

SUPREME COURT OF LOUISIANA

NO. 2025-B-1474

DEC 11 2025

IN RE: CLEOPHUS WASHINGTON

ATTORNEY DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDING

JW

PER CURIAM

The instant disciplinary proceeding arises from a motion to revoke probation filed by the Office of Disciplinary Counsel (“ODC”) against respondent, Cleophus Washington,¹ for his failure to comply with the conditions of probation imposed in *In re: Washington*, 24-1367 (La. 12/27/24), 397 So. 3d 842 (“*Washington I*”).

UNDERLYING FACTS AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The record in *Washington I* demonstrated that respondent was arrested on drug possession charges in 2022. The District Attorney offered respondent a diversion, which he accepted.

Following an evaluation facilitated by the Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program (“JLAP”), respondent was admitted to an intensive outpatient treatment program at Palmetto Addiction Recovery Center. Respondent successfully completed the program in July 2024 and was discharged with a diagnosis of cannabis use disorder, moderate, in remission. On August 6, 2024, respondent executed a five-year JLAP recovery agreement.

Prior to the filing of formal charges against him, respondent and the ODC submitted a joint petition for consent discipline addressing respondent’s criminal

¹ On May 28, 2025, respondent was declared ineligible to practice law for failure to comply with his mandatory continuing legal education requirements. As of September 2, 2025, he is also ineligible for failure to pay his bar dues and the disciplinary assessment and for failure to file a trust account disclosure form.

conduct. In the petition, the parties proposed that respondent be suspended from the practice of law for one year, fully deferred, subject to a period of probation that coincides with the term of his JLAP recovery agreement. We accepted the petition for consent discipline on December 27, 2024. Our order in *Washington I* provided that “[a]ny failure of respondent to comply with the terms of the [JLAP] agreement may be grounds for making the deferred suspension executory, or imposing additional discipline, as appropriate.”

On February 14, 2025, respondent executed a probation agreement (effective February 24, 2025). The agreement states, in pertinent part, that respondent shall:

1. Comply with the terms of the JLAP agreement executed on August 6, 2024;
2. Fulfill the terms of any subsequent agreements he may make with JLAP;
3. Acknowledge and agree that the executive director of JLAP is authorized to provide the ODC with quarterly reports documenting his compliance with the agreement;
4. Promptly respond to all requests by and make himself reasonably available for conferences with the ODC;
5. Timely provide any waivers of confidentiality to the ODC as necessary to enable the ODC to monitor his compliance with the Rules of Professional Conduct and the probation agreement;
6. Comply with all bar membership requirements, including maintaining current knowledge in the law by satisfying all MCLE requirements, timely paying all Louisiana State Bar Association membership dues and disciplinary board annual disciplinary fee assessments, and timely registering his client trust account information annually; and
7. Acknowledge that any violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct and/or the probation agreement may result in summary revocation of his probation

and making the deferred suspension executory and/or may result in the imposition of additional discipline as deemed appropriate.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS

On September 25, 2025, the ODC filed the instant motion to revoke probation and to make the deferred suspension imposed in *Washington I* executory. The ODC alleged that respondent failed to comply with his JLAP monitoring agreement, his probation agreement, and the court's order in *Washington I*, as follows:

1. Respondent was discharged from JLAP monitoring on September 10, 2025 and his file was closed due to non-compliance with his JLAP recovery agreement.
2. Respondent had not submitted to random drug and alcohol screenings since May 2025 and had not provided self-reports or AA logs to JLAP since April 2025. JLAP had also not received monitor reports.
3. Respondent failed to comply with any of Palmetto's recommendations, including that he follow up with his primary care physician, return to Palmetto for small group and mirroring, and schedule appointments with Palmetto's medical director, Michael McCormick, M.D., on a regular basis.
4. JLAP and the ODC made many attempts to contact respondent, but he failed to respond. When the ODC finally reached respondent by phone on September 3, 2025, he stated that he was unwilling to complete the required conditions of probation.

Accordingly, the ODC prayed for revocation of respondent's probation and the imposition of the previously deferred one-year suspension, or, alternatively, the imposition of additional discipline, as appropriate. Respondent failed to file an answer to the ODC's request to revoke probation.

Hearing on Revocation of Probation

This matter proceeded to a hearing before a hearing committee on November 5, 2025. Respondent did not appear at the hearing. No testimony was taken, but the ODC introduced documentary evidence into the record.

Hearing Committee Recommendation

On November 20, 2025, the hearing committee filed its report in this court, recommending the ODC's motion to revoke probation be granted. The committee made findings of fact consistent with the underlying facts set forth above, and found the ODC presented sufficient evidence to demonstrate that respondent violated the court's order in *Washington I* and his probation agreement.

Accordingly, the committee recommended that respondent's probation be revoked and that the deferred one-year suspension imposed in *Washington I* be made executory. The committee also recommended that respondent not be allowed to apply for reinstatement until he has been re-evaluated by a JLAP-approved facility and complied with JLAP recommendations. The committee further recommended that he be assessed with all costs and expenses of these proceedings.

Neither respondent nor the ODC filed any response to the hearing committee's recommendation.

DISCUSSION

A review of the record supports a finding that respondent has not complied with the requirements set forth in the probation agreement he executed on February 14, 2025. To protect the public, we believe it is necessary to revoke respondent's probation and impose the previously deferred suspension.

Accordingly, we will accept the hearing committee's recommendation and grant the motion to revoke respondent's probation, making the one-year suspension

imposed in *Washington I* immediately executory. Before seeking reinstatement, respondent shall provide the court with a letter from the Executive Director of JLAP confirming that he has been re-evaluated by a JLAP-approved facility and has complied with the recommendations of JLAP.

DECREE

For the reasons assigned, respondent's probation is revoked and the previously deferred one-year suspension imposed in *In re: Washington*, 24-1367 (La. 12/27/24), 397 So. 3d 842, is hereby made immediately executory. Before being reinstated pursuant to Supreme Court Rule XIX, § 23, in addition to complying with all other requirements set forth in § 23, respondent shall provide the court with a letter from the Executive Director of the Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program confirming that he has been re-evaluated by a JLAP-approved facility and has complied with the recommendations of JLAP. All costs and expenses in the matter are assessed against respondent, Cleophus Washington, Louisiana Bar Roll number 38491, in accordance with Supreme Court Rule XIX, § 10.1, with legal interest to commence thirty days from the date of finality of this court's judgment until paid.