

POST-EMPLOYMENT 1991-2022

APPLICABLE STATUTE AND CASE LAW APPLIED TO THE FACTS IN EACH MATTER:

For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State. 29 Del. C. 5805(d).

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. *United States v. Medico*, 784 F.2d 840, 843 (7th Cir., 1986). Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. *Beebe Medical Center v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, C.A. No. 94A-01-004, J. Terry (Del. Super. June 30, 1995), *aff’d.*, No. 304 (Del. January 29, 1996).

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. *Medico* at 843. To decide if [Employee] would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. *Ethical Standards in the Public Sector: A Guide for Government Lawyers, Clients, and Public Officials*, American Bar Association, Section of State and Local Government Law, Publisher; p. 38. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially. *Commission Op. No. 96-75 (citing Medico at 842)*. See also *Beebe*.

22-36–Post Employment: [Employee] previously worked for a State agency performing environmental duties. [Employee] retired after 33 years of service on October 1, 2022. During his time at [his Agency], he did not recall [working on a project where his current employer was also involved].

[Employee] accepted a position working for [a private company]. His responsibilities were to “develop procedures for department operations to ensure compliance with regulations; participate in the design and construction of [facilities]; review facility operations and report on performance and provide recommendations; prepare and/or review reports to all [agencies].

[Employee] asked the Commission if his new position violated the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters

where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State.

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To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter, the environment, while employed by the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for employees who leave State employment to work for a private business, as long as they do not work on the same projects for which they were previously responsible. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions.

[Employee]’s prior employment with the State did not involve permits or licensing. Nor did he [interact with his current employer]. Consequently, it did not appear that [Employee]’s current job duties overlapped with his previous [State] job duties. As a result, the Commission determined that [Employee]’s new employment did not violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

Lastly, the Commission reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State.

[Employee]’s employment did not violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

22-35–Post Employment: [Employee] recently left his position at [a State agency]. He managed “a staff of fifteen engineers and one engineering technician. [His] program managed [various] projects.

[Employee] planned to accept a position with an [Agency vendor]. His job duties would include management of the “QC/QA program, project management, specifications/manual writing, and development of resources for multiple clients in Maryland, Delaware, and West Virginia.”

[Employee] asked the Commission if his proposed employment would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State.

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[Employee’s] proposed work for [vendor] outside the State of Delaware did not fall within the Commission’s jurisdiction. Therefore, his participation in those projects would not violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. Conversely, due to his prior participation on vendor selection committees, the Commission decided that he may only work on new projects if:

- (a) the project was initiated by another section of [his Agency] AND
- (b) the decision made by the selection committee to choose [the] vendor was more than two years in the past.

If the decision to select [the vendor] was made more recently than two years ago, [Employee] may not work on [those] new projects. Nor could he work on any of the projects for which he was materially responsible while employed at [the Agency].

Lastly, the Commission reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State.

[Employee] proposed employment with [Vendor] would not violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct as long as he abided by the advice in his Opinion Letter.

22-31—Post-Employment: [Employee] worked for [a State Agency]”). [Employee]’s primary responsibilities included: overseeing the Division’s hiring, recruitment and promotions; managing [Agency]’s intern program; managing the Division ’s operating, travel and training budgets; reviewing and drafting policies, regulations and legislation. [Employee] retired from State service on December 31, 2022.

[Employee] accepted a contingent offer of employment as a Senior Manager with [Vendor] in their Wilmington, Delaware office to begin upon his State retirement. His job duties included: day-to-day management of the office and staff; project management

[Vendor] had several contracts with [Agency]. [Employee] was not involved in the selection process for any of the existing contracts. [Employee] included a list of active [Vendor] contracts and indicated those in which he was previously involved.

[Employee] asked the Commission if his prospective employment with [Vendor] would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State.

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Appended to [Employee]’s Request Letter was a very thorough and detailed list of [Vendor]’s contracts. He documented his involvement, if any, and correctly identified those which would require his future recusal. As a result, the Commission was confident that [Employee] had a clear understanding of the factors which would prohibit his involvement in existing [Vendor] contracts and he would recuse himself accordingly. In addition to recusing himself from [Vendor]’s projects in which he was previously involved, the post-employment provision is meant to ensure that former employees do not use their former position to "get a leg up" on other competitors or use the influence they derived from their former employment to influence their former co-workers in making decisions. As a consequence, [Employee] could not appear before any [Agency] bid committee until the expiration of the two-year post-employment restriction.

The Commission also reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State.

[Employee]’s post-retirement position with [Vendor] would not violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct as long as he did not work on any contracts for which he was previously responsible while employed by [Agency].

22-23—Post-Employment: [Employee] previously worked at [a specific location] as a Therapist. [She provided therapy to clients in state-run facilities]. She left State employment in March 2022.

[Employee]’s previous supervisor contacted [Employee] about a contract position [providing the same therapy Employee had previously provided while employed by the State].

[Employee] asked the Commission if her employment as a contractor would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

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To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter, counseling, while employed by the State. In fact, she was being asked to return to teach one of her former programs. Consequently, the Commission determined that there was substantial overlap between [Employee]’s former job duties and the job duties she was being asked to perform as a contractor. As a result, [Employee] could not contract with the State to perform the same job duties for which she was previously responsible as a State employee. The post-employment restriction, which applies to [Employee]’s status as a contractor, expires in March 2024.

During the meeting, the Supervisor mentioned that she could hire [Employee] as a casual/seasonal (part-time) employee. The post-employment restriction does not prohibit a former State employee from returning as casual/seasonal employee because the statutory definition of ‘state employee’ includes both full-time and part-time employees. Therefore, concerns about returning to the State as a private contractor were eliminated. The Commission recommended that [Employee] return to work as a casual/seasonal employee.

[Employee] could not return as a contractor to provide counseling until after the expiration of the two-year post-employment restriction. However, [Employee] could work as a casual/seasonal employee without violating the Code of Conduct.

22-22—Post-Employment: [Employee] recently left her position at [a State Agency]. She was responsible for quality reviews of a federal document required by [federal law]. The document describes the impact of [the Agency’s] projects on the surrounding area. [Employee]’s job was to make sure the document contained all the required information. Once completed, she would send the document to the appropriate federal agencies for approval. The most recent document [Employee] completed on behalf of the State was [for a location in New Castle County]. While employed by [Agency], [Employee] did not have any job duties related to contracts or vendors.

[Employee] accepted a position with an [Agency] vendor. She started her new job on Sept. 19th. [Employee] would be performing the same job duties for [Vendor] that she performed for the State, completing documents and submitting them for approval. In her written submission, she stated that she would not be working on any documents that she previously worked on as a State employee and she would not represent [Vendor's] projects before the State.

[Employee] asked the Commission if her employment with [Vendor] was in violation of the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State.

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To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter, completing federal documents, while employed by the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for [Agency] workers who left State employment to work for one of the agency's contractors so long as they did not work on the same projects. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions.

[Employee] would be performing the same job duties for [Vendor] as she performed for the State. However, the parameters of each document were different, similar to the application at issue in the *Beebe* case. [Employee] stated that she would not work on any documents she was previously responsible for while employed by the State. Nor would she represent [the Vendor] before [the State Agency] by participating in bidders meetings, etc. As long as she

abided by those recusal strategies, the Commission decided that her position with [Vendor] did not violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

Lastly, the Commission reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State.

[Employee]'s new position with [Vendor] did not violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct as long as she recuses herself as necessary

22-19 Stephanie Wingert—Post-Employment (Waiver GRANTED)

VIA EMAIL

September 14, 2022

22-19—Post-Employment (Waiver GRANTED)

Hearing and Decision By: Andrew T. Manus, (Chair); Michele Whetzel (Vice-Chair); Rourke Moore (Vice-Chair); ***Commissioners:*** Sen. (Ret.) F. Gary Simpson; Ronald Chaney, Judge (Ret.) Alex Smalls

Dear Ms. Wingert,

Thank you for participating in the August 16, 2022, Commission meeting, which you attended via Zoom videoconference. After consideration of the relevant facts and circumstances, the Commission decided that it would be a violation of the two-year post-employment restriction to allow your agency to contract with a former DTI employee. However, the Commission granted a waiver due to agency hardship. The Commission's reasoning is set forth below.

I. FACTS

You are the Director of Project Management within the Department of Technology and Information ("DTI"). Your office provides oversight of the Enterprise Information Technology Project and Program Portfolios from beginning to end. A project portfolio is a collection of projects that are similar in nature or meet a set of pre-defined criteria. Portfolio management is centralized management of multiple portfolios that facilitates identifying, evaluating, prioritizing, authorizing, and controlling projects or programs to achieve the organization's goals. You contacted the PIC on July 25, 2022, regarding the resignation of one of your employees and you submitted an email request for an advisory opinion on July 26, 2022.

Ray Veenema was previously employed as a Project/Portfolio Management System (“PPMS”) Administrator. He resigned from his position on July 29, 2022. Mr. Veenema was the only employee that knew how to fully administer the system DTI uses to track and manage the State’s IT projects. At the time of the August meeting, you had posted the vacancy internally to other DTI employees, but had not yet selected an applicant. Consequently, Mr. Veenema’s replacement will be hired after his departure, leaving no time for training.

The manufacturer of the PPMS provides an online training program at a cost of \$3000 per person (two sessions). In your opinion, the training is adequate, but not customized to your use of the product. You want to extend a contract to Mr. Veenema to provide on-the-job training to the individual selected as his replacement (as well as yourself) for 5-8 hours per week for “a few months”. You expected that he would charge approximately \$800 per person, a significant cost savings over the manufacturer’s cost. Mr. Veenema has moved on to another full-time position but is willing to return on a limited basis to help train his replacement.

You asked the Commission for a waiver of the post-employment restriction to allow Mr. Veenema to return to DTI as a contractor for a limited term so that he may provide training to other DTI employees, including the person hired as his replacement.

II. APPLICATION OF THE FACTS TO THE LAW

A. For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. To decide if Mr. Veenema would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially.

In the matter at hand, there was no question that if Mr. Veenema were to return to DTI as a contractor, performing his former job duties, he would be violating the two-year post-employment restriction. The Commission then considered whether the agency qualified for a waiver of the post-employment restriction.

B. Waivers may be granted if there would be an undue hardship on the State employee or State agency, or the literal application of the law is not necessary to serve the public purpose.

(a) Undue Hardship

A waiver may be granted if there is an “undue hardship” on the applicant or the agency. “Undue” means “more than required” or is “excessive.”

You stated that no other employees could properly teach the use of the PPMS, including yourself. Because the PPMS provides a comprehensive overview of all the technology projects in the state, it was reasonable for the Commission to assume that it served a critical purpose in the administration, maintenance and development of the State’s technology infrastructure. As a consequence, the Commission agreed that the lack of on-the-job training for Mr. Veenema’s replacement would create an undue hardship on the agency.

(b) Is literal application of the law necessary to serve the public purpose?

The overall purpose of the Code of Conduct is to instill the public’s confidence in its government. The statute was designed to protect against self-dealing and its enforcement is generally the best way to serve the public purpose. However, the public also expects services from the State to be provided quickly, accurately and responsibly. In order to accomplish those goals, it was necessary for the Commission to grant a waiver to allow Mr. Veenema to return to DTI as a contractor for 5-8 hours a week, for a period of three months from the date of the first training. To receive the full benefit of this waiver, the Commission recommends that you train at least two other employees in the use of the PPMS. Factors considered in favor of the waiver included: limited work hours; duration of the waiver was relatively short; extreme need.

The Commission would like to point out that this situation was completely preventable. A sole employee should not be the only source of institutional knowledge. “Organizations spend a lot of time and resources developing knowledge and capability. While some of it gets translated into procedures and policies, most of it resides in the heads, hands, and hearts of individual managers and functional experts. Over time, much of this institutional knowledge moves away as people take on new jobs, relocate, or retire.” Such is the case here. Mr. Veenema provided the requisite two-week notice. However, the length of the hiring process prevented you from hiring his replacement before he was able to provide on-the-job training to the person who will serve in his place.

Waiver GRANTED. Ms. Wingert should train as many employees as possible under the waiver.

22-16—Post Employment: [Employee] retired from the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families (“DSCYF”) in September 2021. During her employment, [Employee] managed programs for children ages 0-17. The programs were provided to children [in an educational format].

On July 1, 2021, [Employee] began working for [a private company] located in Maryland. She was hired to provide “project coordination support” for [a federal grant] to the Department of Health and Social Services (“DHSS”). The grant program provided crisis intervention services;

mental and substance abuse treatment; and other...supports for children and adults impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.” [Employee]’s responsibilities included: collaborating with staff to create and monitor work plans, evaluation plans, scopes of work, and budgets for Delaware Emergency COVID-19 initiatives. The Emergency COVID-19 federal grant ends May 31, 2023.

[Employee] asked the Commission whether her employment with [the private company] violated the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

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[Employee] worked for DSCYF before her retirement. Her contractual work was on behalf of DHSS, a distinctly separate State agency. The two agencies generally served clients in different age demographics: DSCYF for children under 18 years old and DHSS for adults. However, [Employee] stated in her request that the grant provided “supports for *children and adults* impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.” She also stated that her previous DSCYF job duties were directed towards children.

