

Move Begins For Agnew's Disbarment

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The Maryland State Bar Association has voted to take disciplinary action aimed at disbarment of former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew, Bar officials said yesterday.

The Maryland Bar's 25-member board of governors voted Thursday evening by a lopsided margin to file promptly a petition in Montgomery County Circuit Court for a court hearing to consider Agnew's disbarment.

If disbarred, Agnew would be prohibited from practicing law in Maryland or anywhere else in the United States. The Bar's action is a major step in the formal disbarment process.

Agnew was represented at the meeting of the state bar's board of governors by George Cochran Doub, a Baltimore lawyer and former U.S. attorney, who spoke for about 10 minutes in defense of the former Vice President.

Presenting the bar's case against Agnew at the Baltimore meeting was Thomas Howell, chairman of the state bar's grievance committee, which had considered the charges against Agnew at a

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meeting on Monday at which Doub also was present.

As a result of Thursday's action, Norman P. Ramsey, state bar president, was authorized to appoint one or two lawyers to represent the Bar in its action against Agnew.

Agnew resigned as Vice President on Oct. 10, the same day he pleaded no contest to one count of tax evasion in U.S. District Court in Baltimore. Federal prosecutors then released a 40-page account of other allegations of bribery and extortion against Agnew that were dropped by the Justice Department in return for his plea and resignation.

Hal C. B. Clagett, president-elect of the State Bar declined any direct comment yesterday of the Bar's action against Agnew. Earlier, Clagett had said he was certain that the state bar would have to consider disciplinary action against Agnew "to meet its responsibility of maintaining professional standards of ethical conduct."

The state bar's petition calling for disciplinary action against Agnew is to be filed in Montgomery County because Agnew now resides there in the home he purchased in Kenwood last Spring.

Once the bar's petition is filed, the Maryland Court of Appeals will be required to appoint a three-judge panel to hold a hearing and consid-

er action against Agnew. The action could be limited to a reprimand or suspension, but bar officials interviewed yesterday said they expect that Agnew will be disbarred.

The Court of Appeals will have the final decision on what action to take after the

three-judge panel acts.

Clagett said that under Maryland court rules, when disbarment action is brought against a lawyer, the bar does not have to independently prove evidence already established by a "no contest" court decision in which a sentence or fine was imposed. This was the situation in Agnew's Oct. 10 plea.

Agnew could seek to resign from the bar, but would still be disbarred or given a "resignation with prejudice," which would also prevent him from practicing law anywhere in the nation.