



SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

June 30, 2026

Office of Disciplinary Counsel
District of Columbia Court of Appeals
515 5th Street NW
Building A, Suite 117
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Bar Complaint—Sparkle L. Sooknanan

To Whom It May Concern:

This complaint addresses possible violations of the D.C. Rules of Professional Conduct by Judge Sparkle L. Sooknanan originating from her practice prior to her time on the federal bench, including at the Department of Justice (DOJ) Civil Rights Division as Deputy Associate Attorney General and Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General. In January 2025, Sooknanan received her commission as a United States District Judge for the District of Columbia and is an active member of the D.C. Bar.¹ These possible violations concern her potential dishonesty, deceit, and conduct that may have interfered with the administration of justice while employed at the DOJ.

On April 14, 2026, the DOJ released “The Biden Administration's Weaponization of the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act” Report (Weaponization Report).² The Weaponization Report was based on over 700,000 internal records and shows, among other things, that then-DOJ senior official Sparkle Sooknanan participated in and encouraged a pattern of partisan prosecution under the FACE Act.

First, the Weaponization Report indicates that Sooknanan was involved in discussions and actions supporting vigorous FACE Act prosecution against pro-life protesters for protected speech and assembly, while downplaying or ignoring threats of violence against pro-life pregnancy resource centers and houses of worship. Emails show Sooknanan utilizing DOJ-colleague Sanjay Patel’s presentations to abortion industry groups (*e.g.*, National Abortion Federation) on leveraging federal resources against pro-life speech.³ Sooknanan requested the

¹ D.C. Bar, Member Directory, accessed June 15, 2026, <https://my.dcbbar.org/directorymemberships?id=0014z00001kYqouAAC>.

² U.S. Department of Justice, “The Biden Administration's Weaponization of the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act,” April 16, 2026, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-reveals-biden-administrations-weaponization-federal-law-against-pro-life>.

³ *Ibid*, 645.



presentation materials and linked to narratives framing post-*Dobbs* protestors as “anti-abortion extremists.”⁴

Second, in regard to Mark Houck, a father of seven in Pennsylvania whose home was raided by the FBI despite Houck’s offers to self-surrender for abortion-center protests, Sooknanan gave her “many thanks” to the FBI-raid and subsequent-prosecution teams.⁵

Third, Sooknanan participated in standing meetings and coordination with organizations like the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), granting them influence over federal civil-rights enforcement.⁶ This included quarterly meetings and efforts to direct prosecutorial priorities against perceived “hate” groups, often conservatives or Christians. The DOJ-SPLC coordination conflated government power and special interests, thus undermining the electoral, democratic counterbalance on federal prosecution.

Fourth, the Weaponization Report indicates Sooknanan avoided compiling statistics for congressional testimony regarding FACE Act prosecutions amid broader concerns of selective enforcement.⁷

Taken as a whole, this pattern of behaviors evinces an entanglement of private-party special interests in what is supposed to be a holistic, democratically elected justice system. Per the Weaponization Report, Sooknanan, during her time as a senior official at the DOJ, spearheaded this injustice to the American people.

Further, public records indicate that Sooknanan may have lied to Senators during her confirmation hearings. According to *The American Prospect*, when asked whether she was lead counsel on a highly controversial litigation handled during her time at Jones Day, Sooknanan responded “I was not lead counsel.”⁸ However, contemporaneous-to-the-litigation press releases by Jones Day stated that Sooknanan “was leading the team,” and Sooknanan listed herself as “Counsel of Record” in filings to the Supreme Court regarding the same litigation.⁹

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⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid, 837.

⁶ House Judiciary GOP, *Partisan and Profitable: The SPLC’s Influence on Federal Civil Rights Policy* 53:15 (YouTube, Dec. 16, 2025), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrLwCyT08lo>.

⁷ Weaponization Report, 708–09.

⁸ David Dayden, “Biden Nominee Asked About Discrepancies in Testimony,” *The American Prospect*, April 5, 2024, <https://prospect.org/2024/04/05/2024-04-05-biden-nominee-sooknanan-testimony/>.

⁹ Ibid.



decisions impacting people’s lives lies in the hands of individuals elected by their constituents.

In D.C., it is misconduct for a lawyer to “[e]ngage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation.”¹⁰ A D.C. lawyer additionally may not “[e]ngage in conduct that seriously interferes with the administration of justice.”¹¹

Sooknanan’s conduct at the DOJ appears to directly implicate the Rules designed to promote honesty and justice. First, the constituents of the DOJ – the whole of the American people – greatly rely on the principle that “no man is above the law.” However, Sooknanan’s time at the DOJ is marred by the opposite. During her tenure, DOJ FACE Act prosecutions overwhelmingly brought the hammer down on pro-life protestors but routinely ignored pro-abortion activities involving violence. This was no accident; the Weaponization Report identifies that Sooknanan was aware of this selective enforcement as a central, active participant.¹²

Sooknanan’s possible deceit was not confined to her law-enforcement responsibilities, however. The Weaponization Report shows that, on the suspicion of Congressmen, DOJ officials were called to testify about biased FACE Act prosecutions, and Sooknanan evaded compiling crucial statistics pursuant to congressional oversight.¹³

Sooknanan’s prosecutorial prejudice was also not limited to emails. For Americans like Mark Houck, Sooknanan’s bias became a living nightmare. Sooknanan encouraged and requested further action and updates regarding the targeted raid on an unarmed citizen’s family home. She further provided a special forum for special-interest groups like the SPLC to have unique, and inappropriate, access to influencing federal law enforcement. Sooknanan’s behaviors regarding Houck and elevating the SPLC, whose business model is premised on identifying people like Houck it believes should be punished, seriously interfere with the administration of justice.

Lastly, the discrepancy between Sooknanan’s sworn testimony before the Senate for her confirmation hearings and the public records available indicate that Sooknanan likely deceived the Senate regarding the scope of her involvement in highly controversial litigation. The D.C. Bar prohibits these sorts of misrepresentations for a reason—so that clients, peer attorneys, and judges have trust that all are operating with candor. Sooknanan’s lies before the Senate call into question her honesty, and the fact that her lies come against a backdrop of

¹⁰ DC Bar Rules of Professional Conduct Rule 8.4(c). <https://www.dcbbar.org/For-Lawyers/Legal-Ethics/Rules-of-Professional-Conduct/Maintaining-the-Integrity-of-the-Profession/Misconduct>

¹¹ DC Bar Rules of Professional Conduct Rule 8.4(d).

¹² Weaponization Report, p. 837.

¹³ Weaponization Report, p. 708-09



deceitful and prejudicial conduct while in the DOJ underscores the imperative of investigating Sooknanan.

The American people deserve a legal system free from partisan weaponization. Sooknanan's record demonstrates that she places politics above honesty and justice and may have violated several D.C. Rules of Professional Conduct in doing so. Accountability is essential, and we urge you to open an investigation in hopes of returning the power of *all* three branches of government back to the people—the same people who hope for impartial judges, advocate in front of them, and expect them to have practiced consistently with the Rules of Professional Conduct.

Sincerely,

Houston Keene

Director

Democracy Restored

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