Because of the distinction(s) between [Employee]’s former agency and DHSS, the Commission was satisfied that there would be little or no overlap in clients or personnel between her former State job duties and those she performed for [her private employer]. In addition, the job duties she performed [at her private job] were different than those she performed while employed by the State. As a consequence, the Commission decided that her new employment did not violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

[Employee] was also reminded of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State.

No conflict.

22-12—Post Employment: Since March of 2022, [Employee] worked as a casual/seasonal [management-level employee]. He served in the same role from 2005 through November of 2018. Between November 2018 and March 2022, [Employee] was [a Division] Director.

[Employee]’s responsibilities included creating policies, plans and reviewing protocols for [matters related to his job duties].

[Employee] wanted to accept a position with [a private company] as their Executive Director (state and federal). [The company] had 15,000 clinicians and professionals in 34 states. [*Omitted to preserve confidentiality*].

Given the fact that [the company] was contemplating becoming a State contractor, [Employee] asked the Commission whether his proposed employment with [company] would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

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To determine if there is substantial overlap, the Commission compares the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while employed by the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for employees who leave State employment to work for, or as, one of the State’s contractors so long as they do not work on the same projects. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions.

[Employee] had high-level decision-making power that affected the health and safety of all Delawareans. It was difficult for the Commission to see how [Employee] could work as the Director for [the private company] in the State of Delaware without encountering colleagues with whom he previously worked. Furthermore, [the company] (assuming they are the successful bidder) could decide to change the operating protocols [Employee] put in place or they may want to discuss those protocols with other [agency] staff. Either way, [Employee] could be required to review work for which he was materially responsible while employed by the State. Consequently, he could not work for [the private company] in Delaware for the next two years.

The Commission also reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State.

No conflict working for [company] outside the State of Delaware, may not work in the State of Delaware for two years, may not work on the bid if [company] applied for a contract with a Delaware agency.

22-08--Brandywine School District (*letterhead and footnotes removed for formatting purposes*). **Waiver Granted.**

VIA EMAIL

April 14, 2022

22-08—Brandywine School District—Post-Employment (Waiver Granted)

Hearing and Decision By: *Andrew T. Manus, (Chair); Michele Whetzel (Vice-Chair); Rourke Moore (Vice-Chair); Commissioners: Sen. (ret.) F. Gary Simpson; Marjorie Biles; Ronald Chaney; Judge (ret.) Alex Smalls*

Dear Dr. Warner,

Thank you for participating in the March 15, 2022, Commission meeting which you attended via Zoom videoconference. After consideration of the relevant facts and circumstances, the Commission decided to grant a hardship waiver of the post-employment restriction to allow the Brandywine School District to contract with a former employee who is prohibited from returning to the District as a contractor until February 2023. The Commission's reasoning is set forth below.

I. FACTS

Lauryn Elder was previously a Behavior Specialist with the Brandywine School District ("BSD" or "District") before resigning in February 2021 to work for a private business. Her job duties were district-wide, meaning she was not assigned to a specific school but would travel to different schools in the District. Ms. Elder's employment with the private business did not work out and she wanted to return to the BSD and work as a contractual Board-Certified Behavior Analyst ("BCBA"). Ms. Elder did not want to return as a full-time employee of the District.

You are the Director of Special Education for the BSD. The District has "two students with Individual Education Plan ("IEP") support needs requiring in-home BCBA services to address behavioral concerns." You reached out to the District's contractual BCBA's but were unable to find a professional that would provide in-home services. You then contacted Ms. Elder and she confirmed that she would be willing to accept the part-time contractual position but that she could not do so due to the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. You stated that if the District cannot contract with Ms. Elder, the District will be unable to comply with their Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") obligations. You stated that the contractual position is unlike Ms. Elder's previous State job because it requires home services, something Ms. Elder did not provide in the past.

You asked the Commission whether Ms. Elder's position as a part-time BSD contractor would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. If so, you requested a hardship waiver.

II. APPLICATION OF THE FACTS TO THE LAW

A. For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not "directly and materially responsible" for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official's responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not "directly and materially responsible" for that matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. To decide if Ms. Elder would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially.

To determine if there would be substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, Ms. Elder worked on the subject matter, providing behavioral health services, while employed by the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions.

The Commission considered whether the fact that Ms. Elder would provide home-based services in a slightly different capacity was enough of a difference to exclude her contractual work from the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct and decided it did not. Ms. Elder would be working for the same school district, in the same geographic location, with the same population of students. The Commission then considered whether the District qualified for a waiver.

B. Waivers may be granted if there would be an undue hardship on the State employee or State agency, or the literal application of the law is not necessary to serve the public purpose.

Having decided that the post-employment restriction was applicable to this matter, the Commission "may grant a waiver to the specific prohibitions contained therein if the Commission determines that the literal application of such prohibition in a particular case is not necessary to achieve the public purposes of this chapter or would result in an undue hardship on any employee, officer, official or state agency."

(1) Undue hardship

A waiver may be granted if there is an “undue hardship” on the applicant or the agency. “Undue” means “more than required” or is “excessive.”

It is difficult to think of a hardship more problematic than the District not being able to meet its federal IDEA obligations. Indeed, in a letter to the Delaware Secretary of Education dated June 24, 2021, the federal Director of the IDEA program, David Cantrell, PhD., advised that Delaware’s rating in achieving IDEA compliance was “needs assistance”. In addition, two students of your District have been underserved while the resolution of this matter was pending. Based on the foregoing, the Commission determined that the District qualified for a hardship waiver.

(2) Is literal application of the law necessary to serve the public purpose?

The overall purpose of the Code of Conduct is to instill the public’s confidence in its government. The statute was designed to protect against self-dealing and its enforcement is generally the best way to serve the public purpose. Publication of the waiver assures the public

that the waiver exists for a specific purpose, thus reducing the public's concerns about self-dealing while also promoting the public's confidence in their government.

It is important to note that you, the Director of Special Education for the BSD, requested permission to hire Ms. Elder. The request was not made by a former State employee seeking to evade the confines of the post-employment restriction.

III. CONCLUSION

Based solely on these facts and circumstances, the Commission determined that the BSD qualifies for a waiver of the post-employment restriction to allow the hiring of Lauryn Elder as a contractor to provide in-home BSBA services to the two students identified by the BSD.

Sincerely,

/s/ Andrew T. Manus

Andrew T. Manus
Chair

Waiver granted based upon agency hardship.

22-09—Post-Employment: [Employee] worked for [a State Agency]. [He was part of a dual-agency software team]. He worked on multiple network systems. [Employee] worked on several [Agency] projects during his employment with the State. Most recently he worked on: [redacted to preserve confidentiality]. [Employee] was planning to retire in June 2022.

Post-retirement, [Employee] wanted to work as an employee of a third-party contractor. [The company was] a vendor to several State agencies, including [his Agency]. Alternatively, he may become a contractor himself. [Employee] specifically noted that he may work on [the systems used by his former Agency]. He distinguished his future endeavor as being distinct from his State job duties because the work would involve requests for new enhancements or new service requests.

[Employee] asked the Commission whether his employment as a State contractor, or as an employee for a State contractor, would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and

colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. To decide if [Employee] would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially.

To determine if there is substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while employed by the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for employees who left State employment to work for, or as, one of the State’s contractors so long as they did not work on the same projects. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions.

In this case, both of the projects for which [Employee] was materially responsible were complete. Therefore, it would be impossible for him to work on those projects once he left State employment. However, because of [Employee]’s association with his former colleagues, he could not appear before bid review committees [of his former State agencies] until after the expiration of the two-year post-employment restriction. The Commission also reminded him of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State.

[Employee] could work as a [State] vendor, or for a vendor, as long as he did not work on any projects for which he was previously responsible. [Employee] could not appear before [his former Agencies’] bid review committees for two years.

22-08—Post-Employment: [Employee] worked for [a Division] within the Department of Services for Children Youth and Their Families (“DSCYF”). “[Employee]’s job duties included evaluating new admissions, conducting crisis assessments, treatment and discharge planning.

[Employee] submitted a bid in response [to a Request For Proposals (“RFP”) issued by the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services (“DPBHS”) for [a contractual position as a consultant]. The consultants [would work in] classroom settings throughout Kent County.

[Employee] asked the Commission whether her employment as a State contractor with DPBHS would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter.

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[Employee]’s position at [the State] involved working with adolescent aged youth. In the contractual position she would be working with preschool children, a different age demographic than her [previous] clients. Consequently, it was almost impossible that [Employee] would be asked to treat a previous [State] client while working with preschool children. However, it was possible that she could encounter family members related to her previous clients. In that case, she was instructed to recuse herself from working with the family members of her former clients.

[Employee] was also reminded of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State.

No violation if [Employee] recuses as necessary.

22-07—Post-Employment: [Employee] worked for [a State Agency] from 2014 to July 2021. Her responsibilities included working with license applicants. Additionally, she monitored licensed [businesses] by conducting annual visits and conducting complaint investigations. [Employee] also provided technical assistance to licensed [businesses] as needed and documented all transactions in [a State computer program].

[Employee] wanted to open a [private business] in the City of Dover. However, she would need to apply to her former employer to obtain the license.

[Employee] asked the Commission whether her application to her former State employer for a license violated the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. To decide if [Employee] would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while employed by the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for employees who leave State employment to work in the same industry as long as they do not work on the same projects. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions.

It was the ‘undue influence’ portion of the post-employment restriction that was at issue here. In order to open the business, [Employee] needed to apply for a license from her former State employer. Obviously, since [Employee] was previously employed by [Agency], she likely had colleagues who still worked for that agency. That could lead to favoritism or undue scrutiny

depending on the circumstances under which she left her State job. In addition, as a former [Agency employee], the Commission decided that her previous position allowed her access to information regarding possible competitors in the area.

The [business] would be a violation of the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

22-05—Post-Employment: [Employee] was employed by [a school district]. His primary job responsibility was to oversee the District's capital construction projects. His job duties included: coordination of construction projects; hiring architect/engineers; hiring construction management companies; approving contractor payments; and generally representing the District throughout the construction process. [Employee] was contemplating retiring from his District position [in 2022].

For the past nine years, a private business located in Delaware, had been awarded multiple construction management contracts with the District. The following projects were active: [redacted to preserve confidentiality].

[Employee] requested that the District assign another employee to oversee all matters regarding [Vendor] as he transitioned towards retirement. As of March 2022, [Employee] no longer approved [Vendor] pay applications and was no longer responsible for approving changes to the scope of the existing projects.

[Employee] wanted to start working for [Vendor] [after his retirement]. His prospective position would be in the business development and client relations field. His job duties would include: advertising/marketing; social media management; acting as a client liaison; job site visitations and safety training. [Employee] would not be working on any District projects for two years from the date of his retirement.

[Employee] asked the Commission whether his prospective employment with [Vendor] would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not "directly and materially responsible" for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official's responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not "directly and materially responsible" for that matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. To decide if [Employee] would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially.

To determine if there is substantial overlap, the Commission compares the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter, capital construction projects, while employed by the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for employees who leave State employment to work for, or as, one of the agency’s contractors so long as they do not work on the same projects. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions.

[Employee] already recognized that he could not work on any of [Vendor]’s District projects for two years from the date of his retirement. Otherwise, [Employee] could work on any other [Vendor] projects in Delaware. [Employee] was also reminded of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State.

22-04—Post-Employment: [Employee] worked for [a State agency] as a supervisor in the [New Castle County area]. His group was responsible for analyzing, testing and quantifying the materials used by [the agency] and their vendors. [Employee] was contemplating retirement from his State position. He inquired about his ability to work for one of [agency]’s consultants or vendors (he did not provide a name).

[Employee] asked the Commission whether his proposed post-retirement employment, working for an [agency] consultant, would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been

involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. To decide if [Employee] would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially.

To determine if there is substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while employed by the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for [agency] workers who left State employment to work for, or as, one of the agency’s contractors so long as they do not work on the same projects. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions.

[Employee] could not work on any existing projects assigned to [his agency in New Castle County] at the time of his separation from State employment. As the supervisor of the New Castle area, it was extremely likely that he would have had responsibility for, and given opinions about those projects. However, he could work on new projects assigned to his [area] after his retirement and he could work on new and existing [agency] projects outside of the [New Castle County area] because those projects were ones for which he had no responsibility while employed by the State.

[Employee] was also reminded of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State.

No violation of the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct as long as applicant abided by the advice in his Opinion Letter.

22-03–Post-Employment: [Employee] worked for [a State agency] beginning in July 2016 and ending on March 11, 2022. The job responsibilities included: drafting, developing and modifying [various documents]. Her job duties included reviewing permit applications; planning and conducting studies, surveys, research and development projects, inspections and/or investigations to collect data and ensure conformance to state/federal laws and regulations; reviewing, analyzing and reporting on the status of projects and/or regulatory compliance.

[Employee] provided a list of projects on which she most recently worked as well as the last active project on which she worked.

[Employee] accepted employment with [an agency vendor]. Her job duties included: working on projects involving her former State employer; preparing and completing designs; completing tasks within the assigned schedule and budget; developing project criteria, calculations, details, and estimates.

[Employee] asked the Commission whether her employment with [the agency vendor] violated the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter.

