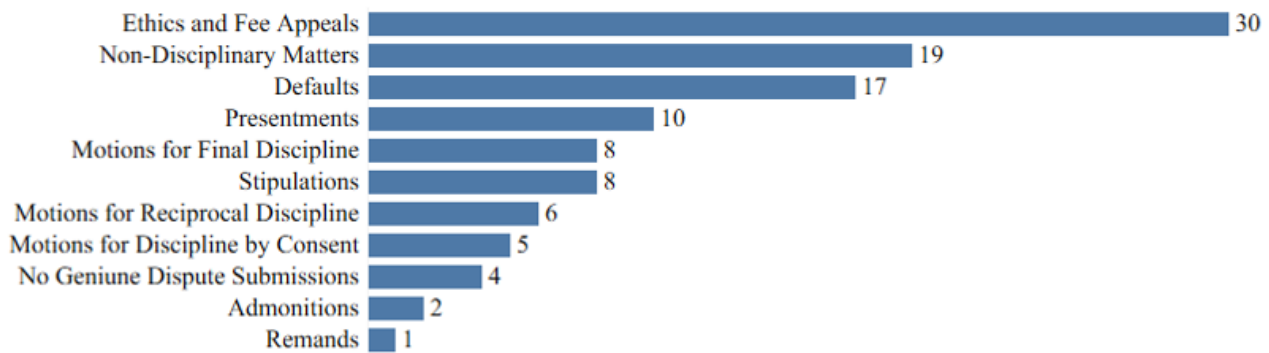
Pending Matters¹

The Board carried ninety-eight matters into January 2025. A total of 110 matters were pending on December 31, 2025, a 12% increase from 2024. However, from 2019 to 2025, there was a 43% decrease in pending matters overall.



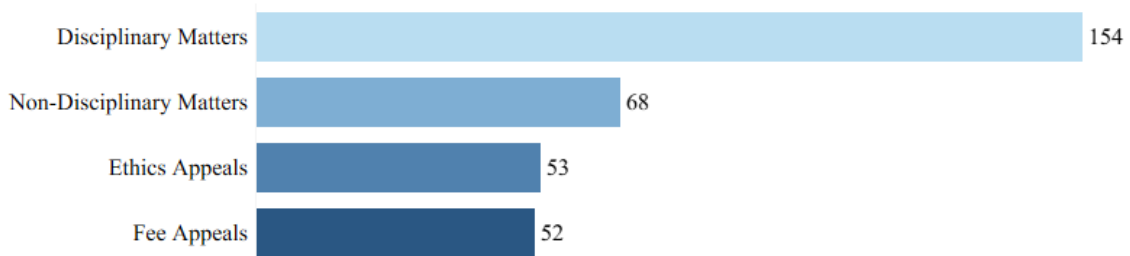
Of the 110 matters pending at the end of 2025, 17% were non-disciplinary matters, followed by defaults (15%) and fee appeals (15%). The smallest percentage of matters pending were admonitions (2%) and remands (1%).

¹ For the purposes of this illustration, “Presentments” include presentments, stipulations, motions for final discipline, motions for reciprocal discipline, consents to discipline and no genuine dispute submissions (R. 1:20-6(c)(1)). “Non-Disciplinary Matters” include motions for medical examinations, petitions for reinstatement, and matters filed pursuant to R. 1:20-7(j).

