

SUPREME COURT OF RHODE ISLAND

In the Matter of Jesse W. Duarte

No. 2026-68-M.P. · No. No. 2026-68-M.P. · Decided April 30, 2026

SUMMARY

The Rhode Island Supreme Court suspended Jesse W. Duarte from practicing law in the state effective immediately and until further order. The suspension followed his failure to answer a disciplinary complaint and his willful failure to comply with a prior court order directing him to file an answer.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of Rhode Island
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Per curiam; Suttell, C.J.; Goldberg, J.; Robinson, J.; Lynch Prata, J.; Long, J.
JURISDICTION	Rhode Island Supreme Court
DECIDED	April 30, 2026
DOCKET	No. 2026-68-M.P.
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The Supreme Court of Rhode Island considered Disciplinary Counsel's petition under Article III, Rule 6(e), requesting an order compelling respondent to answer a disciplinary complaint. After respondent failed to comply with a prior reprimand and order directing him to answer, the Court suspended him from the practice of law.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published disciplinary order; no general precedential treatment stated in the opinion.
PARTIES	Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Jesse W. Duarte

TOPICS

- sanctions
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

- attorney discipline
- legal ethics
- professional responsibility

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the respondent should be suspended from the practice of law after failing to answer a disciplinary complaint and willfully defying the Court's order directing him to file an answer.

HOLDINGS

1. A respondent who fails to file an answer to a disciplinary complaint after being ordered to do so and warned that noncompliance will result in suspension may be suspended from engaging in the practice of law until further order of the Court.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The respondent has failed to file his answer and is in willful defiance of this Court’s order.” (1)

“Accordingly, it is ordered that the respondent, Jesse W. Duarte, is suspended from engaging in the practice of law in this state, effective immediately, and until further order of this Court.” (1)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Duarte failed to answer a disciplinary complaint despite receiving several notices requesting an answer. The Court reprimanded him and ordered him to file the answer within ten days, expressly warning that noncompliance would result in suspension. Attempts to serve that order by mail and electronically were returned as undeliverable, and Duarte did not file the required answer.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Disciplinary Counsel filed the petition on March 3, 2026, reporting that Duarte had failed to answer a disciplinary complaint despite several notices. On March 27, 2026, the Court reprimanded Duarte, ordered him to file an answer within ten days, and warned that failure to comply would result in suspension. After service attempts were returned as undeliverable and Duarte still did not answer, the Court entered the present suspension order.

DISPOSITION

other

OPINION

In the Matter of Jesse W. Duarte

PER CURIAM.

Supreme Court No. 2026-68-M.P. In the Matter of Jesse W. Duarte. :

ORDER

On March 3, 2026, this Court’s Disciplinary Counsel filed a petition pursuant to Article III, Rule 6(e) of the Supreme Court Rules of Disciplinary Procedure requesting that the Court order the respondent, Jesse W. Duarte, to file an answer to a disciplinary complaint. Counsel informed us that the respondent had failed to answer the complaint despite several notices being sent requesting that he do so. On March 27, 2026, we entered an order reprimanding the respondent for

his failure to answer that complaint and directing him to file his answer within ten days. The order further provided that his failure to do so would result in his suspension from the practice of law. On the same day, attempts were made to serve the respondent with that order by mail at the address the respondent has on file with this Court and his last known home address and electronically at both email addresses that the respondent has on file with this Court. All mailed and electronic communications have been returned as undeliverable. The respondent has failed to file his answer and is in willful defiance of this Court's order. -1- Accordingly, it is ordered that the respondent, Jesse W. Duarte, is suspended from engaging in the practice of law in this state, effective immediately, and until further order of this Court. Entered as an Order of this Court this 30th day of April 2026. By Order, /s/ Meredith A. Benoit Clerk -2-

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

SUPREME COURT – CLERK'S OFFICE

Licht Judicial Complex 250 Benefit Street Providence, RI 02903

ORDER COVER SHEET

Title of Case In the Matter of Jesse W. Duarte. Case Number No. 2026-68-M.P. Date Order Filed April 30, 2026 Suttell, C.J., Goldberg, Robinson, Lynch Prata, and Justices Long, JJ. Source of Appeal N/A Judicial Officer from Lower Court N/A For Petitioner: Kerry Travers, Esq. Maria R. Lenz, Esq. Attorney(s) on Appeal Office of Disciplinary Counsel For Respondent: Jesse W. Duarte, pro se SU-CMS-02B (revised November 2022)