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[Employee] could not work on the enumerated projects for two years from her date of separation. Otherwise, [Employee] could work on any [agency] projects for which she was not previously responsible while a State employee.

[Employee] was also reminded of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State.

No violation of the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

21-36—Post-Employment: [Employee] worked for [a State Agency]. His job responsibilities included reviewing, processing and issuing permits. [Employee]’s job duties included:

conducting meetings; initial and primary inspections; coordinating with legislators to address constituent issues. [Employee] provided a list of projects he worked on over the past four years.

[Employee] wanted to accept employment with [Vendor], an [Agency] contractor, to provide services for [certain] projects. At the meeting, he clarified that the projects he had worked on while employed by the State were similar in nature to those he would be performing for the vendor. However, the scale of the projects the vendor would assign to him would be much larger than those he had worked on while employed by the State.

He asked the Commission if his employment with [the vendor] would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter.

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The Commission recognized that the type of [Vendor] projects [Employee] would be working on were different in size and scope than those he worked on while employed by the State. That fact reduced the likelihood that [Vendor] would ask him to work on a State project for which he had previously been responsible. As to the projects [Employee] identified on his project list, he could not work on those projects (to the extent that they remained incomplete) for a period of two years.

[Employee] was also reminded of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State.

No violation.

21-34—Post-Employment: [Employee had worked for a unit of a State agency] since March 2017. Between March 2016 and March 2017, [Employee] worked [for a different unit within the division]. Prior to that, she [held another position within the division] beginning in 2007. As part of her 2007 job duties, she [worked on a project that] was completed in October 2013.

[Vendor], an [Agency] contractor, had several positions posted on their website. One position cited a preference for [experience relevant to the employee's State job]. [Employee] applied and the vendor requested that she confirm the legality of her application given the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. In a follow-up email, [Employee] stated that [Vendor] was currently overseeing [an Agency project].

[Employee] asked the Commission if working for [Vendor] would violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not "directly and materially responsible" for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official's responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not "directly and materially responsible" for that matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that "matter" must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. To decide if [Employee] would be working on the same "matter," Courts have held that it is the same "matter" if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while employed by the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions.

Although [Employee] worked with [Vendor] in the past, she had not performed that type of work for at least the past four years. As a consequence, the job duties she would perform for [Vendor] would be extremely unlikely to overlap with the job duties she most recently performed on behalf of the State. Therefore, the Commission determined that her proposed position with [Vendor] would not violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

The Commission reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State.

The position with [Vendor] would not violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

21-32 Marissa Catalon—Post-Employment (Waiver Granted)

VIA EMAIL

October 12, 2021

21-32—Post Employment (Waiver Granted)

Hearing and Decision By: Andrew T. Manus, (Chair); Michele Whetzel (Vice-Chair),
Rourke Moore (Vice-Chair); ***Commissioners:*** Bonnie Smith, Marjorie Biles

Dear Ms. Catalon,

Thank you for participating in the September 21, 2021, Public Integrity Commission meeting which was held via Zoom videoconference. After considering all the relevant facts and circumstances, the Commission decided that hiring Ms. Nonnenmacher as a contractor would violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. However, due to the time-limited nature of the project she would be working on, the Commission decided to grant an 18-month waiver. The Commission's reasoning is set forth below.

I. FACTS

You are the Director of the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services ("DDDS") within the Department of Health and Social Services ("DHSS"). Prior to your appointment as Director, you were Deputy Director of the Division under Marie Nonnenmacher.

According to your written submission, "the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 provides states a time-limited opportunity to expand and enhance Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services. The division's Medicaid cost allocation efforts currently enables DDDS to leverage over \$2M a year to support the cost of administering existing Medicaid programs for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities. As those programs are expanded and enhanced, it will be essential that the existing cost allocation plan keeps pace with that growth; failing to do so will result in a loss of federal revenue and a higher cost to the State of Delaware to administer those programs. Additionally, an expansion of services will necessitate the development of new or adjusted service rates. DDDS needs technical assistance with this rate development and rate studies." Essentially, the American Rescue Plan will pay for extra client services if DDDS expands their services during a prescribed time period. The Federal government will continue

to pay for some or all of those services as long as DDDS has developed Medicaid cost allocation and rate setting methods to support the extra reimbursement.

Ms. Nonnenmacher was Director of DDDS from February 2018 through July 2020. Before then, Ms. Nonnenmacher was Deputy Director of DDDS from November 2012 through August 2017. She also worked for a couple of other State agencies in the years prior to her time at DDDS, including the Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance and the Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families. In your request letter, you stated that Ms. Nonnenmacher acquired the job skills necessary for Medicaid cost allocation and rate setting methods while employed at the Division of Medicaid, not during her employment with DDDS.

You asked the Commission if contracting with Ms. Nonnenmacher would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

II. APPLICATION OF THE FACTS TO THE LAW

A. For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that particular matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. To decide if Ms. Nonnenmacher would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially.

To ascertain if there is substantial overlap, the Commission compares the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, Ms. Nonnenmacher worked on the subject matter, health services, while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In this case, Ms. Nonnenmacher has specific knowledge that would benefit DDDS. While she is a former employee of DDDS, she acquired the necessary skills during her employment with a different State agency prior to 2012. Additionally, Ms. Nonnenmacher’s job duties while employed by DDDS did not include Medicaid rate setting and cost allocation.

Therefore, it could not have been a duty for which she was materially responsible, while employed by the State.

However, permitting Ms. Nonnenmacher to engage in such activities would distort the purpose of the post-employment provision by allowing a former employee to get a "leg up" on other private enterprises that deal with the State. As to the specific issue of contracting with her former agency, Delaware Courts have noted that where government officials seek contracts with their governmental entity, that the award of such contracts "has been suspect, often because of alleged favoritism, undue influence, conflict and the like." The Code of Conduct was subsequently enacted with restrictions, such as the post-employment law, which aids in avoiding those very types of allegations and suspicions.

As a consequence, hiring Ms. Nonnenmacher as a contractor is likely to create an appearance of impropriety.

B. Employees may not engage in conduct that may raise suspicion among the public that they are engaging in conduct contrary to the public trust.

The purpose of the code is to ensure that there is not only no actual violation, but also not even a "justifiable impression" of a violation. The Commission treats that as an appearance of impropriety standard. The test is whether a reasonable person, knowledgeable of all the relevant facts, would still believe that the official's duties could not be performed with honesty, integrity and impartiality. Thus, in deciding appearance of impropriety issues, the Commission looks at the totality of the circumstances. Those circumstances should be examined within the framework of the Code's purpose which is to achieve a balance between a "justifiable impression" that the Code is being violated by an official, while not "unduly circumscribing" their conduct so that citizens are encouraged to assume public office and employment.

Hiring Ms. Nonnenmacher as a contractor to her former division would likely create an appearance of impropriety amongst the public because she recently retired from the same division with which she wants to contract. The public is likely to believe that she obtained a contract with DDDS as a direct result of contact with her former colleagues. Having decided that contracting with Ms. Nonnenmacher would create an appearance of impropriety, the Commission next considered whether to grant a waiver.

C. Waivers may be granted if there would be an undue hardship on the State employee or State agency, or the literal application of the law is not necessary to serve the public purpose.

(a) Undue Hardship

A waiver may be granted if there is an "undue hardship" on the applicant or the agency. "Undue" means "more than required" or is "excessive."

The American Rescue Plan's invitation to expand services is time limited. At the meeting, you stated that hiring contractors with Ms. Nonnenmacher's skills would become almost impossible in the near future because other states are also planning to take advantage of the American Rescue Plan's proposal to increase covered services for vulnerable populations. As the state's compete with each other to hire staff or contractors with the necessary job skills, the pool of qualified applicants will shrink significantly. You are trying to get

ahead of the game by asking permission to contract with Ms. Nonnenmacher while her services are still available.

It is important to note that the time limitation you must abide by is one that is imposed by the federal government. Your Division has no control over that time limitation and you are concerned that if you don't get started quickly, you may lose this opportunity to expand services to your clients. Furthermore, you do not have the time to go through the traditional hiring or contracting process. Given the circumstances, the Commission decided that the time-limitation, and the need to hire an employee or contractor with special skills, created a hardship for DDDS.

(b) Is literal application of the law necessary to serve the public purpose?

The overall purpose of the Code of Conduct is to instill the public's confidence in its government. The statute was designed to protect against self-dealing and its enforcement is generally the best way to serve the public purpose.

This is a one-time offer by the federal government to cover the costs of services provided to citizens with developmental disabilities. The program is time limited and your Division must devise Medicaid reimbursement rates and rate setting methods to qualify for the extra funding. Once the new services have been developed, the federal government will continue to pay for those services after the American Rescue Plan ends. In essence, your Division has an opportunity to expand services to your clients, at the federal government's expense.

The Commission decided that it would best serve the public purpose to grant a waiver to Ms. Nonnenmacher and DDDS to allow you to contract with her for the necessary services. The waiver will be in place for 18 months. A waiver of limited length assures the public that the waiver exists for a specific purpose, thus reducing the public's concerns about self-dealing while also promoting the public's confidence in their government. If you cannot complete your project before the expiration of the waiver, you should return to the Commission for further advice.

Waiver granted.

21-24–Post-Employment: [Employee] worked for [a State Agency]. Prior to his 16-month term as Director, he served as the Deputy Director for approximately eight years. [Employee] retired in July 2021. [Employee] also described his specific job duties in his Letter Request.

[Employee] had no immediate plans to re-enter the workforce but anticipated that he would work in his area of expertise, perhaps contracting directly with his former agency. [Employee] asked the Commission under what circumstances he could return to work as either an [Agency] contractor, or as an employee of an [Agency] contractor, without violating the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. Elsewhere in his Letter Request, [Employee] stated that he wanted to contract with the [Agency] to "assist in the development and review of manuals, policies and procedures for the Department."

[Employee] asked the Commission if his proposed post-retirement work would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. To decide if [Employee] would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while employed by the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for [Agency] workers who leave State employment to work for, or as, one of the agency’s contractors so long as they do not work on the same projects. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions.

The job duties [Employee] described in his letter underestimated the scope and breadth of the services he provided to the [Agency] during his tenure. While he described specific duties he actually performed, he did not properly account for his responsibilities. It is true that [Employee] was the Division Director for a relatively short time, approximately 16 months. However, he was Deputy Division Director for eight years before his promotion to Director. Consequently, he has long had management duties and oversight at the [Agency].

In his Letter Request, [Employee’s] statement that “I did not have approval for the agreements in place as they were executed before I became Director....” does not recognize the fact that his *responsibilities* extended farther than the end of his pen. Whether he was responsible for those Agreements when he was Deputy Director could be debatable, the fact that he was responsible for them when he was actually Director, was not. The Commission cannot be expected to parse through documents to determine which job duties were actually performed and those that were ignored or ‘saved’ for future employment opportunities.

Consequently, [Employee] could not work on any projects that existed/passed through [his former Division] for two years from the date of his retirement. That included returning to the [Agency] as a contractor or as an employee of a contractor. However, he could work on projects outside the State of Delaware, work for other State agencies and other divisions of [his former Agency]. Nor could he contract with the [Agency] “to assist in the development and review of manuals, policies and procedures for the Department.”

[Employee] did not have prior involvement with [a particular initiative] during his tenure at the [Agency]. The project was new and the parameters were not clearly defined.

The Commission was unable to opine as to [Employee's] ability to work on projects related to the [initiative] because its use and processes had not been clearly defined. If [Employee] wanted to work on projects related to the [initiative] after the parameters were more clearly defined, the Commission stated that it would be happy to review the matter in the future.

The Commission also reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State.

The only [Agency] projects [Employee] could work on were those that were managed by a different Division of [his former Agency] and had not passed through, nor originated in, [his former Division]. [Employee] could work for any other State agency and he could work for any State vendor on projects outside the State of Delaware. He could *not* work on any projects related to: [projects] that existed at [his former Division] for two years from the date of his retirement.

21-24—Post-Employment (Reconsideration): [Former employee] asked the Commission to reconsider its previous opinion issued after the July 18, 2021, meeting. Specifically, he asked the Commission to reconsider three issues:

- The previous opinion contained many inaccurate statements about [his job title].
- [Applying for an annual grant].
- [Applying for work as a result of studies performed by an organization similar to, but different from, his State Agency].

The Commission addressed each of the issues raised in [Employee's] PIC Appeal.

1. [Employee] clarified his job title. The post-employment statute has a two year “look-back” period. Therefore, the Commission was primarily concerned with the job duties [Employee] performed in the 24 months immediately prior to his retirement which would include 18 months as a Director and 6 months as [the disputed job title].

2. The [‘grant’ program] was listed as a subdivision of [the Agency] on their website. The [Agency] website also contained forms, instructions and links related to the [grant]. However, the [grant] was administered by [an independent body]. Given the apparent neutrality of the [body], despite the [grant's] administrative connections to [Agency], the Commission withdrew its objection to [Employee] working on future [grant] applications.

3. [Non-state] studies for which an RFP had not been advertised [before his date of retirement].