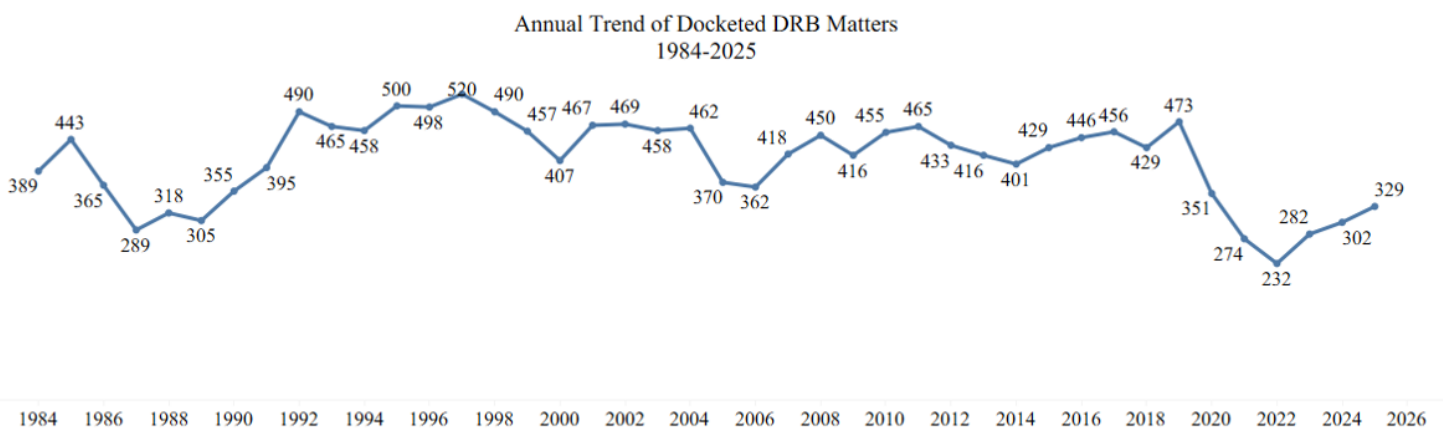


Docketed Matters

During calendar year 2025, the OBC docketed 327 matters for review before the Board. Of the 327 matters docketed, 47% were disciplinary followed by non-disciplinary (21%).



In 2025, docketed matters rose 8.9% compared to 2024.



Resolved Matters

Overall, the Board resolved 315 of the 425 matters carried into or docketed during calendar year 2025, a 10% increase from 2024. Below is the Board's disposition rate from 2020 to 2025.

Annual Disposition Rate of DRB Cases 2020-2025

<i>Year</i>	<i>Carried</i>	<i>Docketed</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Disposed</i>	<i>Disposition Rate</i>
2020	193	351	544	369	68%
2021	175	274	449	365	81%
2022	84	232	316	244	77%
2023	72	282	354	272	77%
2024	82	302	384	286	75%
2025	98	327	425	315	74%

Pursuant to R. 1:20-8(c), recommendations for discipline are to be resolved within six months of the docketing date. In 2025, the Board met its goal in 98.7% of cases.² Although there was a slight increase in the average resolution time from 2024 to 2025, overall, from 2020 to 2025, the average resolution time has decreased 35.2%.

Average Resolution Times for DRB Discipline Cases 2025-2025 (In Months)

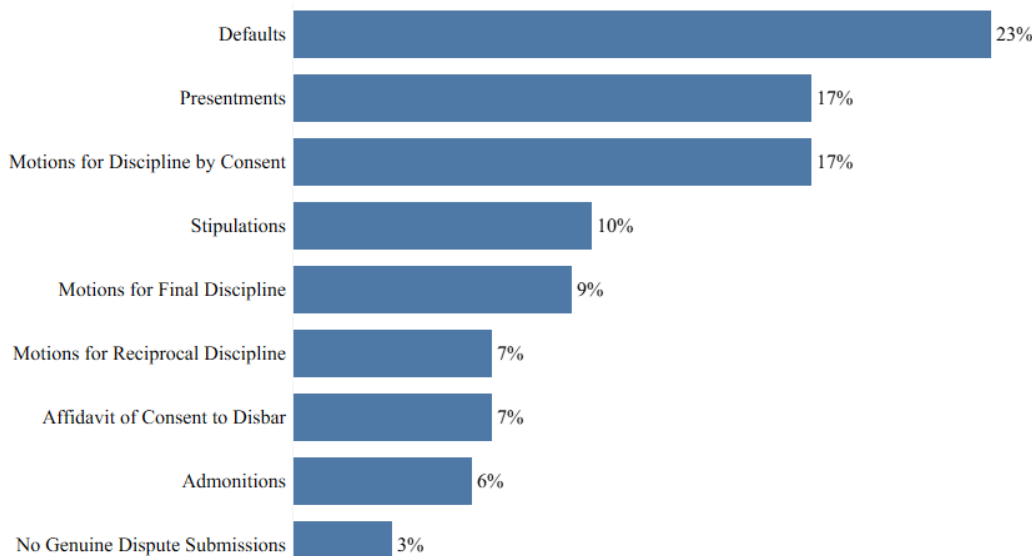
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<i>Presentments</i>	8.8	9	5.7	5.5	5.3	5.2
<i>Motions for Final Discipline</i>	7	9	5	4.1	4.7	8.0
<i>Motions for Reciprocal Discipline</i>	9.3	9	4.1	4.5	5.3	4.5
<i>Defaults</i>	7.6	6.8	4.2	4.1	4.4	4.9
<i>Motions for Discipline by Consent</i>	3.6	4.7	3.8	2.5	2.5	2.5
<i>Stipulations</i>	8.3	8.5	5.1	5	4.7	5.2
<i>No Genuine Dispute Submissions</i>	8.3	7	3.4	5	5.1	4.1
<i>Admonitions</i>	4	4.7	2.8	2.4	2.6	2.1
Total Average	7.1	7.3	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.6

² Two motions for final discipline carried from 2023 were resolved in 2025, following the Board's determination to remand the matters to a SEA for a limited evidentiary hearing.

