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### Allegations Against Attorney Go Back Several Years

## Complaints Against Frank Fernandez Lead To Suspension

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**HONOLULU** -- Ethical and financial complaints against a local attorney go back more than five years, according to investigative files of the Hawaii Supreme Court Office of Disciplinary Counsel.

Frank Fernandez was ordered to stop practicing law Monday as the investigation continues.

Files show the complaints include misappropriation and misuse of client funds, coercion to exact payment and mixing his law practice with Exodus Bail Bonds, which investigators said is owned by Fernandez' wife.

Chief Public Defender Jack Tonaki said defense attorneys hold a position of trust for their clients.

"You're dealing with a person who is in a very vulnerable state both emotionally and legally and it would be highly improper to take advantage of that professionally," Tonaki said.

The disciplinary counsel said a judge ordered Fernandez to keep his bail and legal businesses separate in 2006, but recent complaints said he kept bail money as payment for legal work.

Fernandez has not responded to requests for comment.

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