A Request for Proposal (“RFP”) for a future project was likely not a project for which [Employee] was previously responsible while performing his State job duties. In addition, the [group responsible for conducting particular studies] were comprised of individuals from multiple stakeholders, lessening the likelihood that [Employee's] previous relationship with [the Agency] would create a conflict of interest. Therefore, he would not be prohibited from working on those projects as part of his post-employment job duties.

To the extent that the Commission's prior opinion was inconsistent with the more recent opinion, it was withdrawn. No violation if [Employee] abided by the most current advisory opinion.

21-17—Post-Employment: [Employee] worked for [Agency] as a Manager. As part of her job duties, [Employee] worked with [Facility] employees. “[C]urrently, I work in collaboration with [Facility’s] team and other state and community partners on difficult cases and meet regularly with the [Facility’s] team.”

[Employee] wanted to leave State employment to work for [Facility] as a Manager. When asked about her potential job duties, [Employee] responded that she would be “managing [specific tasks] as I am in my current role.”

[Employee] asked the Commission if her new employment would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. To decide if [Employee] would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter, healthcare management, while employed by the State. In addition, she stated that she would be working on the same matters for which she was previously responsible while employed by the State.

[Employee]’s proposed employment at [Facility] would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

21-15—Post-Employment: [Employee] worked for [a State Agency]. Her job duties required her to consult with other government agencies regarding [her Agency’s capital projects]. She

was assigned to 20 specific projects. On some projects, [Employee] was required to prepare the permit applications.

[Employee] was planning to leave State employment and work for [an Agency vendor]. [Vendor] had several offices in the mid-Atlantic area and had already advised [Employee] that she could work on projects in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. [Employee] anticipated that she would be [preparing permit applications and performing evaluations.]

[Employee] asked the Commission if her employment with [Vendor] would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. To decide if [Employee] would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while employed by the State. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for workers who left State employment to work for one of the agency’s contractors so long as they did not work on the same projects. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions.

[Employee] stated in her written submission that she was assigned to 20 projects but she also stated that she had some involvement in all of the projects that passed through her office. To the extent that she did not have involvement in a project, her position with [Vendor] would require her to interact with her [Agency] replacement. For that reason, the Commission decided that her new job duties, if performed in Delaware, would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

Lastly, the Commission reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State.

[Employee] could not work for [Vendor] on Delaware projects until after the expiration of the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

21-14—Post Employment: [Employee] worked for [a State Agency]. She oversaw the nurses responsible for reviewing clinical documentation and authorizing patient [services]. Each department has a direct supervisor that reports to [Employee].

[Employee] had interviewed for, and been offered, a position with [Vendor], a State and [Agency] contractor. [Vendor] provides insurance for [medical and long-term care]. [Employee] would be [hired as a Manager]. Her duties would include managing supervisors and case managers and could require her to collaborate with [her former Agency] to discuss care for [the Agency]'s clients. [Employee] learned about the employment opportunity via a job posting on the internet.

[Employee] asked the Commission if her new employment would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter.

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To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter, healthcare administration, while employed by the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a distinct line between subject matter overlap and its application to specific facts. In similar situations the Commission approved post-employment positions for workers who left State employment to work for one of the agency’s vendors, so long as they did not work on the same projects. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions.

While employed by the State, [Employee] did not work directly with clients. Instead, she supervised the nursing staff. Her non-public role at [the Agency] greatly reduced the likelihood that she would encounter a conflict of interest while working for a private entity. Should circumstances arise in which she would be required to confer with her former subordinates (i.e.,

the nurses that are employed by [Agency]), she should recuse herself from those matters until the end of the two-year post-employment restriction.

Lastly, the Commission reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State.

[Employee]'s employment with [Vendor] did not violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct as long as she recused herself as necessary.

21-06—Post Employment: [Employee] was responsible for the finances and contracts at [a State Agency].

Since 2013, [Employee] had also worked as a private contractor for a local construction company. [Employee]'s father retired from [the company] in 2019 and remained a 2% shareholder in the company. [Employee]'s job duties included data entry for payroll and tax purposes, for which she earned less than \$5000 per year. She did not have authority to sign or approve any financial documents or tax forms.

The [Agency] had two major capital improvement projects in progress. During the bid process [Employee] recused herself from all activities surrounding the bid process. [The Company] was the successful bidder on that project. Purchase orders and payment vouchers for [the Company's] work on the project were approved by [other Agency employees]. Ordinarily, [Employee] would handle those duties but she had recused herself in order to avoid "public integrity issues."

The [Agency] hired an architect to begin the design phase of a [new project] and [Employee] participated in the contract negotiations. The next step in the project was to hire a Construction Manager. [Employee] believed that [the Company] would submit a bid for the [new project]. As a result, she recused herself from all aspects of the project.

[Employee]'s continued recusal was a burden on the [Agency] because many of her finance duties have to be performed by other employees due to her personal interest in [the Company]. [Employee] asked the Commission if she could participate in both projects due to the fact that her compensation from [the Company] was under \$5000 per year.

1. In their official capacity, employees may not review or dispose of matters if they have a personal or private interest in a matter before them.

A personal or private interest in a matter is an interest which tends to impair a person's independence of judgment in the performance of the person's duties with respect to that matter." When there is a personal or private interest, the official is to recuse from the outset and even neutral and unbiased statements are prohibited. As to the existence of a conflict of interest, Delaware Courts have held that for the interest to be sufficient [to constitute a conflict of interest] the allegation of a conflict cannot be merely conclusory, without supporting facts.

Officials subject to the State Code of Conduct often try to argue that if an official decision does not result in a \$5000 benefit to accrue to themselves or their family, that they do not have a conflict of interest. That logic is flawed. The legal parameters of § 5805(a)(1) are not defined by § 5805(a)(2), as affirmed by the Delaware Supreme Court.

First, the Code of Conduct has a clear and specific definition section. The definition of a personal or private interest is NOT contained in the definition section of Title 29. It is defined in 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(a)(1) as an interest “which tends to impair independence of judgment.” A separate definition exists for financial interest:

(5) A person has a “financial interest” in a private enterprise if:

a. The person has a legal or equitable ownership interest in the enterprise of more than 10% (1% or more in the case of a corporation whose stock is regularly traded on an established securities market);

b. The person is associated with the enterprise and received from the enterprise during the last calendar year or might reasonably be expected to receive from the enterprise during the current or the next calendar year income in excess of \$5,000 for services as an employee, officer, director, trustee or independent contractor;

Second, the Commission has previously held that § 5805(a)(1) is a codification of the common law restriction on public officials having a personal or private interest. That is because conflict of interest statutes generally do not abrogate common law conflict of interest principles. To read the statute any other way would lead to an absurd result whereby a public official could financially benefit from one of their own decisions, as long as the person benefits by \$4999 or less. To carry that example to its extreme, if a public official financially benefitted by \$4000 for 10 of their official acts, they would have accumulated \$40,000, all free of ethical considerations. That is not what the legislature intended when crafting the Code of Conduct. Courts have ruled that existing statutory language must be interpreted consistent with the General Assembly’s manifest intent. If a statutory interpretation “would lead to an absurd and undesirable result,” the terms should agree with legislative intent. When analyzing the legislature’s intent, the Commission looks to 29 *Del. C.* § 5803 which states “[t]his subchapter shall be construed to promote high standards of ethical conduct in state government.” Allowing public officials to benefit from their own decisions up to \$4999 would be an absurd and undesirable result.

Turning to the pertinent facts of the matter, [Employee] worked for a company that contracted with her State employer. Yes, [Employee] had a financial interest in [the Company] that was less than \$5000. However, the Commission decided that [Employee] also had a personal interest in [the Company]. One aspect of that interest was continued employment, which is related to, but separate from, a financial interest.

During the meeting [Employee] stated that [the Company] hired her full-time after she left her former State position and before accepting the position in the [Agency]. Their willingness to accommodate her temporary need for full-time employment was demonstrative of an employer/employee relationship that extended beyond the amount of money [Employee] earned. For example, during a time when she was in need, they helped her by hiring her full-time. When she no longer needed full-time employment, they continued to contract with her part-time. In addition, [Employee] had worked for [the Company] for seven years in a part-time capacity and her father retired from [the Company] after 50 years of employment. [The Company] is located in a small town in Sussex County with approximately 6000 residents. [Employee] also listed her residence as Lincoln when she submitted paperwork with our agency in 2018 when she was employed by [a different State agency]. During the years she lived and

worked in the same small community as [the Company], it was reasonable for the Commission to conclude that [Employee] forged friendships and relationships with her colleagues and gained insight into the company's operations, procedures and finances. It was those relationships, knowledge and insider perspective, that created a personal interest. Furthermore, when asked at the meeting whether she would be willing to leave her job at [the Company], she stated that it might put a strain on her family. That was also indicative of an interest in continuing part-time employment that was important to [Employee] and her family but was at, or below, the \$5000 financial threshold.

2. Employees may not engage in conduct that may raise suspicion among the public that they are engaging in conduct contrary to the public trust.

The purpose of the code is to ensure that there is not only no actual violation, but also not even a "justifiable impression" of a violation. The Commission treats that as an appearance of impropriety standard. The test is whether a reasonable person, knowledgeable of all the relevant facts, would still believe that the official's duties could not be performed with honesty, integrity and impartiality. Thus, in deciding appearance of impropriety issues, the Commission looks at the totality of the circumstances. Those circumstances should be examined within the framework of the Code's purpose which is to achieve a balance between a "justifiable impression" that the Code is being violated by an official, while not "unduly circumscribing" their conduct so that citizens are encouraged to assume public office and employment.

In weighing the totality of the circumstances, the Commission notes that the [Agency] was only five years removed from news articles alleging [wrongdoing]. While [Employee] was new to the [Agency], it was through that lens that the public would view her dual employment. [Employee] worked for a company that had been the successful bidder for millions of dollars of the [Agency]'s contracts. As the [finance manager] for the [Agency], her close association with both entities was sure to draw suspicion amongst the public that she was engaging in conduct that was contrary to the public trust. In her [Agency] role, [Employee] would be reviewing and disposing of [the Company's] matters (i.e., contracts, bids, invoices, etc.) while performing her [Agency's] job duties. As of the day of the meeting, she had handled the situation appropriately by recusing herself. However, the public was sure to be suspicious of [Employee] and the [Agency] if she did not continue to recuse.

The Commission also decided that the recusal requirement did not 'unduly circumscribe' her conduct. First, she had already worked out a recusal strategy to remove herself from reviewing any [the Company's] matters while performing her [Agency's] job duties. Second, the Commission's decision only affected her part-time employment with [the Company]. She could seek part-time employment with other businesses as long as they did not contract with the [Agency].

[Employee's] part-time employment with [the Company] created a conflict of interest with her [Agency] job duties. She must continue to recuse herself from any involvement with [the Company] as it related to her position at her [Agency].

21-04—Post Employment: [Employee] was formerly employed by [a State agency]. His responsibilities included: permit writing; compliance monitoring; and administration for 12 permitted facilities. [Employee] was the only employee that provided oversight of [those types of] facilities. His oversight responsibilities included conducting field inspections of the facilities

once a year. [Employee] was also responsible for reviewing permit applications to ensure they had the required documentation. [Employee] left State employment in June 2020.

[Employee] was considering employment with a private company over which he had previously held regulatory authority]. In his new role, [Employee] expected to manage and coordinate the transition of the existing facility into a new facility that would be built from the ground up. He expected that his job duties would include: building and logistical design; contract management; scheduling; contractor selection and oversight; ensuring compliance with building and zoning laws; securing the permits necessary for the operation. The company would continue its [other business] separately from the [new] business and [Employee] would not be required to oversee any aspect of that operation during the remainder of the two-year post-employment restriction.

[Employee] asked the Commission if his proposed employment violated the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. To decide if [Employee] would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter, oversight of permitted facilities, while employed by the State. In fact, the facility where [Employee] would be working was one of the facilities he previously oversaw while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a distinct line between subject matter overlap and its application to specific facts. In similar situations the Commission approved post-employment positions for workers who left State employment to work for one of the agency’s vendors so long as they did not work on the same projects. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions.

Although [Employee] would be working for one of [his former Agency’s] licensees, he would be performing new job duties that appeared to be unrelated to his previous [Agency] duties. [Employee] stated that he would be hired to establish, build and manage a [new] facility rather than performing the license oversight duties he was responsible for while employed by [Agency]. The Commission asked whether his new job duties would require him to apply for

permits issued by his former agency, to which he responded affirmatively. The post-employment provision is meant to ensure that former employees do not use their former position to "get a leg up" on other competitors or use the influence they derive from their former employment to influence their former co-workers in making decisions. As a consequence, the Commission decided that he may not appear before, or communicate with, [Agency] staff regarding the *license* until after the expiration of the two-year post-employment restriction in June 2022. Likewise, he could not work on the existing facility until June 2022 because that work was directly related to his former [Agency] job duties.

Lastly, the Commission reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State.

[Employee] could accept employment to build and manage [a new] facility. He could not work in their existing business until after the expiration of the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

20-20—Post-Employment: [Employee] worked for [a State Agency]. His primary responsibility was to implement and run [management software]. The [software] “stores the condition and all information for all the [of the Agency’s infrastructure]. [The goal of the software was to try to predict maintenance costs for the future]. [Employee] also reviewed projects so that he could add comments from his Division’s perspective.