The Board's Actions

Disciplinary Dispositions

In 2025, the Board rendered dispositions in 150 disciplinary matters. Of the 150 dispositions, 23% were defaults, followed by presentments (17%), and motions for discipline by consent (17%).³



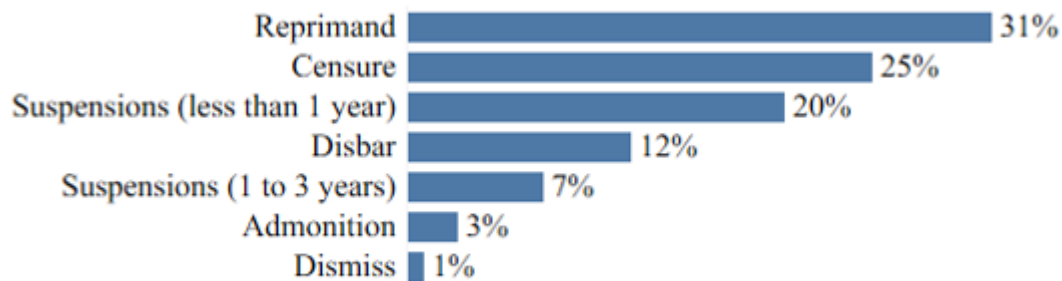
Recommendations for Discipline

Pursuant to R. 1:20-15(f), the Board must issue a formal decision for any recommendation for discipline in which the recommendation is a reprimand or greater. In motions for discipline by consent, regardless of the recommendation for discipline, and in almost all cases where the Board determines to impose an admonition, the Board will issue a letter decision.

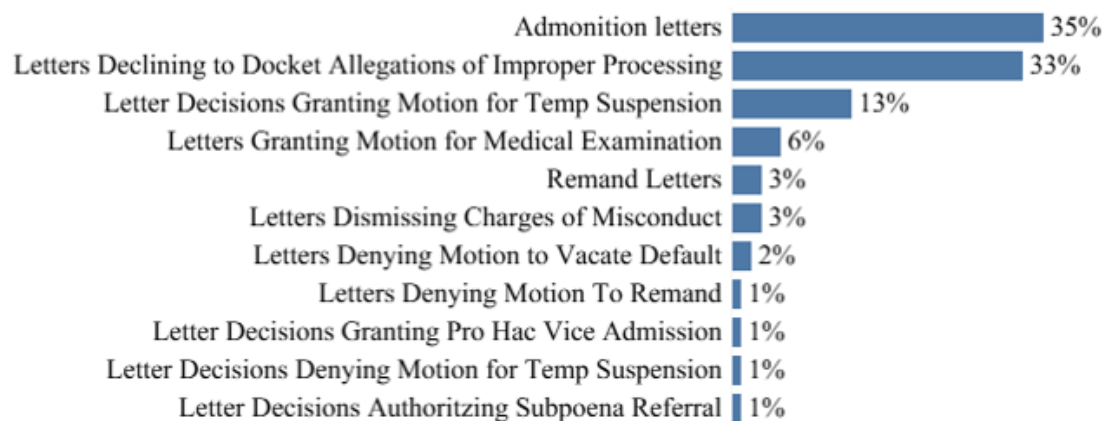
The Board also will issue letter decisions in non-disciplinary matters, including but not limited to, motions for medical examinations, motions for temporary suspension related to fee arbitration enforcement, and motions to vacate default.

³ For the purposes of this illustration, “Presentments” include presentments and admonition/presentments. “Motions for Discipline by Consent” includes consent/admonitions, consent/censure and consent/reprimand. “Affidavit of Consent to Disbar” includes consent/disbar and consent/disbar post-hearing.

In 2025, the Board issued 108 formal decisions with recommendations for discipline to be imposed by the Supreme Court. Of the 108 formal decisions, 31% were reprimands, followed by censures (25%) and suspensions with a term of less than one year (20%). The Board recommended disbarments, the most serious form of discipline, in thirteen matters.



