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January 22, 2026

Office of Lawyers Professional Responsibility  
Minnesota Judicial Center, Suite 105  
25 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

**RE: Complaint regarding Attorney Nekima Valdez Levy Armstrong for potential violation of the Minnesota Rules of Professional Conduct**

To Whom it May Concern,

This complaint addresses potential violations of the Minnesota Rules of Professional Conduct by Attorney Nekima Valdez Levy Armstrong, a licensed attorney in the State of Minnesota and the leader of the angry mob that invaded Cities Church, located at 1524 Summit Avenue in St Paul, MN, Minnesota on January 18, 2026. We ask that you initiate an investigation into Levy Armstrong due to her role in organizing the invasion of the church and for her potential violation of multiple federal laws in doing so.

**I. Who We Are**

The Center to Advance Security in America (CASA) is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to improving the safety and security of the American people. CASA educates and informs the American people about the actions of their government and its officials that impact their safety; peace and security; democracy, civil rights, and civil liberties; and privacy.

**II. Background**

Based upon information and belief, Nekima Valdez Levy Armstrong is a licensed attorney in the State of Minnesota and, as of this submission, is in good standing with the Minnesota Bar.<sup>1</sup> She runs “Black Pearl, LLC,” which is “a multi-dimensional company offering consulting, talent management, media manage[sic].”<sup>2</sup> In a recent interview, during her invasion of a service at

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<sup>1</sup> Minnesota Judicial Branch, “Lawyer Details-0335101-Levy Armstrong-Nekima-Valez,” accessed January 19, 2026, <https://mars.courts.state.mn.us/AttorneyDetail.aspx?attyID=0335101>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.; “Black Pearl, LLC,” Facebook, accessed January 19, 2026, <https://www.facebook.com/blackpearlmmn1/>.



Cities Church, she described herself as “a reverend, on top of being a lawyer and an activist, so I come here in the power of the almighty God.”<sup>3</sup>

In the wake of the ICE shooting in Minneapolis, whereby a violent agitator was killed by an ICE officer after the agitator attempted to run over the ICE officer with her sport utility vehicle,<sup>4</sup> protests erupted, including vandalism of the federal courthouse where windows were broken.<sup>5</sup>

About a week later, as tensions flared, Levy Armstrong and a dozen or so other people barged into an active church service in St. Paul.<sup>6</sup> According to Levy Armstrong, “this is a clandestine operation. We show up somewhere that is a key location. They don’t expect us to come there. And then we disrupt business as usual. So that’s what we’re about to go do right now.”<sup>7</sup> She is subsequently videoed screaming at churchgoers.<sup>8</sup>

In a separate social media post, Levy Armstrong is seen on a microphone yelling about one of the church’s pastors, who allegedly has ties to ICE.<sup>9</sup> In his own church (ironically this man was not present<sup>10</sup>) she yells at the congregants about how the pastor is “teaching about God” while also “overseeing ICE agents.” She then proceeds to levy accusations against ICE, as if it’s the church’s fault.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Don Lemon, “Minneapolis activists disrupt church service over pastor’s ICE role,” Facebook, Jan. 18. 2026, <https://www.facebook.com/reel/1590637468944103>.

<sup>4</sup> See Holmes Lybrand, “DHS Said a Woman Attempted to Run Over ICE Officers Before Being Shot in Minneapolis. Here’s What Videos Show,” CNN, January 7, 2026, <https://www.cnn.com/2026/01/07/us/minneapolis-shooting-ice-video-analysis-vis>.

<sup>5</sup> Andy Ngo (@MrAndyNgo), “It looks like the far-left rioters followed lawyer Brenna Rahmlow’s instructions to obstruct the federal courthouse in Minneapolis after smashing up the glass of the courthouse.” X, January 7, 2025, <https://x.com/MrAndyNgo/status/2009119329376219166?s=20>.

<sup>6</sup> Jack Brook, “DOJ Says it Will Investigate, Press Charges After Activists Disrupt Church Where Minnesota ICE Official is a Pastor,” PBS, January 19, 2026, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/doj-says-it-will-investigate-press-charges-after-activists-disrupt-church-where-minnesota-ice-official-is-a-pastor>.

<sup>7</sup> Lemon.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> I Meme Therefore I am (@ImMeme0), “BREAKING: Social justice activist Nekima Levy Armstrong, in a Facebook post, accused the pastor of Cities Church of being an Acting Field Director for the ICE office and expressed gratitude to the activists who joined her in storming the church this morning. She wrote: ‘Thank you to all the activists who showed up, as well as independent journalists Georgia Fort, Don Lemon, DawokeFarmer2, and Brixton Hughes. Special thanks to Monique Cullars Doty, Chauntyll Allen, and Satara Strong-Allen for co-organizing this mission with Black Lives Matter Minnesota, Black Lives Matter Twin Cities Metro, and the Racial Justice Network.’” X, January 18, 2026, 7:00 p.m., <https://x.com/immeme0/status/2013038789975843231?s=46&t=FEj1ATXTq5kFFBNctvszRA>.

<sup>10</sup> Luke Barr and Jack Date, “DOJ Investigating After Protesters Disrupt Service at St. Paul Church Where ICE Field Director is Pastor,” ABC News, January 19, 2026, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/doj-investigating-after-protesters-disrupt-service-minneapolis-church/story?id=129349242>.