[Employee] retired from State employment at the end of July and wanted to accept a position with an [Agency vendor]. In his email, [Employee] stated that he had not worked on any projects that have involved [the vendor]. His new duties would include reviewing calculations and specifications for projects as well as “developing [the] scope of work for projects.”

[Employee] asked the Commission if his proposed employment would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. To decide if [Employee] would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while employed by the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for [Agency] workers who leave State employment to work for one of the Agency's contractors so long as they do not work on the same projects. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions.

The Commission weighed several factors in determining whether [Employee]'s employment with [the vendor] would violate the post-employment restriction. First, his most recent [Agency] position was limited to working with the software, an internal position at [the Agency]. That meant that [Employee] did not work with [the vendor's] employees while performing his State job duties. Second, he also stated that his familiarity with the software would not lead to [the vendor] being able to access confidential information. Lastly, [the vendor] had not previously bid on any [related projects] in Delaware. Considering the length of the bid process, the Commission decided it was unlikely that [the vendor] would ask [Employee] to work on a Delaware project before the end of the two-year post-employment restriction. The Commission also reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State.

The position with [Vendor] would not violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

20-19—Post-Employment: [Former Employee] worked for a Division within the Department of Health and Social Services (“DHSS”) as a Senior Administrator until his resignation on October 31, 2019. As the Senior Administrator, [Former Employee] was responsible for supervising lower-level administrators and support staff and compiling reports on the management of grants awarded to DHSS.

[Former Employee] had been offered a position with [a private company]. [The private company] was a non-profit organization which held several contracts with [Former Employee]'s Division. Lower-level administrators managed three of those contracts. During his tenure as Administrator, [Former Employee] was responsible for reviewing reports generated by [the private company] for federal submission; reviewing contracts awarded to [the private company] by other administrators; answering general questions about state and federal policies and procedures.

[Former Employee]'s new duties would include managing [the private company]'s sub-contracts with other non-profit agencies. The sub-contracted agencies provided emergency services to Delawareans under [a federal grant]. His new duties would include “interpreting and implementing state and federal grant rules and regulations, negotiating contract terms and conditions, developing tools for reporting, providing training to contractor staff, reviewing and submitting reports to [private company] as well as managing the grant budget funded by the [federal grant].

[Former Employee] asked the Commission if his proposed employment would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. To decide if [Former Employee] would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Former Employee] worked on the subject matter, administration of grants, while employed by the State. In similar situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for workers who left State employment to work for one of the agency’s contractors so long as they do not work on the same projects. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions.

After reviewing the facts and circumstances surrounding his request, the Commission decided that although [Former Employee] had minor responsibilities related to [the private company] while he was employed by the State, those job duties did not overlap with the duties he would be performing for his new employer, monitoring and enforcing the rules regarding disbursement of funds under the [federal grant]. As a result, the Commission decided that [Former Employee] was not materially responsible for matters related to [the private company] while he was employed by the State and the post-employment restriction did not prevent him from working for [the private company] under the facts presented to the Commission. Lastly, the Commission reminded [Former Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State.

No violation of the post-employment restriction.

20-16—Post-Employment (Appearance by Division Director): [Employee] was employed by [a Division of a State Agency] from October 2018 to April 2020. Her annual salary was \$73,366.02. [Employee] resigned to accept a job offer in [another State]. [Employee’s] duties included: providing administrative and technical guidance to subordinate staff; effective operation of the unit; ensuring compliance with all federal, state and agency rules, regulations, policies and procedures concerning fiscal activities, contracts administration, Personnel/Merit system policies and budgets; analyzing and evaluating all administrative functions and activities;

developing new systems and procedures; effective implementation of administrative/fiscal statewide systems. [Employee] reported directly to the Division Director.

During her discussion with the Commission, [the Division Director] stated that many of [the Division's] clients lived in group homes. [The Division] did not play a role in actually acquiring the housing but did assist its clients in finding safe and affordable residential homes. Some of the group homes [were federally funded] and managed by non-profit entities. [The Division] was responsible for ensuring that the homes were healthy and safe. If the cost of the residential setting exceeded the income of the individual, [the Division] used Delaware taxpayer funds to subsidize the cost of the home.

[The Division learned] that [the federal oversight entity] had specific rules related to leasing arrangements, tenants of homes, rent subsidies and the use of a capital reserve account. [Employee] previously worked with [the federal entity] in a different state prior to working for [the Division]. Based on her prior work with [the federal entity], [Employee] noticed that several of the [non-profit providers] were not following [the federal entity's] rules, to the financial detriment of both [the Division] and its clients. Knowledge of [the federal entity's] rules was not, and never had been, a job requirement of Employee's position]. However, [Employee's] expertise in the area would benefit [the Division's] ongoing review of the matter. Because [the Division Director] knew [the federal entity's] program was not being properly administered, [the Director] was obligated to investigate further because the misadministration of [the federal entity's] program by two non-profit providers had resulted in the inappropriate use of client's, and [the Division's] funds. In order to remediate the situation, [the Division Director] wanted to hire [Employee] as a contractor in order to take advantage of her knowledge about [the federal entity's] rules as they related to [their client's] homes.

In [the Division Director's] letter to the Commission, she stated that she was not aware of any other resource that could provide the necessary knowledge, other than the state and federal entities responsible for administering the [federal entity's] programs. While such entities had the ability and authority to sanction the local non-profit entities, [the Division's] goal was to improve the process so that the non-profit entities could continue to operate [the federally funded] homes in Delaware. The [federal entity's] homes were a critical source of housing for [the Division's] clients.

[The Division Director] asked the Commission if contracting with [Employee], to uncover and remediate violations of the [the federal] rules, would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. If so, [the Division Director] requested a waiver to allow [the Division] to contract with [Employee].

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. *United States v. Medico*, 784 F.2d 840, 843 (7th Cir., 1986). Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not "directly and materially responsible" for that matter. *Beebe Medical Center v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, C.A. No. 94A-01-004, J. Terry (Del. Super. June 30, 1995), *aff'd.*, No. 304 (Del. January 29, 1996). In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official's responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former

agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that particular matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. *Medico* at 843. To decide if [Employee] would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. *Ethical Standards in the Public Sector: A Guide for Government Lawyers, Clients, and Public Officials, American Bar Association, Section of State and Local Government Law, Publisher*; p. 38. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially. *Commission Op. No. 96-75 (citing Medico at 842)*. See also *Beebe*.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter, housing for [the Division’s] clients, while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In this case, [Employee] had specific knowledge that would benefit [the Division’s] inquiry into [the non-profit entity’s] owners, but she gained that knowledge while working in a different state. As a consequence, the Commission decided that [Employee] was not materially responsible for [the same] issues while employed by the State of Delaware. Therefore, the two-year post-employment restriction did not apply to [Employee] and her former Division could contract with her regarding the [misappropriation of State and federal funds]. Because the Commission decided that the post-employment restriction did not apply to [Employee], the Commission did not consider whether [the Division] was eligible for a waiver.

The post-employment restriction did not apply to [Employee] for purposes of contracting with her to investigate the federal [housing] requirements. As a result, the Commission did not consider a waiver but suggested that [the Division Director] report [the non-profit’s] violations to the appropriate state and federal authorities.

20-11 Post Employment: [Employee] was the Administrator for a unit in an [Agency]. The [unit] “functions as the ‘gatekeeper’ for the [Division].” Services included residential treatment programs as well as community based mental health services “that promote the independence and recovery of individuals with severe and persistent ... illness.” [citation omitted]. Anyone wanting to enroll in the program must apply through the [unit]. The [unit] then evaluates the client’s need for those services based on: diagnosis; history of illness; history of previous hospitalizations; and their ability to function independently in the community. When the [unit] determines that a client qualifies for services, they will authorize a specific quantity of services and link the client to a community provider. Once the client is enrolled in a program, the [unit] monitors the services provided to the client and periodically reviews how well the program is meeting the client’s needs.

Specifically, [Employee]’s primary duties were: authorizing hospital billing on bi-weekly basis; processing continued stay requests; being on call 24/7 for hospital placements in the event of complex issues; acting as a liaison between [Agency] and other state and community providers; coordinating complex hospital placements; developing and/or revising policies and procedures that affect [the unit] and [the Agency] as a whole.

[Employee] wanted to leave State employment to work for one of the State's insurance providers. She included postings for open positions with her request. Two of the openings were for Case Managers and one was for a quality control position. As the [unit] Administrator, she had extensive contact with the insurance companies during the course of performing her duties. However, she claimed that her contact was limited to determining which programs the client's insurance would cover so that the client could be referred to the appropriate program.

[Employee] asked the Commission if she could work for one of the state's insurance providers without violating the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not "directly and materially responsible" for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official's responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State, he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not "directly and materially responsible" for that matter.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while employed by the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for workers who leave State employment to work for one of the agency's contractors so long as they did not work on the same projects. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions.

While performing her State job duties, [Employee] did not provide direct services to clients. Instead, she would query the insurance provider about the extent of the client's coverage and would make a recommendation for care based on that coverage. If [Employee] was hired by one of the State's insurance providers as a case manager, she could find herself on the other end of those types of queries from her former co-workers. As a consequence, the Commission determined that she could not work for a State insurance provider in a position which would require her to interact with her former co-workers for a period of two years, lest the public think she was trying to leverage her relationships with her former co-workers and colleagues. However, if she was offered a position that did not require her to interact with her former colleagues and was focused on the insurance provider's internal processes (i.e. in quality control or as an audit manager), it would be unlikely that her new job duties would violate the post-employment restriction because those duties did not overlap with her State job duties. As a consequence, the public would be less likely to be concerned that she used her State position as a leg up to attain new employment. Lastly, the Commission reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State.

The Commission decided that [Employee] could seek employment with one of the State's medical insurance providers as long as the job duties were internal to the organization and did not require her to have contact with her former co-workers.

20-10 Post-Employment: [Employee worked for a State agency in a leadership position]. He retired on April 1, 2020. According to the [Agency] website, [Employee]’s duties were to “work with internal and external customers to create plans that result in a system of [agency] options in coordination with state policies and local government comprehensive plans; provide information and advice to local governments with decision-making responsibilities to help coordinate decisions among state agencies, counties and municipalities. In his request letter, [Employee] described his job duties as being: (1) responsible for setting policy and (2) determining budgets. He stated that he was not responsible for the selection of consultant services for his Division, which took place at the staff level, but he did sign all the contracts once the consultants were chosen. [Employee] added that he did not have “direct oversight of the work products and activities of the Division other than to ensure they complied with all rules and regulations and were budgeted for completion. He provided authorizations to advertise bids and recommended the award of projects based on established policies.

[Employee] had no immediate plans to re-enter the workforce but anticipated that he would work in his area of expertise, perhaps contracting directly with his former agency. [Employee] asked the Commission whether he could return to work as either a contractor, or as an employee of an [Agency] contractor, without violating the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while employed by the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for workers who leave State employment to work for, or as, one of the agency’s contractors so long as they do not work on the same projects. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions.

[Employee]’s view of his role at [the Agency] appeared to underestimate the scope and breadth of the services he provided to [the Agency] during his tenure. While he broadly described his duties as setting policy and budgets, [Employee] neglected to appreciate the consequences of: (1) being the Division’s chief policy maker; (2) being a signatory for the Division’s consultant contracts; (3) authorizing bids for advertising; and (4) recommending the award of projects. As a policy maker, [Employee] implemented overarching standards, requirements and direction to all of the Division’s employees whether they were State or

contract employees. As a signatory to the consultant contracts, [Employee] authorized the engagement of each consultant working for the Division. Without his signature, those contracts could not have been executed. Authorizing the advertisement of bids is part of an approval process which impacts the number of contractors or consultants the Division, or perhaps even the agency, could hire. Finally, [Employee] recommended the award of projects by stating that the consideration of the award was based upon "established policies". [Employee] did not indicate whether he, the Division Director, had a role in establishing those same policies. In either case, his decisions to award projects required the application of Division policy, budget and standards to the facts at hand. Such decisions are the quintessential definition of being "materially responsible" for a matter.

Additionally, [Employee] stated in his letter that he was not responsible for the work product of the Division's consultants or employees. Of course, as a Division Director, he did not directly supervise every employee and consultant in his division, but the idea that he did not have "direct oversight of the work products and activities of the Division other than to ensure they complied with all rules and regulations and were budgeted for completion" ignores the fact that the people who *did* have "direct oversight" over those individuals, reported to [Employee]. It would be impossible for him to know if the consultants' and employees' work products were compliant with regulations and within budget if he did not perform some sort of cursory review of the information he was provided.

It is important to note that the post-employment law does not speak about 'direct' or 'indirect' supervision. It does, however, speak about being materially responsible for a matter while employed by the State. While many of [Employee]'s duties may have been performed within the physical confines of his office, his approvals of consultant agreements and bid postings, along with his implicit approval of the consultants' and employees' work product and his express policy-making authority, demonstrated that his areas of responsibility extended far past the confines of his desk. Consequently, the Commission decided that he may not return to work at [the Agency] as a contractor, or work for an [Agency] contractor, on any project that is/was assigned to the Division during [Employee]'s tenure as Division Director, for the next two years. However, he may work for other State agencies and he may work for an [Agency] contractor on any project outside the State of Delaware.