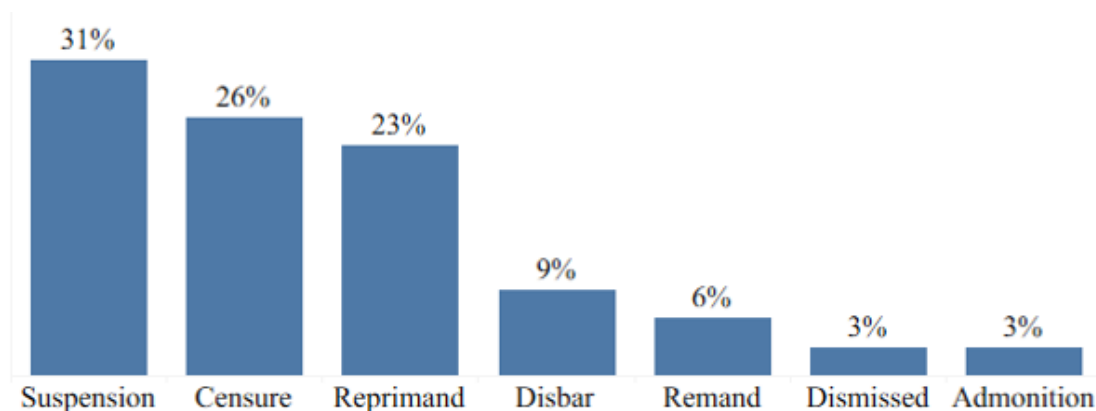
The Board issued eighty-nine letter decisions. Of the eighty-nine letters decisions, 35% were for admonitions, followed by 33% for matters in which the Board declined to docket allegations of improper processing and 13% granting motions for a temporary suspension related to fee arbitration enforcement.



Defaults

In 2025, there were thirty-five defaults resolved by the Board, of which thirty-two were determined on the merits. Of the thirty-two matters, 31% resulted in suspensions, with terms ranging from three months to three years, followed by censures (26%) and reprimands (23%).

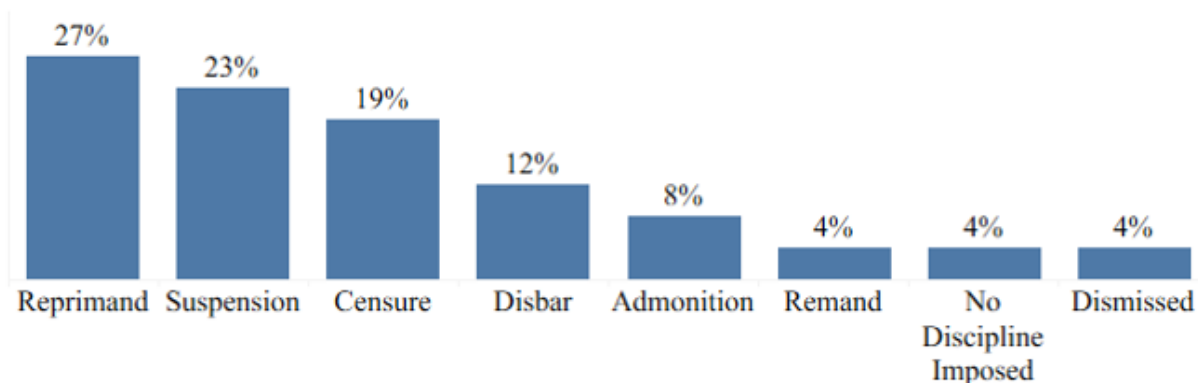
Of the remaining three defaults, two (6%) were remanded by the Board following the granting of motions to vacate the default, and one (3%) was dismissed as moot because the Supreme Court disbarred the attorney.



Presentments⁴

Of the twenty-six presentments resolved by the Board, twenty-three resulted in discipline. Of those twenty-three matters, 27% resulted in reprimands, followed by suspensions, with terms ranging from three months to one year (23%) and censures (19%).

Of the remaining three presentments, the Board dismissed one (4%), remanded the other (4%) for a new ethics hearing, and one (4%) resulted in no discipline imposed.



