

Md. Bar Association Seeks Agnew Action

By Charles A. Krause
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The Maryland Bar Association asked the state's highest court yesterday to take disciplinary action against former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew, alleging that he is guilty of "professional misconduct, crime involving moral turpitude or conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice."

The bar association's petition for disciplinary action, filed with the Maryland Court of Appeals, could lead to Agnew's temporary suspension from practice or permanent disbarment. The bar association did not ask for a specific penalty but requested only that the appeals court take whatever action "it may deem appropriate."

The bar association could have asked for disbarment, according to Alfred L. Scanlan, one of three attorneys who signed the petition, but chose to follow tradition and leave to the Court of Appeals the decision as to what penalty, if any, should be imposed.

Scanlan, who will argue the bar association's case at an as-yet-unscheduled court hearing on the petition, said that "if we were asked, we would convey the board of governors' position" regarding a specific penalty for Agnew. He refused to say what that position is.

Scanlan said that under the state's rules and procedures, the disciplinary petition had to be filed with the Court of Appeals in Annapolis rather than the Montgomery County Circuit Court, as earlier reports had indicated. The bar association's 25-member board of governors voted to file the petition at a meeting last Thursday.

James Norris, clerk of the appellate court, said a panel of three or more state circuit or district court judges will be appointed promptly by the Court of Appeals to hear arguments on the bar association petition.

The panel will then recommend a course of action to the



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appeals court, which will make the final determination regarding any penalty of the former vice president. Norris said Agnew will receive a copy of the bar association's petition as soon as the panel is appointed by the Court of Appeals.

In its petition, the bar association said it was asking for disciplinary action against Agnew because of his no contest plea to one count of income tax evasion. Agnew resigned as vice president moments before entering his plea on Oct. 10 in U.S. District Court in Baltimore.

At the same time, federal prosecutors 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. Agnew was fined \$10,000 and placed on probation after he pleaded no contest to the income tax evasion charge.

A copy of the Justice Department document was attached to the bar association petition filed yesterday. Agnew was admitted to the Maryland bar in 1947 and, if disbarred, would be prohibited from practicing law anywhere in the United States.