In addition, he may not appear before [the Agency's] bid committee, for any project, for a period of two years lest the public think he is trying to leverage his relationships with his former co-workers or subordinates. Lastly, the Commission reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State.

[Employee] may work as an [Agency] contractor, or for an [Agency] contractor, as long as he followed the advice in his opinion letter.

20-05 Post-Employment: [Employee] worked for [a State agency]. He provided a list of projects that he had mostly recently worked on.

[Employee] retired from State service on April 1, 2020 and sought employment with [a State contractor]. His supervisor would be the department head. His job duties would include staff development, project reviews, project management.

[Employee] asked the Commission if his proposed employment would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while employed by the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for [employees] who leave State employment to work for one of the agency’s contractors so long as they do not work on the same projects. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions.

[Employee] provided the Commission with a list of the projects on which he had most recently worked. The Commission decided that as long as [Employee] did not work on those projects, he would not violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. However, the Commission did prohibit [Employee] from appearing before any [Agency] bid committees so that the public is assured that he is not attempting to influence his former co-workers. In addition, the Commission reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State.

No violation of the post-employment restriction as long as he does not work on the projects he included in his list, he does not appear before [Agency] bid committees or reveal confidential information gained during his State employment.

20-04—Post Employment: [Employee] was employed by a [State Agency]. Her primary job duties included: overseeing capital project acquisition; overseeing condemnation activities; and overseeing consultant acquisitions for capital and non-capital projects. [Employee] retired from State service on February 1, 2020.

After retirement, [Employee] was considering employment with one of [the Agency]’s vendors. [Employee] would be hired as a Services Manager. Her new duties would include securing easements; ensuring compliance with applicable laws, rules, regulations, policies and procedures; as well as performing property and boundary research. [The Vendor was not approved for the type of work that Employee anticipated being hired to perform, although they did contract with the Agency on other types of projects.

[Employee] asked the Commission whether she could work for [the Vendor] after her retirement, in the above-described position without violating the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. To decide if [Employee] would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while employed by the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a precise line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission had approved post-employment positions for [Agency] workers who left State employment to work for one of the agency’s vendors so long as they did not work on the same projects. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions.

[Employee’s State] job duties were similar to the work she would be performing for [the Vendor]. However, because [the Vendor] was not [approved by the Agency to work on the types of projects Employee anticipated working on, she anticipated that she would be working exclusively on out-of-state projects for the next three years. After that time, [the Vendor] could apply for [Agency] projects but that would be long after the expiration of the two-year post-employment restriction. Although unlikely, the Commission wanted to make [Employee] aware that she could not appear before any of [the Agency’s] bid committees for the duration of the post-employment restriction, lest her former co-workers be influenced by their past working relationships. Lastly, the Commission reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State.

[Employee's position with [vendor] did not violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct because she would be working on out-of-state projects until after the prohibition expired.

20-02—Post Employment: [Employee] was employed by [a State agency]. Her job duties included: assisting with [a specific] program; processing and maintaining records; providing advice to contracted [reviewers] about the relevant standards; and participating in audits of the program. [Employee] was contemplating retirement from State service in the future.

After retirement, [Employee] would be seeking private sector employment with local firms, likely a [State] vendor. While she had not narrowed down which of the firms she wanted to work for, she believed that she would be assigned to work [in a specific area].

She asked the Commission for guidance as to which [State] projects she could work on after she retired from State service without violating the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State, he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. To decide if [Employee] would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially.

To determine if there would be substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during her State employment to the proposed post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, she worked on the subject matter while employed by the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a precise line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for [State] workers who leave State employment to work for one of the agency’s

contractors so long as they did not work on the same projects. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions.

While employed by the State, [Employee] worked on [various] projects throughout the State. One of her primary job duties was to provide advice and direction to the contracted [reviewers] regarding applicable standards and regulations. As a result, the Commission determined that there would be considerable overlap between [Employee]'s State job duties and those she would perform as an employee of a private company. Consequently, it was decided that for two years after she left State employment, [Employee] may only work [on Agency projects] initiated after she left State employment. Projects that existed prior to her separation from State service were subject to the two-year post-employment restriction.

One of the goals of the post-employment law is to allay the public's concern that government employees may exercise undue influence over their previous government co-workers. For that reason, [Employee] could not appear before any [Agency] bid committees for the duration of the post-employment restriction. The Commission also reminded her of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State.

[Employee] may work for an [Agency] vendor so long as she worked on projects that were initiated after her separation date.

20-01—Post Employment: [Employee] was a [Deputy Director of a Division within a State Agency]. As Deputy Director, [Employee]'s primary responsibility was the oversight of [the Agency's administrative section]. [Employee] retired from State service on February 1, 2020.

After retirement, [Employee] would be employed as the Executive Director of [a healthcare facility]. The facility provided free medical and dental treatment to uninsured members of the community. The [facility] was funded through grants and business donations. [Employee]'s duties included: ensuring compliance with policies and procedures; improving efficiency; maintaining the physical site; recruiting and training volunteers and staffers; grant writing; and budgeting.

[Employee] asked the Commission if her post-retirement position at the [Facility] would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State.

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not "directly and materially responsible" for that matter. In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official's responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand

their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State, he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. To decide if [Employee] would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter, while employed by the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a precise line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for [Agency] workers who left State employment to work [in a related field]. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions.

While performing her new duties, [Employee] anticipated that the potential for overlap between her former State position and her new job would be at its highest if she decided to apply for State grants from her former agency. However, because of the amount of work that was already awaiting her and the fact that she would only work 10 hours per week, she anticipated that it would be some time before she would be able to begin the State grant application process. If [Employee] begins the application process more than two years after her separation date with the State, she would not violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. However, if she began applying for State grants prior to the expiration of the two-year period, she could not apply for grants administered by [her former Agency]. This was so the public may be assured that her former co-workers and colleagues were not influenced by her former relationship with them.

The Commission also reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State.

[Employee’s] post-retirement job duties do not overlap with her former State job duties as long as she does not apply for grants administered by [her former Agency] for a period of two years.

19-38—Post Employment: [Employee] was the Assistant Division Director of [a State agency]. He was responsible for managing the agency’s capital improvement projects throughout the State. He retired from State service at the end of November 2019. [Employee] planned to open his own management consulting firm after his retirement. He expected to contract with State agencies, including [his former Agency], other consulting businesses and/or contractors. He anticipated that his business would focus on [tasks similar to those he performed for his former employer]. [Employee] asked the Commission how the ethics rules would affect his ability to work as an [Agency] consultant or as a consultant for one of [Agency]’s contractors.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the proposed post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while employed by the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for [Agency] workers who left State employment to work for one of the agency's contractors so long as they did not work on the same projects. The Commission is to strive for consistency in its opinions.

As the Assistant Division Director, [Employee]'s state job duties required him to oversee all [of the Agency's] capital improvement projects. Consequently, he was materially responsible for most, if not all, capital projects in the State. As a result, it was very unlikely that he could parse out projects to work on for which he was not previously materially responsible. That limited his new business to working only on non-capital [Agency] improvement projects, new [Agency] projects that were initiated after his separation from the State, work for other State agencies and any projects outside the State of Delaware. [Employee] could not work on any of the capital improvement projects which were initiated during his tenure at [Agency], including [a large project] which was scheduled to begin construction in March 2020. Although construction of that project hadn't been started at the time of [Employee]'s meeting with the Commission, he admitted to the Commission that he had commented on the project's plans and specifications and that his employees had also been involved in the project. The Commission's reasoning applied equally to [Employee] and to companies that he owned. That meant that the restrictions applied equally to new employees that [Employee] intended to hire over the next two years.

In addition, [Employee] was advised that he could not meet with any [Agency] bid committees for a period of two years, lest the public think he was trying to leverage his relationships with his former co-workers and colleagues. Unlike to the restriction cited above, [Employee]'s workers could meet with [Agency] bid committees if they had not been employed by [the Agency] in the past two years. The Commission also reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State.

19-37—Post-Employment: [Employee] worked for [a State Agency] and was retiring from State employment on December 31, 2019. For the last eleven years, she has [worked on Project A]. In 2017, she was assigned to various projects in the City of Wilmington, [Project B]. Over the years, [Employee] had supervised the work of many of [the Agency]'s vendors but had not been involved in the selection of any of those vendors. After retirement, [Employee] was considering employment with one of [the Agency]'s vendors. While she had not narrowed down which of the vendors she would work for, she believed that she would be asked to [work on projects that were in the same geographic location as her State job]. She asked the Commission for guidance as to which [Agency] projects she could work on after she retired without violating the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To determine if there would be substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while employed by the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for [Agency] workers who leave State employment to work for one of the agency's contractors so

long as they do not work on the same projects. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions.

Obviously, [Employee] could not work on any part of [Project A], that being the most recent State project for which she was materially responsible. In her State role, [Employee] had overarching responsibilities that touched all aspects of the project. Consequently, the post-employment restriction for that project will expire on December 31, 2021. The post-employment restriction also applied to the City of Wilmington projects she worked on in 2017. At the meeting, [Employee] stated that she was still working on those projects. As a result, the expiration date of the post-employment restriction as it applied to the Wilmington projects would also expire on December 31, 2021. As to [Employee]'s question regarding other projects, the Commission decided that upon her retirement, [Employee] could work on projects in the same geographic area as long as she did not have any previous involvement with those projects while she was employed at [the Agency].

One of the goals of the post-employment law is to allay the public's concern that government employees may exercise undue influence over their previous government co-workers. Consequently, [Employee] could not appear before any [of the Agency's] bid committees for the duration of the post-employment restriction. That would assure the public that her work on behalf of a private company would not be influenced by the prior working relationships between [Employee] and her former co-workers. Assuming that [Employee] accepted employment which required her to work on State projects, the Commission reminded her of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State.

19-35—Post-Employment: [Employee] worked for a State [Agency] and retired from State employment on October 31, 2019. [Prior to his retirement] he was responsible for the design and plan development of [several] projects that were assigned to him. At the time of the meeting, he had most recently worked on two projects: [Project A] and [Project B]. Both projects were scheduled to be completed by the end of 2019. In addition, [Employee] was managing a project [that had been] contracted to a third-party vendor: [Project C]. Lastly, [Employee] had worked on: [Project D]. [Project D] involved researching [certain aspects of the State's infrastructure maintenance]. There were approximately 30 locations to be researched. [Employee] had finished researching two locations and had six more 'in progress' at the end of 2018. He had not worked on the project in 2019. After retirement, [Employee] was considering employment in the same field and some of that work could include [Agency] projects. He asked the Commission for guidance as to which [Agency] projects he could work on after he retired without violating the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. Specifically, he asked 1) if he could contact the staff working on [Project C] so that he could answer any questions that may arise and 2) if he could resume work on [Project D] at some point in the future?

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while employed by the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for [Agency] workers who leave State employment to work for one of the agency's contractors so long as they do not work on the same projects. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions.

It was clear that [Employee] could not work on [Project A] or [Project B], those being the most recent State projects for which he was materially responsible. As a consequence, the post-employment restriction for those projects will expire on Oct. 31, 2021. As to [Project C], [Employee] asked if he could respond to questions from his former co-workers about the project. The Code of Conduct does not prohibit [Employee] from answering questions to assist his former colleagues. However, if the questions were posed by outside vendors, he should not insert himself into matters involving a project for which he was previously responsible lest it be seen as assisting a private enterprise, a violation of the Code. Finally, [Employee] asked if he may work on [Project D] after he left State service. The last time [Employee] worked on that project was at the end of 2018. As stated above, [Employee] completed the research on two of the [project's] locations and had six others 'in progress'. The Commission decided that [Employee] could work on the 22 locations for which he had not previously been responsible, any time after he left State service. However, he could not have any involvement in the two research projects that he completed or the six other research projects that were 'in-progress' at the time of his separation from the State. The post-employment restriction for those projects will expire at the end of 2020.

The Commission also reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. In addition, [Employee] may not appear before any [of the Agency's] bid committees for a period of two years. That did not mean that he could not work on [Agency] bids, he could, but he could not appear before his former colleagues and co-workers when the bid is presented to [the Agency].

19-25—Post Employment: [Employee] worked for a State [Agency] and his primary job duty was to inspect work being performed to ensure compliance with industry standards. [He was assigned to two specific projects]. [Employee] was considering accepting a position with [one of the Agency's Vendors]. He would be responsible for overseeing [the Vendor's contracts with his former Agency]. [Employee] asked the Commission if his proposed employment with [Vendor] would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission had approved post-employment positions for [Agency] workers who left State employment to work for one of the agency's contractors so long as they did not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09 and 13-41*. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions. 29 *Del. C.* § 5809(5).

Obviously, [Employee] could not work on the two [projects] he most recently worked on while employed by [the Agency]. However, the Commission decided that he could work on any other State projects as a [Vendor] employee as long as it was not a project for which he was previously responsible while he was a State employee. Additionally, [Employee] could not appear before [the Agency's] bid committees for a period of two years. That did not mean he could not work on any bids, only that he could not appear in person before his former co-workers or colleagues. The Commission also reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d).