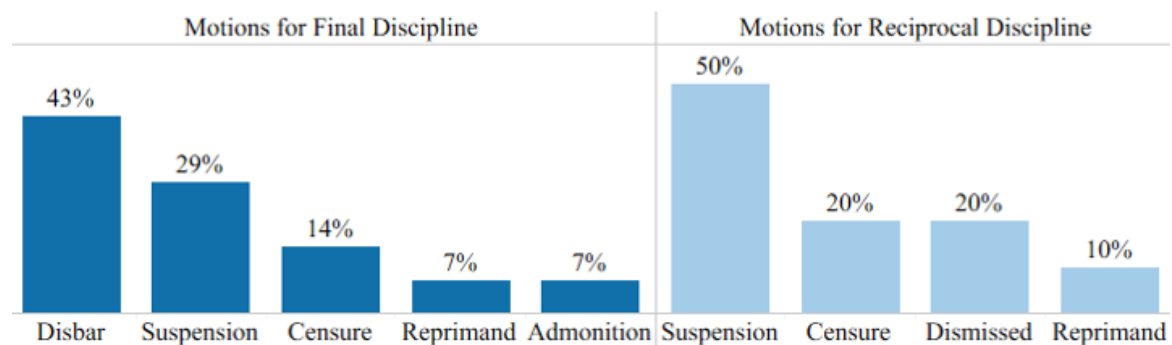
⁴ For the purposes of this illustration, “Presentments” include presentments and admonition/presentments. “Motions for Discipline by Consent” includes consent/admonitions, consent/censure and consent/reprimand. “Affidavit of Consent to Disbar” includes consent/disbar and consent/disbar post-hearing.

Motions

The Board resolved fourteen motions for final discipline and ten motions for reciprocal discipline.⁵

All motions for final discipline resulted in a recommendation that discipline be imposed by the Supreme Court. Of the fourteen matters, 43% resulted in recommendations for disbarment, followed by suspensions (29%), with terms ranging from three months to three years, and censures (14%).

Regarding the ten motions for reciprocal discipline, eight resulted in a recommendation that discipline be imposed by the Supreme Court. Of the eight matters, the majority (50%) resulted in suspensions with terms ranging from three months to three years, followed by censures (20%).



Motions for Discipline by Consent

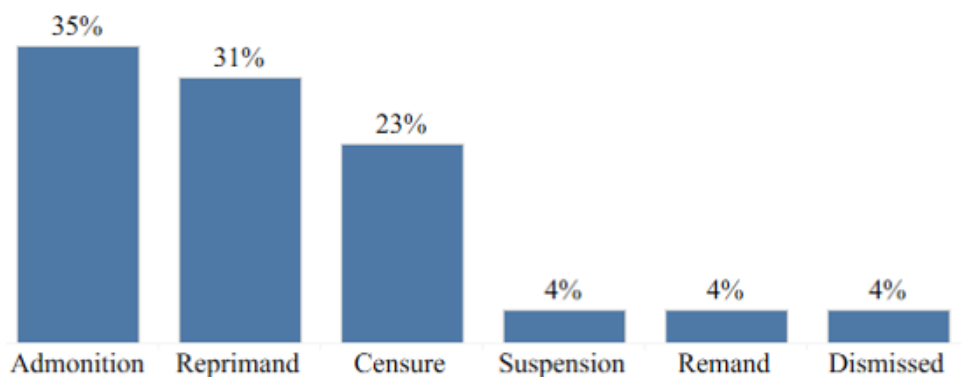
Motions for discipline by consent are governed by R. 1:20-10(b), wherein the respondent has consented to a specific recommendation for discipline. The Board may accept the motion and the recommended discipline or deny the motion and the disciplinary proceeding will resume, as if no motion had been filed.

Of the twenty-six motions for discipline by consent, the Board recommended discipline in twenty-four matters. Of the twenty-four matters, 35% consented to admonitions, 31% consented to reprimands (or such lesser discipline as the

⁵ Two matters presented to the Board in 2023 on motions for final discipline were remanded to the trier of fact for limited evidentiary hearings. Both matters were then brought before the Board in March 2025 and resolved in May 2025.

Board deems appropriate), and 23% consented to censures (or such lesser discipline as the Board deems appropriate).

Of the remaining two motions, the Board dismissed one (4%) and remanded the other (4%) for a new ethics hearing.

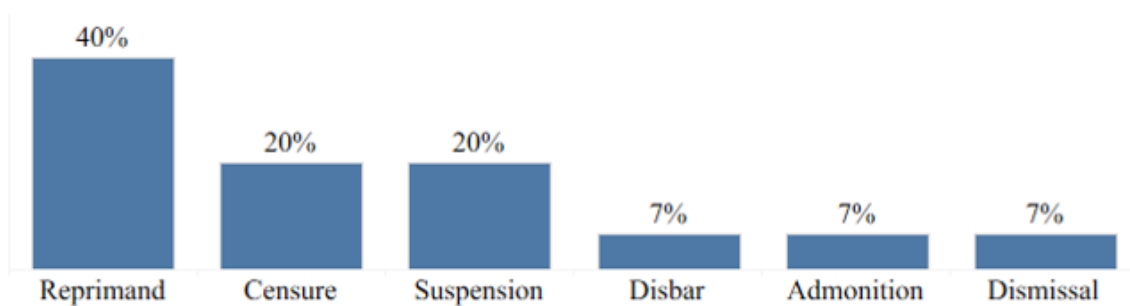


Stipulations

For stipulations, the parties enter into a Disciplinary Stipulation, wherein the attorney admits not only the improper conduct but also the relevant violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct. In this fashion, the hearing process is bypassed, and the matter proceeds to the Board for its review of whether the stipulated facts constitute unethical conduct and support the admitted Rule violations. Stipulations differ from motions for discipline by consent to the extent that the parties do not agree on a form of discipline and, therefore, leave the issue of the suitable quantum of discipline (including any conditions) solely to the Board's determination.

