

Professor Eastman Accused of Spreading Misinformation About Elections, Prompting Capitol Rioters

Former Chapman University law professor John Eastman is facing disciplinary charges in California for his role in the events leading up to the Capitol riot on January 6, 2021. The State Bar of California's Office of Chief Trial Counsel has filed 11 counts of misconduct against Eastman and is seeking disbarment. The charges against Eastman stem from his efforts to overturn the 2020 presidential election and his false statements that helped incite the rioters at the Capitol building.

At a "Stop the Steal" rally shortly before the Capitol riot, Eastman made false claims about the election results. He claimed that voting machines had secret folders that manipulated the results, that dead people had voted, and that Vice President Mike Pence was not qualified for his office because he did not delay the electoral vote count. These false claims were later found to be without the evidence. Despite this, Eastman continued working with former President Donald Trump and others to spread false information about the election.

In addition to his false statements, Eastman wrote two legal memos that provided scenarios that could be used to change the election results. However, these memos needed to be supported by historical records or established legal authority. The charges against Eastman also allege that he violated his duty to uphold the Constitution and the laws of the United States and sought to mislead courts in election litigation.

Eastman's legal counsel, Randall A. Miller, has stated in response to the bar charges, disputing "every aspect" of the complaint. Miller claims numerous legislators had raised severe allegations of vote fraud and that Eastman was representing Trump in the election's aftermath. He also argues that the bar complaint is part of a nationwide effort to use the bar discipline process to penalize attorneys who opposed the current administration in the presidential election.

Despite these defenses, the notice of disciplinary charges alleges that Eastman committed acts of moral turpitude or dishonesty. The moral turpitude counts are based on Eastman's false statements in his legal memos, court documents, media interviews, his speech on January 6, 2021, and an email intended to pressure Pence.

The charges against Eastman highlight the importance of maintaining ethical standards in the legal profession. Attorneys are responsible for upholding the Constitution and the laws of the United States and avoiding making false or misleading statements. In this case, Eastman's actions are alleged to have contributed to a dangerous and violent event, and the bar is taking appropriate action to hold him accountable for his actions.

Overall, the case against John Eastman serves as a reminder of the consequences that can result from spreading false information and engaging in unethical behavior. It is crucial for attorneys and all individuals to take responsibility for their actions and to hold themselves to high standards of integrity and truth-telling.

REFERENCES:

Law prof Eastman's false statements about election helped provoke Capitol rioters, ethics charges say

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