19-17– Post Employment: [Employee] worked for a State Agency and retired in June 2017. [Employee]’s duties included, but were not limited to, reviewing responses to requests for proposals (“RFP”) from vendors that would provide supplies and services to the [Agency]. [Employee] was also one of the [Agency]’s employees who would vote on, and award, contracts to contractors. One contractor, [Vendor], was the selected bidder in response to an RFP for which the other three bids were disqualified for not responding to the RFP appropriately. As the result of the successful bid, [Vendor] provided [the Agency] with [supplies, services and personnel]. During the time the contract was in place [Employee] worked with the [Vendor]’s employees as well as State employees.

After [Employee]’s retirement in June 2017, he returned to his former position as a casual/seasonal employee to aid the [Agency]’s transition from [one employee to another]. He remained a casual/seasonal employee until June 2018. [Employee] contacted the human relations department to determine if his separation date was 2017 or 2018. He was told that his separation date was 2017. In June of 2018, a representative of [Vendor] contacted [Employee] to see if he would be interested in working as an independent contractor [for one of the Vendor’s audit projects] to take place in May 2019. [Employee] communicated his interest but because of the post-employment restriction he stated he would not be able to assist them until June 2019. In the fall of 2018, [Employee] began attending training seminars in preparation of performing the audit work. [Vendor] compensated [Employee] a total of \$7,000.00 for his training hours in December 2018 and January 2019.

[Employee] asked the Commission to consider whether he violated 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d) by accepting payment from [the Vendor] in December 2018 and January 2019. Second, [Employee] asked the Commission to consider if his upcoming audit work in May 2019 would be a violation of the two-year post-employment restriction.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter, contracting with [Vendor], while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts.

[Employee’s State] job duties related to [Vendor] involved the receipt and monitoring of [products and personnel]. [Vendor] was not selected because of any favoritism on the part of the [Agency]. They were selected because they were the only qualified bidder that responded to the RFP. The audit work that [Employee] would be performing for [Vendor] as an independent contractor had nothing to do with his previous job duties. While there could be some overlap in personnel, it did not seem to be a situation in which [Employee] had hoped to use his contact with [Vendor] to benefit himself after he left State service. The audit work itself did not involve the State of Delaware or the [Agency]. Likewise, [Employee]’s attendance at two training seminars did not appear to share any overlapping duties with his previous job duties when he was employed by the [Agency]. Nor was it related to the prior contract that [Vendor] had with the [Agency].

The Commission reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). In addition, he was advised that the two-year post-employment restriction did not expire until June 2020 because his work as a casual/seasonal employee extended his date of separation from State employment for another year.

19-13– Post Employment: [Employee] worked for a [State Agency] as a Division Director. As a Division Director, he oversaw personnel and budgets. [He was also] responsible for [many of the Agency’s projects]. His involvement in those projects was limited to approving documents and contracts. His staff managed the day-to-day activities and made decisions regarding work assignments, including assignments to vendors providing professional services. [Employee] did not participate on professional services selection committees but he did approve the final selection made by the committees. Even though [Employee] could technically override the final choice of a selection committee, the only effect would be to restart the process from the beginning. He could not choose a different vendor than the one selected by the committee. As a result, [Employee] was responsible for everything and nothing [regarding the Agency’s projects] other than signing documents on behalf of [the Agency].

[Employee] wanted to continue to [work in the same field after] his retirement. At the meeting he stated that he had been offered a position by [Vendor], an [Agency] contractor. His duties were expected to include: staff supervision; management of project teams; assisting with employee training, recruitment and hiring; operations management. [Employee] would be spending most of his time in Maryland but the position required oversight of the Delaware, Maryland and West Virginia regional operations. During his tenure at [Agency], [Employee] signed off on two of the [Vendor]’s projects, both of which were still active. [Employee] asked the Commission whether he could work on new projects that the [Agency] could award to [Vendor] after his retirement and specifically, if he could work on the open projects without violating the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission had approved post-employment positions for [Agency] workers who left State employment to work for one of the agency’s contractors so long as they did not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09 and 13-41*. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions. 29 Del. C. § 5809(5).

[Employee’s State] job duties were primarily internal, with little to no contact with vendors or contractors, thus reducing any overlap that could occur between his former job duties and his proposed job duties. However, his approval of [the Vendor]’s open projects prevented him from working on those same projects as a [Vendor] employee. At the meeting, [Employee] spoke about investigating contracts and bids that had been reported as having the appearance of impropriety but when they were investigated, it turned out that the process had not been tainted. His authorization of the two open projects would create the same appearance of impropriety because if someone were to pull the RFP, bids and associated paperwork related to those projects, they would see his signature. [Employee]’s involvement on behalf of [the Vendor], in a project he approved as a State employee, was likely to lead the public to believe that he approved those projects in anticipation of working for [the Vendor] in the future. In addition, the Commission decided that his authorization of the projects made him materially responsible for them because they could not have moved forward without his signature.

[Employee]’s proposed work for [the Vendor] on new projects, that he had not authorized or had any involvement with whatsoever (including drafting or approving the RFPs, etc.), would

not violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. However, because of his position with the State, [Employee] was likely recognizable to a vast majority of [the Agency's] employees. As a result, he could not appear before any [of the Agency's] bid committees, for any project, for two years. That did not mean he could not work on the bid, only that he could not appear in person before his former co-workers or subordinates. The Commission also reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

18-49 Michael Vild--Post Employment (*Commission Counsel recusing*) (*Waiver GRANTED*)

Because of Commission Counsel's recusal, what follows is a short summary of information related to Counsel after meeting with the party and the Commission's decision.

Mr. Vild asked the Commission for a waiver of the post-employment restriction to allow him to work on litigation as a private attorney that he had started while a state-employed attorney. His former supervisor, Aaron Goldstein, State Solicitor, wrote a letter of support stating that Mr. Vild's continuing work on the litigation was necessary and that the agency (the Attorney General's Office) would suffer a hardship if the waiver was denied.

The Commission decided to grant a waiver of the post-employment restriction based on agency hardship until the expiration of the post-employment restriction or the end of the litigation, whichever came first.

18-42 Post-Employment: [Employee] previously worked as [a supervisor] within the Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families ("DSCYF"). While at DSCYF, [Employee] worked with families and children to assist them in identifying and accessing community-based services which would best meet their needs and goals. [Employee] left State employment on October 1, 2017.

[Employee] was offered contractual employment with DSCYF at [a new facility]. The [unit at the new facility] oversaw services for clients who were hospitalized and also helped new clients identify and enroll in outpatient services when released. Her duties related to outpatient services would be limited to making sure patients due to be released had enrolled in suitable programs. [Employee] would also notify a patient's school district of their eligibility to return to school. [Employee] asked the Commission if her employment as a contractual employee with DSCYF would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To determine if there is substantial overlap, the duties and responsibilities during State employment are compared to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter, access to community treatment services, when working for the State. While both her former position and the contractual position had job duties related to outpatient services, her State position was more client oriented. In the contract position, her involvement would be limited to making sure clients had enrolled in appropriate programs prior to release. [Employee's] involvement with them would then end. Therefore, the Commission decided there was enough separation between the two sets of job duties that her acceptance of the contractual position would not violate the post-employment restriction.

When asked how she had been made aware of the job opening, [Employee] stated that DSCYF had contacted her to see if she was interested. She also pointed out that the Medical Director at DSCYF during her State employment had left, thus ameliorating concerns that she obtained the position through friendships with her former colleagues. The Commission decided that [Employee's] acceptance of the contract position did not violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

18-38—Post Employment: {Employee} worked for [a particular State agency until] August 2018. Her duties were: interviewing clients and family members to gather background information and make referrals for services; assessing the client's progress and providing that information to courts and law enforcement agencies; collaborating with schools, doctors and other service providers to set goals and measure her client's progress.

[Employee] wanted to accept a contract position offered by [her former agency]. Her job duties would include working with school students and their families in the school environment assessing needs, assisting with the development of interventions (within the school), and making referrals for additional services. The demographic of her new clients would be similar to that of her previous State clients. [Employee] asked the Commission if her contractual position would violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To ascertain if there was a substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter, assisting youth clients, while employed by the State. However, her State clients were older than those she would be working with in the schools. As a result, it was unlikely she would encounter a former client while working as a contractor. Should such a circumstance occur, she was advised to recuse herself from working with that client. Recusal meant she should report the conflict to her supervisor, so that another [contractor] could be assigned to assist the client. The recusal requirement would be in place until August 2020, two years after she left [her former Agency]. When asked how she heard about the job posting, [Employee] responded that she had seen a posting on the State website. Therefore, her application was part of a fair and equal competitive selection process, lessening the likelihood that her former co-workers had interceded on her behalf. [Employee] was also reminded of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d).

18-31—Post-Employment: [Employee] worked for a State [Agency]. His job duties included: providing technical information to assist in the creation of manuals; identifying issues in need of remedial measures; reviewing plans, estimates and bid proposals to ensure quality and consistency within the agency; serving as the [Agency's] representative at regional and national professional conferences.

[Employee] was preparing to retire from State service. He was expecting to obtain employment with [one of two private companies which were Agency] contractors. He expected his future employment would involve working on [specific] projects. Such projects would include design and development of plans, specifications and estimates. [Employee] asked the Commission to decide if his proposed post-retirement employment would violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission had approved post-employment positions for [Agency] workers who left State employment to work for one of the agency's contractors so long as they did not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09 and 13-41*. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions. 29 Del. C. § 5809(5).

[Employee]'s job duties were performed entirely within the Agency and he did not work on specific projects or assignments. As a consequence, the Commission did not discern any overlap between his proposed job duties and his [Agency] duties. When asked if his new job duties would require him to appear before [his former Agency's] bid committees, he indicated that it was unlikely to occur in the near future and he estimated it would be five years before he would be asked to perform such job duties. In the unlikely event his new employer asked him to appear before an [Agency] bid committee within the next two years, he was advised to recuse himself if the bid committee was comprised of his former co-workers. [Employee] was also reminded of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

18-28—Post-Employment: [Employee] worked for a State [Agency] as an Engineer. His job duties included maintaining [one of the Agency's] websites (provided technical guidance); reviewed plans; reviewed estimates and bid proposals to ensure compliance with [Agency] guidelines; provided technical information to assist in the updating of procedure manuals; maintained PC hardware and components. [Employee] retired from State service in August 2018.

[Employee] intended to seek work as an engineer for a private firm, possibly one of [Agency]'s contractors. At the time of the hearing, he had not yet submitted an employment application. [Employee] stated that contractors had been reluctant to discuss possible job opportunities with him until after he had obtained an opinion letter from the Commission. He anticipated his job duties would include preparing plans for projects and/or mentoring young engineers. [Employee] asked the Commission to decide if his proposed post-retirement work would violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the proposed post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter, engineering, while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission had approved post-employment positions for [Agency] workers who left State employment to work for one of the Agency's contractors so long as they did not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09 and 13-41; see 18-03 (attached)*. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions. 29 Del. C. § 5809(5).

[Employee]'s job duties at [Agency] were primarily intra-agency and did not require him to work on outside projects with any of the [Agency]'s contractors. One of his duties was to review and update technical information which was posted on the website for use by interested parties, including the public. While [Employee], on behalf of his future employer, could refer to

the technical information on the website, he would not be responsible for the content contained therein, like he was as a [Agency] employee. By way of analogy, it was the difference between reading a book and authoring a book. The content of the book would not be affected by the reader. Therefore, his use of [Agency]'s technical information after he obtained employment in the private sector would not violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

The Commission did remind [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing *any* confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). For example, he could not disclose to his future employer the intricacies of [Agency]'s bid scoring system which he described during the hearing.

18-13—Post Employment: The matter was reported anonymously to the State Auditor's Office who then referred the matter to the Commission. The reporting person did not file a formal complaint. The letter alleged that [a former Employee] was violating the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct by contracting with three Delaware [State agencies] but did not elaborate further. [The Employee worked for the State from 2011-2017. In 2017, he moved out-of-state to accept a position similar to the one he held in Delaware].

Generally, to determine if there is substantial overlap, the Commission compares the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. However, there were not enough facts in the letter to adequately determine if [Employee] was contracting with Delaware [agencies] and if so, whether his contract work overlapped with his previous State duties.

The question considered was what course of action the Commission should pursue? [Employee] was no longer working in Delaware. As a result, an administrative penalty would not be a suitable remedy if it was discovered that [Employee] was in violation of the post-employment restriction. Violations of 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d) are subject to a criminal penalty of "not more than one year in prison and by a fine not to exceed \$10,000." 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(f)(1). The Commission is authorized to refer matters to the Attorney General's ("AG") office when there is substantial evidence of a criminal violation. 29 *Del. C.* § 5809(4). However, the Commission decided it was very unlikely that the AG's office would pursue the case given the fact that [Employee] lived out-of-state. Another option would be for the Commission to generate a Complaint on its own initiative. 29 *Del. C.* § 5810(a). Thereafter, assuming the Complaint was found to adequately allege a violation of the Code of Conduct, the matter would be set down for a formal hearing. The end result of the formal hearing would likely be a referral of the matter to the Attorney General's office.

Based on the lack of information in the anonymous letter and the inability to impose a meaningful penalty, if necessary, the Commission decided to dismiss the matter.

