

**Legal Advocacy Group Calls for Investigation into Trump-Linked Lawyer's Capitol Riot Testimony**



A legal advocacy group, The 65 Project, has submitted an informal ethics complaint to the general counsel for the Georgia State Bar, requesting an investigation into former White House ethics lawyer Stefan Passantino for alleged misconduct in his representation of Cassidy Hutchinson. Hutchinson is a former White House aide who became a star witness for the congressional Jan. 6 committee investigating the attack on the U.S. Capitol. The complaint accuses Passantino of attempting to obstruct the House committee's work by advising Hutchinson "to evade questioning and answer dishonestly."

The 65 Project is a nonprofit group that has filed numerous complaints against attorneys accused of aiding Trump's efforts to overturn his defeat in the 2020 election. The organization is led by Michael Teter, a political strategist who heads a group opposing Republican-led House investigations. The complaint alleges that Passantino violated four ethics rules, including regulations that bar attorneys from being influenced by external interests and that mandate clients be informed about outside funding sources.

Passantino, a member of the Georgia bar, split from the law firm Michael Best & Friedrich after Hutchinson's allegations against him became public. According to federal disclosures, he represented Hutchinson as part of his work at the firm Elections LLC, which has received regular payments from Trump-aligned political groups. Passantino denies the allegations and accuses The 65 Project of making "frivolous and ill-informed" claims without direct knowledge of his representation of Hutchinson.

According to transcribed testimony released by the panel, Hutchinson claims that Passantino urged her to "protect" Trump. She told U.S. House investigators in a September 2022 interview that Passantino "was invested in others' interests more than mine" and that he advised her not to remember certain events and not to correct testimony that she feared was false during a break in one deposition. She stated that attorneys in Trump's orbit connected her with Passantino after she struggled to secure an attorney. She also claimed that Passantino refused to tell her who was funding the representation. Still, Garber, Passantino's lawyer, said Hutchinson knew her legal bills were being paid by a "third-party."

The Georgia bar is not required to take any action on the complaint. A bar spokesperson has not responded to a request for comment on the matter. The complaint is the latest in a series of complaints by The 65 Project against attorneys accused of aiding Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 election results. The group has filed scores of complaints against these attorneys. It has been spearheaded by Teter, a political strategist who also leads a group that opposes Republican-led House investigations.

**REFERENCES:**

**Group wants Trump-aligned lawyer investigated over Capitol riot testimony**