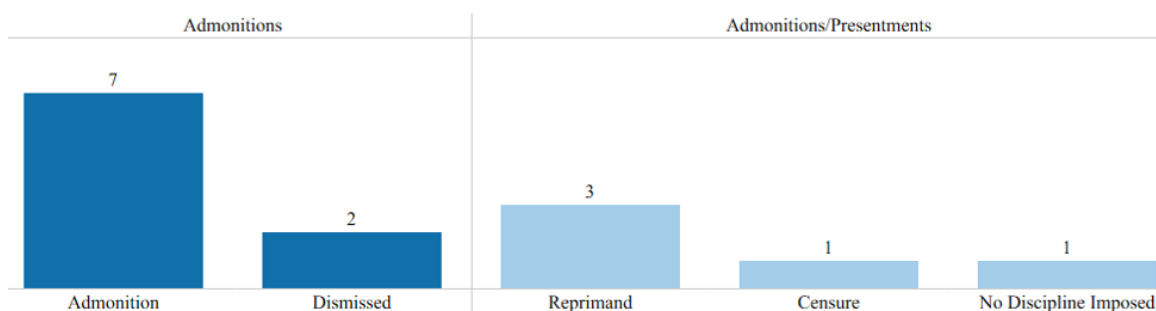
Of the fifteen stipulations filed in 2025, the Board resolved fourteen matters. The majority (40%) of the matters resulted in reprimands, followed by censures (20%) and suspensions (20%), with terms ranging from three months to two years. In one matter, the Board recommended to the Court that the attorney be disbarred.

The remaining matter was dismissed by the Board after the Office of Attorney Ethics withdrew the Disciplinary Stipulation.



Admonitions

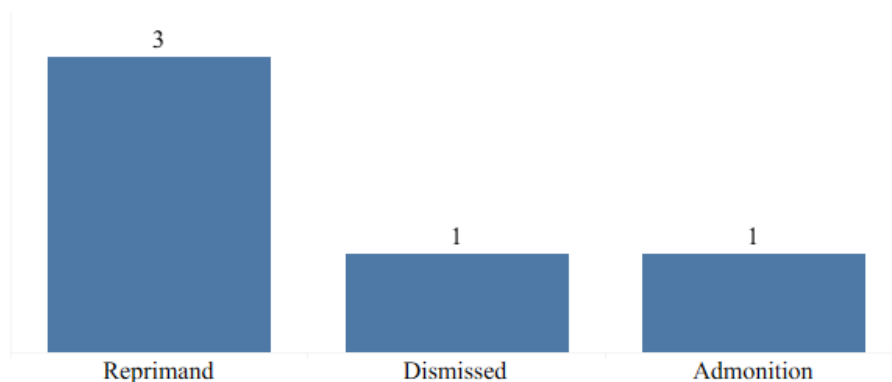
The Board reviewed fourteen admonition matters. Of these, seven matters resulted in letters of admonition, five matters were treated as presentments, resulting in three reprimands, one censure, and one matter in which no discipline was imposed. The last two matters were dismissed.