<sup>11</sup> I Meme Therefore I am.



In the same video, the pastor who was present was put on camera with Don Lemon. The pastor talks about how his service was “interrupted.” He said “we asked them to leave and they obviously have not left.”<sup>12</sup> In the videos, children can be seen, visibly scared.<sup>13</sup>



Additionally, Lemon documents families leaving the church traumatized, with fathers hugging their kids. He even says it’s “uncomfortable and traumatic for the people here, but that’s what protesting is about.”<sup>14</sup>

On January 22, 2026, Levy Armstrong was arrested for her role in the invasion of Cities Church.<sup>15</sup> As of the filing of this Complaint, the crime(s) for which she will be charged are not yet available.

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<sup>12</sup> CatholicVote (@CatholicVote), “Horrendous. Former CNN host Don Lemon breaks into a church in Minneapolis with a group of anti-ICE protestors and lectures a pastor on what Jesus would do. Pastor: ‘This is unacceptable. It’s shameful to interrupt a public gathering of Christians in worship... We’re here to worship Jesus because the hope of the world is Jesus Christ...’ Lemon: ‘Do you think Jesus would be understanding?’ How tone-deaf can you be?” X, January 19, 2026, 11:31 a.m., <https://x.com/CatholicVote/status/2013288287998288088>.

<sup>13</sup> Savannah Hernandez (@Savsays), “Yeah so if Don Lemon and every single radical that stormed that church isn’t immediately arrested, people are going to start taking matters into their own hands & things are going to get ugly fast Either the DOJ steps up, or the American parents whose kids were terrified, will,” X, January 19, 2026, 10:36 a.m., <https://x.com/Savsays/status/2013274463488364677>.

<sup>14</sup> TheBlaze (@theblaze), “Don Lemon sees children fleeing church: ‘I imagine it’s uncomfortable and traumatic for the people here, but that’s what protesting is about.’” X, January 19, 2026, 9:46 a.m., <https://x.com/theblaze/status/2013261698115747912>.

<sup>15</sup> Josh Skluzacek, “FBI Arrests an Organizer of Anti-ICE Protest at St. Paul Church,” KSTP Eyewitness News, January 22, 2026, <https://kstp.com/kstp-news/top-news/fbi-arrests-an-organizer-of-anti-ice-protest-at-st-paul-church/>.



### **III. Ethics Standards and Criminal Statutes**

In Minnesota, a lawyer may be disciplined for “a criminal act that reflects adversely on the lawyer’s honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects.”<sup>16</sup> It also violates the Minnesota Rules of Professional Conduct to “harass a person on the basis of...religion....”<sup>17</sup>

It is a crime under federal law to: “by force or threat of force or by physical obstruction, intentionally injures, intimidates or interferes with or attempts to injure, intimidate or interfere with any person lawfully exercising or seeking to exercise the First Amendment right of religious freedom at a place of religious worship.”<sup>18</sup>

Additionally, “if two or more persons conspire to injure, oppress, threaten, or intimidate any person...in the free exercise or enjoyment of any right or privilege secured to him by the Constitution or the laws of the United States,” the person has committed a felony under federal law.<sup>19</sup> The First Amendment protects the right to assemble for religious worship.

### **IV. Analysis**

Here, Levy Armstrong organized and led the effort to potentially commit federal crime(s). If substantiated, this clearly and unequivocally violates Rule 8.4(b).

First, she is seen on video saying exactly what the purpose of the intrusion was. According to her own words, which she proudly put on video, “We show up somewhere that is a key location. They don’t expect us to come there. And then we disrupt business as usual. So that’s what we’re about to go do right now.” There is no mistaking the that she intended to “intimidate” or “interfere” with a church service. There is no mistake that she intimidated the congregation.

She then actively participated in it. She was seen inside the church screaming into a loud speaker, lambasting one of the church’s pastors. She even bragged that she’s an attorney during her tirade, which should draw the Minnesota Bar’s attention to the matter even more. She said it in such a way that she felt that the law justified or supported her actions. It does not. And a lawyer fit to practice law should know that.

It also violates the Minnesota Rules of Professional Conduct even apart from the criminality of her actions. A lawyer is not allowed to “harass” someone on the basis of their religion. She may argue that this was not “in connection with a lawyer’s professional activities.”

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<sup>16</sup> Rules of Professional Conduct Rule 8.4(b).

<sup>17</sup> Rule 8.4(g).

<sup>18</sup> 18 U.S.C. §248.

<sup>19</sup> 18 U.S.C. §241.



But, again, Levy Armstrong herself promoted the fact that she's a lawyer. She made it about her professional activities.

Don Lemon said that it's "uncomfortable and traumatic for the people here, but that's what protesting is about." Sadly, he and Levy Armstrong were mistaken. Protesting, under the Constitution, is not about disrupting places of worship and traumatizing families who worship there. Federal law makes that clear. Levy Armstrong must be investigated and disciplined for her unlawful actions.

## **V. Conclusion**

Levy Armstrong's actions warrant an investigation and, likely, discipline. The Office of Lawyers and Professional Responsibility should act accordingly.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

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