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June 21, 2021

Prominent Attorneys Call for Reversal of DC Bar's Dismissal of Ethics Complaint Against Former Attorney General William Barr

WASHINGTON, DC – Signatories of the [ethics complaint against former Attorney General William Barr](#) are urging the D.C. Board on Professional Responsibility to reverse the Office of Disciplinary Counsel's (ODC) refusal to open an investigation into alleged misconduct committed by the former Attorney General. The comprehensive complaint, filed by twenty-seven prominent attorneys, including four former presidents of the DC Bar, alleged multiple violations of ethics rules committed by Barr when he served as Attorney General, including deliberate efforts to whitewash the Mueller report.

In declining to open an investigation of Barr, the ODC stated that the office generally “will not intervene in matters that are currently and publicly being discussed in the national political arena.” The ODC also argued that complainants lacked “personal knowledge of the facts or allegations.”

In response, Lawyers Defending American Democracy has appealed to Matthew Kaiser, the chair of the Board on Professional Responsibility in the form of a letter. The Board has supervisory authority over the Office of Disciplinary Counsel.

To read the appeal to Mr. Kaiser, please click [here](#).

“The ODC’s refusal to substantively respond to our thirty-seven paged complaint that details numerous ethical violations by the former Attorney General in plain sight of the entire country violates the mandate to Disciplinary Counsel set forth in D.C Bar Rule XI ‘to investigate all matters involving alleged misconduct by an attorney . . . which may come to the attention of Disciplinary Counsel . . . from any source whatsoever, where the apparent facts, if true, may warrant discipline,’” states **Gershon (Gary) Ratner, a prominent signer, co-founder of Lawyers Defending American Democracy, and former HUD Associate General Counsel for Litigation.**

“The ODC’s non-intervention policy effectively provides immunity to DC lawyers working on national ‘political’ issues,” he continued.

In urging the ODC to take action, the letter warns that a policy that refuses to investigate complaints of misconduct against public figures undermines public confidence in the integrity of the disciplinary process governing the legal profession.

“Gross misconduct by members of the bar—be they private attorneys or the Attorney General of the United States—seriously stains the reputation of the legal profession with the general public, and also, no doubt, tempts other lawyers to skirt ethical boundaries,” the letter states. “Even worse, the aroma of a special immunity to protect lawyers in the political class from having to conform to the code of professional responsibility is even more corrosive and should be unacceptable to the board.”

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