No Genuine Dispute Submissions

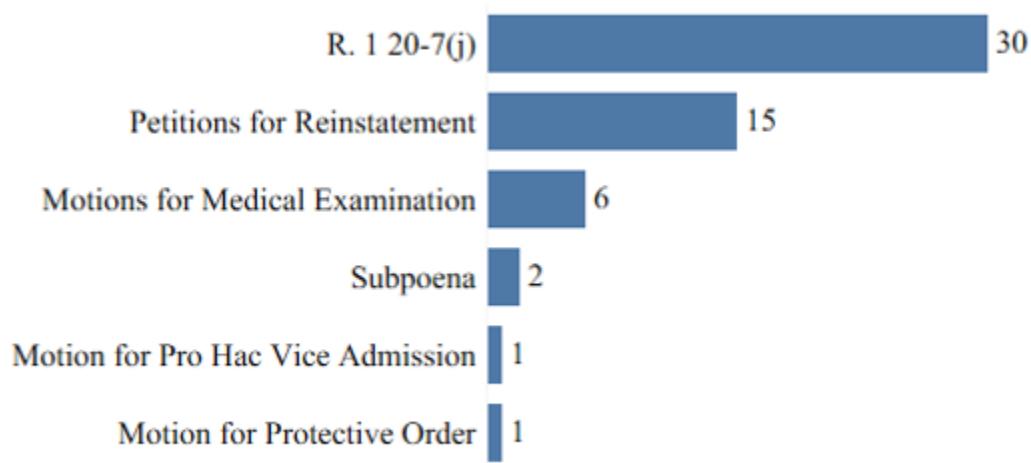
In matters submitted pursuant to R. 1:20-6(c)(1), where no dispute of material fact is raised by the pleadings, because the respondent's answer admits all the factual allegations of the complaint, and neither the respondent nor the presenter requests a hearing in mitigation or aggravation, the pleadings are sent to the Board and discipline, if any, may be imposed.

There were five matters submitted to the Board where no dispute of material fact was raised. Of those five matters, three resulted in reprimands, one was dismissed, and one resulted in a letter of admonition.



Miscellaneous Matters

The Board also determined thirty R. 1:20-7(j) matters, fifteen petitions for reinstatement; six motions for medical examinations; two subpoenas; one motion for pro hac vice admission and one motion for a protective order.



Affidavits of Consent to Disbar

There were ten matters in which the respondent consented to disbarment. Pursuant to R. 1:20-10(a), “an attorney against whom a grievance has been filed may submit a consent to disbarment. . . through the Director [of the Office of Attorney Ethics] who [will submit] the consent . . . together with a report and recommendation [directly to the Supreme Court].” The Board does not perform

a de novo review of consents to disbarment.

Appeals (Ethics and Fee Combined)

The Board carried nineteen appeals into January 2025 and docketed 105 new appeals, for a total of 124 appeals, a 4% decrease from 2024. The Board disposed of ninety-four appeals (ethics and fee combined), leaving a total of thirty appeals pending on December 31, 2025.

	Carried	Docketed	Total Appeals	Disposed	Pending
2024	31	98	129	110	19
2025	19	105	124	94	30

Specifically, the Board reviewed fifty-one ethics appeals. Of the fifty-one appeals reviewed, the Board dismissed forty-seven appeals (92%) and remanded four (8%).



Of the forty-three fee appeals reviewed, the Board dismissed thirty-five appeals (81%) and remanded eight (18%) to the District Fee Arbitration Committees.



All ethics and fee arbitration appeals have a three-month resolution goal. In 2025, the Board met its time goal in 100% of appeals.

***Average Resolution Times for DRB Appeal Cases
2020-2025 (In Months)***

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<i>Ethics Appeals</i>	5.3	3.4	3.3	3.2	2.2	2.4
<i>Fee Appeals</i>	3.6	3.4	2.9	2.6	2.6	2.5
<i>Total Average</i>	4.5	3.4	3.1	2.9	2.4	2.5

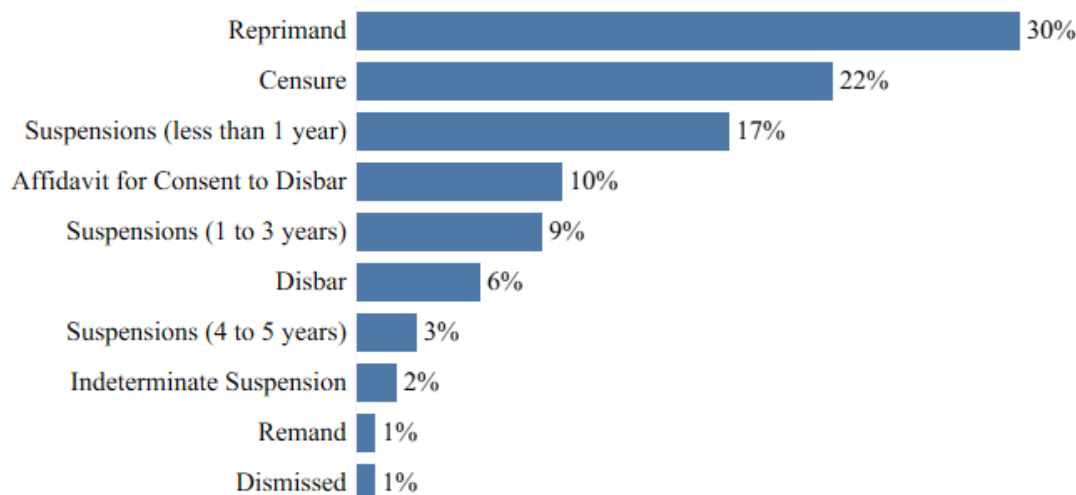
Action by the Supreme Court

As required by relevant Court Rule, The Board submits certain final decisions to the Court. The Court then determines the disposition of the matter and issues a corresponding final Order. In some matters, the Court may decide to supplement the record by the filing of briefs and by oral argument.

