

SUPREME COURT OF LOUISIANA

NO. 2016-BA-0288

IN RE: COMMITTEE ON BAR ADMISSIONS CFN-1578

KNOLL, J., dissents and assigns reasons:

I respectfully dissent from the majority's decision to grant petitioner a limited license to practice law in this state as in-house counsel for his employer. Petitioner was disbarred in another jurisdiction after he deliberately engaged in a pattern of improper billing practices at his former law firm. As a result of petitioner's dishonest acts, his law firm was required to reimburse the client's losses of more than \$595,000. In my view, petitioner's conduct demonstrates a fundamental lack of moral character. Had petitioner been a practicing attorney in Louisiana at the time of this misconduct, there is no question that he would have been permanently disbarred. *See, e.g., In re: Mitchell*, 13-2688 (La. 5/7/14), 145 So. 3d 305 (attorney permanently disbarred for submitting \$23,212 in false expense reimbursement requests to his law firm, which in turn charged the expenses to its client); *In re: Moser*, 11-2790 (La. 2/10/12), 81 So. 3d 650 (petition for consent discipline accepted and permanent disbarment imposed upon an attorney who engaged in improper billing practices at two law firms; total monetary loss to the attorney's clients stipulated to be \$10,648).

The mere fact petitioner is seeking a limited license to practice law is of no moment. Supreme Court Rule XVII, § 14(A)(1)(f)(2) provides in-house counsel are required to satisfy the same standards of character and fitness as all other applicants for admission to the Louisiana bar.

As explained in my concurrence in *In re: Hinson-Lyles*, 02-2578 (La. 12/3/03), 864 So. 2d 108, "... it is a mockery of our rules to allow someone to

apply for admission when the undisputed conduct at issue is a recommended ground for permanent disbarment.” Considering petitioner’s egregious conduct, I see absolutely no basis for granting him admission to the bar in this state in any capacity.