Immigration Bar has Zero Tolerance for
Fraud upon the Public

WASHINGTON, DC – Any conviction of an immigration attorney for participating in or engaging in criminal conduct using his or her immigration practice as a front for illegal immigration schemes is an intolerable taint on the immigration bar. The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) strongly condemns such actions, especially when the conduct could derail the dreams of foreign nationals attempting to enter the United States (U.S.) lawfully to live permanently or to work temporarily in this country. Convictions of an immigration attorney for fraudulent immigration schemes undermines public confidence in the rule of law, and erodes the reputation of responsible and ethical immigration lawyers everywhere, who are providing excellent and reputable services to foreign nationals seeking to immigrate to the U.S. and to the U.S. citizens, legal permanent residents, and businesses who sponsor such immigrants and nonimmigrants.

AILA is the national association of immigration lawyers (representing over 10,000 members), founded more than 60 years ago to promote justice, advocate for fair and reasonable immigration law and policy, advance the quality of immigration and nationality law and practice, and enhance the professional development of its members.

Compliance with our immigration laws and excellence in the practice of immigration law are at the heart of AILA's work. AILA members are well aware of their responsibility to provide immigrants with all available legal protections and benefits, and to ensure compliance with the law. There is absolutely no room for misrepresentations or fraud of any kind in the practice of law.

The commission of fraud in the immigration law context is particularly egregious because of the severe adverse consequences to employers, to our nation's economy, and to foreign nationals themselves when such allegations are true. The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) currently is processing tens of thousands of *bona fide* labor certification applications annually, filed by U.S. employers who require the essential services of foreign workers. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and U.S. Department of State (DOS) consular offices abroad are processing hundreds of thousands of applications and petitions for temporary work authorization and lawful permanent resident status.

All of these applications and petitions, as well as the needs of our nation's economy and of our nation's families, are stymied by fraudulent applications to DOL, USCIS, or to DOS. What is more, foreign nationals victimized by fraudulent applications not only lose substantial sums of money, but in many instances also lose the ability to live lawfully in our great nation. There are few losses more devastating to an immigrant. As noted by the U.S. Supreme Court*:
"Deportation may be a penalty more severe than a prison sentence. Deportation may result*

in families being divided or in "loss of property or life; or of all that makes life worthwhile." [1]
"It has been called "a savage penalty," "a life sentence of exile." [2]

AILA is committed to the highest standards of ethical immigration law practice. We will assist any individual who has been defrauded by an attorney to contact the licensing bar association to obtain information about how to pursue a formal complaint. We will promptly expel any member who is convicted of fraud, according to our long-standing bylaws, which preclude AILA membership to any attorney who is convicted of a felony or disbarred or suspended from the practice of law. And we will continue to make ethics education an essential part of our core continuing legal education programs.

AILA strongly upholds the finest traditions of America, a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants.

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[1] *Ng Fung Ho v. White*, 259 U.S. 276, 284, 42 S. Ct. 492, 495, 66 L. Ed. 938 (1922).

[2] *Jordan v. De George*, 341 U.S. 223, 243, 71 S. Ct. 703, 714, 95 L. Ed. 886 (1951) (Jackson, J., dissenting).