

Lawyer Who Falsely Claimed Trump Won in a Landslide Receives Censure for Stolen Election Claims



Jenna Lynn Ellis, a senior legal adviser to former President Donald Trump, has been publicly criticized by the Colorado Supreme Court for violating lawyer ethics rules by making false claims about election fraud. Judge Bryon M. Large imposed the censure on March 8, confirmed in a state supreme court's Office of Attorney Regulation Counsel statement.

Ellis was part of the legal team that challenged President Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 presidential election. Although she was not a counsel of record for lawsuits challenging the results, Ellis made ten public misrepresentations in November and December 2020 as counsel to Trump's re-election campaign and as personal counsel to the former president. These misrepresentations were made on Twitter and through national television appearances, including on shows aired by Fox Business, MSNBC, Fox News, and Newsmax.

The misrepresentations included false claims of voter fraud in multiple states, such as "we have affidavits from witnesses, we have voter intimidation, we have the ballots that were manipulated, we have all kinds of statistics that show that this was a coordinated effort in all of these states to transfer votes either from Trump to Biden, to manipulate the ballots, to count them in secret" and "we know that the election was stolen from President Trump, and we can prove that." Ellis also falsely claimed that President Trump won in a landslide and that over 500,000 votes were cast illegally in Arizona.

Large said in his opinion approving stipulated discipline that Ellis's false claims violated lawyer ethics rules. The public censure imposed on Ellis "reinforces that even if engaged in political speech, there is a line attorneys cannot cross, particularly when speaking in a representative capacity," the Office of Attorney Regulation Counsel said.

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Ellis did not have prior attorney discipline. In a statement provided to CNN, her lawyer Michael Melito said, "My client remains a practicing attorney in good standing in the state of Colorado. In a very heated political climate, we have secured that correct outcome."

The States United Democracy Center filed a complaint with Colorado attorney regulators, seeking an ethics investigation of Ellis. The group's senior counsel, Aaron Scherzer, commented, "Ellis rightly admits that her actions undermined public confidence in our elections. Her lies did lasting damage, and her name will forever be linked to this assault on our democracy."

The public censure imposed on Ellis significantly rebukes her conduct and underscores the importance of lawyer ethics rules. Lawyers must uphold the law and maintain the integrity of the legal profession, and making false claims in public statements can have serious consequences. Ellis's censure warns other attorneys that they must be truthful in their public statements, even in politically charged situations. It also sends a message to the public that the legal profession takes its ethical responsibilities seriously and will hold lawyers accountable for their actions.