During 2025, the Court issued an order to show cause involving nineteen matters. Of the nineteen matters, four matters were docketed in 2023, twelve in 2024 and three in 2025.

	2023	2024	2025
<i>Disbar</i>	1	5	3
<i>Indeterminate Suspension</i>	1	2	
<i>Censure</i>	1	1	
<i>5-Year Suspension</i>	1	1	
<i>Dismissed as Moot</i>		1	
<i>3-Year Suspension</i>		1	
<i>3-Month Suspension</i>		1	

In 2025, the Court decided 105 matters. Of the 105 matters, 30% were reprimands, followed by censures (22%), and three-month suspensions (14%). The Court also approved ten disbarments by consent.



The Court agreed with the Board's determination in 94 matters, constituting 90% of final Court Orders. However, the Court disagreed with the Board's recommendation in eleven matters.⁶ Of those, the Court imposed a lesser quantum of discipline in ten (or 90%) of those matters. The Court imposed a higher quantum of discipline in one matter.

DRB Docket No.	DRB Final Action	Supreme Court Final Discipline
23-141	Disbar	4-Year Suspension
23-254	Disbar	5-Year Suspension
23-265	6-Month Suspension	Censure
24-044	3-Month Suspension	Indeterminate Suspension
24-061 & 25-041	1-Year Suspension	3-Month Suspension
24-082	Disbar	5-Year Suspension
24-087	2-Year Suspension	1-Year Suspension
24-140	3-Year Suspension	2-Year Suspension
24-150	6-Month Suspension	Censure
24-271	Disbar	Indeterminate Suspension
24-292	3-Month Suspension	Censure

⁶ The Board issued a consolidated decision related to DRB Docket Nos. 24-061 and 25-041.

Collection of Administrative and Actual Costs

The Board assesses the reimbursement of administrative costs and actual expenses to the Disciplinary Oversight Committee (the DOC) in all disciplinary cases by way of the Supreme Court's final Order or the Board's Letter of Admonition. Following the adoption of R. 1:20-17 in 1995, as modified in 2004, administrative costs have included a standardized fee, based upon the case type, ranging from \$650 to \$2,000, plus expenditures advanced by the disciplinary system, such as transcripts, court reporter services, fees to compensate SEAs, and file reproduction costs.

The OBC invoices and collects these assigned costs on behalf of the DOC. R. 1:20-17 authorizes several methods of enforcement when an attorney does not timely remit assessed costs, including temporary suspension and entry of judgment. Judgments are revived prior to their twenty-year expiration. When available, the OBC will petition for the release of funds belonging to the respondent that are held in the Superior Court Trust Fund to offset any unpaid balance.

During calendar year 2025, the OBC assessed disciplined attorneys a total of \$306,764.64, in 131 matters, and collected \$210,017.31.

In 2025, the OBC filed seven motions for temporary suspension against attorneys who failed to timely pay the imposed costs in full. Fifty-three judgments were submitted, totaling \$142,859.90, and payments totaling \$22,532.12 were received toward outstanding judgments.

The OBC also collects payments of monetary sanctions that the Board imposes on attorneys, typically when the OAE files a motion for temporary suspension to enforce a fee arbitration award. The Board imposed sixteen such sanctions in 2025, totaling \$8,000. Six sanctions were satisfied, totaling \$5,000 paid.

Conclusion

The Board continues to carry out its responsibilities with impartiality, promptness, and integrity. The OBC remains dedicated to efficiently screening, docketing, and managing cases filed with the Board, while adhering to the directives of the Court, administrative guidelines, and established legal precedent. Furthermore, the OBC is committed to seeking and implementing

staffing and procedural improvements aimed at increasing efficiency and advancing the Board's mission to resolve all matters under its jurisdiction promptly and fairly. These initiatives, coupled with the unwavering dedication of the Board, are poised to uphold public protection and preserve confidence in the legal profession in New Jersey.



STUART RABNER
CHIEF JUSTICE

HEATHER JOY BAKER
CLERK OF THE SUPREME COURT

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