18-10—Post Employment: [Employee] worked for [a State agency]. [His job duties and assignments have been excluded to ensure the confidentiality his advisory opinion]. [Employee] oversaw the work of other staff and developed their performance plans and evaluated their performance. [Employee] was retiring from State service on April 1, 2018.

[Employee] obtained part-time employment [with one of his agency's vendors]. His job duties and assignments were different than those he performed while working for the State].

[Employee] asked the Commission to decide if his new position would violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission had approved post-employment positions for [Agency's] workers who left State employment to work for one of the agency's contractors so long as they did not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09 and 13-41*. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions. *29 Del. C. § 5809(5)*.

[Employee]'s new job duties were not similar to his State job duties and he had not previously worked on the [specific] project. [Employee] would be summarizing the reports of other employees and filing the information with [his former agency]. When asked by the Commission if he would be required to have contact with [agency] employees, [Employee] stated that if so, his contact would be limited to electronic contact with an occasional phone call. The Commission reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. *29 Del. C. § 5805(d)*.

18-04—Post Employment: [Employee] previously worked for two Divisions within the Department of Health and Social Services. Between November 2017 and February 1, 2018, [Employee] worked for the Division [#1]. She was responsible for managing, budgeting and reporting grants. Prior to that position, [Employee] was [employed by Division #2] from January 2012, until November 2017. In that role [Employee] was responsible for grant administration. [Employee] left State employment effective February 2, 2018.

After leaving State service, [Employee] accepted a position with [Company]. [Company] was located in Philadelphia and offered technical writing, instructional design and project management services. Examples of the services they provided included: writing policies and procedures; work instructions; training documents; quick reference guides; standard operating procedures. At the time of the hearing, [Company] did not contract with the State but [Employee] anticipated they would seek State contracts in the future. [Employee] asked the Commission if her status as a former State employee impacted the [Company]'s ability to work on State contracts and whether her involvement (or lack thereof) on a State contract would affect the Commission's decision.

In answer to her first question, the Commission decided that the post-employment restriction applied to [Employee]'s post-employment activities, not to the [Company]'s. Therefore, [Company] did not have to consider the post-employment restriction when applying for State contracts. Because the post-employment restriction applied to [Employee], her involvement in a State contract was the crucial factor in determining whether there would be a violation of the post-employment restriction. Ordinarily, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities in order to determine if there was substantial overlap. However, because [Company] did not have a contract with the State, it was difficult for the Commission to make a determination as to whether her involvement in a project would be a violation of the post-employment restriction. As a result, the Commission decided that she could not work on contracts between [Company] and [Division #1] until February 2020, and she could not work on contracts between [Company] and [Division #2]

until after November 2019. There were no restrictions that applied to her participation in contracts between [Company] and any other State agency. [Employee] was also reminded of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

18-03—Post Employment: [Employee] worked for [a State Agency and implemented software upgrades for two different Divisions]. From August 2016 until his retirement in December 2017 he worked for [Division #1 using software A]. Between December 2015, and August 2016, [Employee] worked [for Division #2]. In that position he worked on [software B]. [Employee] included a list of active projects in which he had some involvement.

Effective January 2, 2018, [Employee] accepted employment with an [Agency] contractor, [Company]. As a [Company] employee, [Employee] asked the Commission to decide when he could resume work on the [software #2] project without violating the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. In addition, [Employee] asked if he could work on the [software #1] project prior to the expiration of the post-employment restriction so long as he did not work with his former co-workers.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter, software applications, while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for [Agency] workers who left State employment to work for one of the agency's contractors so long as they did not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09 and 13-41*. The Commission strives for consistency in their opinions. 29 Del. C. § 5809(5).

[Employee]'s last involvement with [software #B] as a State employee was on August 29, 2016. As a result, the two-year post-employment restriction would expire on August 29, 2018. [Employee] could have no further involvement with the [software #B] project until that time. The Commission then considered the applicability of the post-employment restriction to [Employee]'s work on the [software #A] application. He last worked on that application in December 2017, with [a specific Division within the Agency]. He stated that the work he performed for the [Division] was specific to their needs and he would not be using any portion of that project to benefit his current employer if they were to contract with other State agencies, or other [Agency] groups, to provide similar services. The Commission decided that he could work on other [software #A] projects as a [Company] employee. The only restriction was that he could not work on [his former Division's] project until after the expiration of the two-year post-employment restriction. The Commission also reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

17-45 Crystal Webb & Paul Silverman—Post Employment Waiver Request

(Because a waiver was granted, the opinion is published so the public is assured that the conduct has been approved.)

VIA EMAIL

January 5, 2018

17-45--Post Employment--WAIVER REQUEST (GRANTED)

Hearing and Decision By: *Bonnie Smith (Chair), William F. Tobin, Jr. (Vice-Chair), Michele Whetzel (Vice-Chair); Commissioners: Jeremy Anderson, Esq., Lisa Lessner. Andrew Gonser, Esq.*

Dear Ms. Webb and Dr. Silverman,

Thank you for attending the Commission meeting on December 19th, 2017. After consideration of all the relevant facts and circumstances, the Commission decided to GRANT your request for a waiver to allow Dr. Silverman to work with DPH for the purpose of creating a program to address the over-prescription of opioid substances in Delaware. The Commission's reasoning is set forth below.

I. FACTS

Ms. Webb is the Deputy Director of the Division of Public Health ("DPH") within the Department of Health and Social Services ("DHSS"). DPH is attempting to address the opioid crisis in Delaware. As part of that effort, DPH secured a grant from the federal government to identify and educate physicians who are prescribing opioids in excess of accepted guidelines. The education efforts would be organized among State agencies and outside contractors. Ms. Webb proposed hiring a former DPH employee, Dr. Silverman to evaluate and report program activities to the federal government and to State agencies. When the grant was originally written, DPH had identified an employee who was to be responsible for the implementation of the program. However, she left DPH before the work on the program began. Ms. Webb stated that DPH's staff was already working at full capacity and some of the deadlines related to the grant were in January 2018. Because time was a consideration, she believed hiring Dr. Silverman would be the fastest and easiest way to implement the program.

Dr. Silverman retired from his position as Associate Deputy Director of DPH on April 1, 2017. He had discussed the program with DPH's Director, Dr. Karyl Rattay, prior to his retirement but he did not have any direct responsibilities for the program. If approved, he would work as a DPH consultant through a temporary employment agency and would work from home. He and Ms. Webb expect he would work approximately one day per week for less than one year. Work Dr. Silverman would complete includes providing the Division of Professional regulation the data necessary to define the target population, approving content for the training program and selecting a vendor to conduct trainings. While Dr. Silverman would have contact with other DPH employees, he would not have contact with anyone who was in his former reporting structure.

Ms. Webb asked the Commission for a waiver of the two-year post-employment restriction to allow DPH to contract with Dr. Silverman, a former employee.

II. APPLICATION OF THE FACTS TO THE LAW

A. For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. *United States v. Medico*, 784 F.2d 840, 843 (7th Cir., 1986). Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. *Beebe Medical Center v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, C.A. No. 94A-01-004, J. Terry (Del. Super. June 30, 1995), *aff’d.*, No. 304 (Del. January 29, 1996). In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State, he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that particular matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. *Medico* at 843. To decide if Dr. Silverman would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. *Ethical Standards in the Public Sector: A Guide for Government Lawyers, Clients, and Public Officials*, American Bar Association, Section of State and Local Government Law, Publisher; p. 38. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially. *Commission Op. No. 96-75 (citing Medico at 842)*. See also *Beebe*.

To ascertain if there was a substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during State employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, Dr. Silverman worked on the subject matter, public health, while working for the State. In this case, Dr. Silverman would be working on a new federal grant awarded to the State. However, his involvement with the grant prior to his retirement (i.e. developing the broad concepts of the project and discussing strategy with Dr. Rattay) led the Commission to believe that his involvement with the program after his retirement would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct

The Commission then turned to a consideration of the waiver request.

B. Waivers may be granted if there would be an undue hardship on the State employee or State agency, or the literal application of the law is not necessary to serve the public purpose. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a).

(1) "Undue hardship," means "more than required" or is "excessive." *Commission Op. No. 97-18 (citing Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, p. 1290 (10th ed. 1992).*

Ms. Webb stated that progress on the grant program was already behind schedule and more deadlines were imminent. Failure to meet the grant's deadlines could lead to a partial forfeiture of the \$4 million federal grant. She further stated that time constraints would prevent DPH from recruiting and hiring another person to perform the work. Ms. Webb believed that Dr. Silverman was the best candidate for the job because he was already familiar with DPH, knew their agency partners and he could begin working on the program immediately.

The Commission decided that given the immediate need to meet the grant's timeline, the agency had adequately justified the existence of an agency hardship.

(2) Is literal application of the law necessary to serve the public purpose?

The overall purpose of the Code of Conduct is to instill the public's confidence in its government. 29 *Del. C.* § 5802(1) and (2). In discussing the federal post-employment law, which is similar to Delaware's, the United States Congress noted that public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that government officials use their public office for personal gain, particularly after leaving the government. "*Ethics in Government Act, Senate Report No. 95-1770, p. 32.* In extending its post-employment law from one year to two years on matters within the official's former responsibility, Congress said the two-year requirement was justified because:

Today public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that officials use public office for personal gain, particularly after they leave government services. There is a sense that a "revolving door" exists between industry and government; that officials 'go easy' while in office in order to reap personal gain afterward.... There is a deep public uneasiness with officials who switch sides—.... Private clients know well that they are hiring persons with special skill and knowledge of particular departments and agencies. That is also the major reason for public concern. *Id.*

On the other hand, the Code also seeks to encourage citizens to assume public office and employment by not "unduly circumscribing their conduct." 29 *Del. C.* § 5802(3). Thus, in setting the post-employment standard, the General Assembly did not place a total ban on former employees representing or otherwise assisting a private enterprise on matters involving the State, It merely placed a restriction on post-employment activity involving matters for which the former employee (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) was otherwise directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d) . *Commission Op. 01-07.*

Delaware Courts have specifically noted that where government officials seek contracts with their governmental entity, that the award of such contracts "has been suspect, often because of alleged favoritism, undue influence, conflict and the like." *W. Paynter Sharp & Son v. Heller*, Del. Ch., 280 A.2d 748, 752 (1971}. (See *Commission Op. 13-34*, State employee could not work for a private entity on a grant that employee

wrote while a State employee). The Code of Conduct was subsequently enacted with restrictions, such as the post-employment law, which aids in avoiding those very types of allegations and suspicions.

The Commission weighed any possible public concern over Dr. Silverman's post-retirement work for DPH against the public's interest in preventing opioid addiction and overdoses. Ms. Webb stated that Delaware had 308 opioid-related deaths in 2016. The grant would pay for education that could not only prevent deaths but could also prevent addiction from happening in the first place. The Commission also noted that if a waiver was granted that the decision becomes a matter of public record. That ensures that the public knows why a former State employee was allowed to work on a State contract in contravention of the Code.

III. CONCLUSION

The Commission GRANTED your request for a waiver to allow Dr. Silverman to work on the federal grant awarded to DPH based upon agency hardship and because to deny the waiver would not serve the public purpose of the statute.

Sincerely,

/s/ Bonnie Smith

Bonnie Smith
Chair

17-42—Post Employment: [Employee] was formerly [a technology] Manager [for a State Agency]. [Employee] was responsible for the overall management of the [Agency's] system. His duties included installing, upgrading and modifying the system as well as assisting other employees who encountered problems when using the system.

[Employee] retired from State service and accepted employment at [a private company, an Agency] contractor. He was working under the direction of another [employee] and he was not working on any of [the Company's] information technology systems. [Employee] asked the Commission to decide if his position with [the Company] violated the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during State employment to the post-employment activities. Unlike the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] was not working on projects related to his former State job. Because his State job duties were performed inside the Agency, it was unlikely that he had extensive contact with [the Company], or their projects, prior to his retirement. As a result, there was no overlap between the two positions and no violation of the Code of Conduct's post-employment restriction.

17-41—Post Employment: [Employee] was employed by [a State agency] and had also filed to run for elected office in the 2018 elections. [Employee] had questions regarding the applicability of the Code of Conduct's post-employment restriction to future employment opportunities in and outside the State of Delaware. In addition, [Employee] filed paperwork with the State Department of Elections [to run for elected office]. She also asked the Commission for advice about her ability to discuss the State's policies, processes and procedures during her campaign.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission usually compares the duties and responsibilities during State employment to the post-employment activities. However, since [Employee] had not sought employment in the private sector, the Commission could only offer general advice that applied to matters involving the State of Delaware and the vendor's employed by [her former State Agency]. The advice applied equally to any consulting opportunities she may pursue.

In her State position, she was materially responsible for oversight of the office including policies and procedures. As a result, the Commission decided she could not effectively separate her work for the State into matters for which she was *not* materially responsible. For example, if [Employee] were to accept private employment with one of the [Agency's] vendors, it would appear to the public that she was leveraging her knowledge of the inner workings of the [Agency] to the benefit of a private entity. *Commission Op. 13-48*. That would violate the policy interests served by enforcement of the post-employment restriction on employees leaving government service to work in the private sector, which have been clearly defined by the Courts. In *United States v. Nasser*, the U.S. Court of Appeals upheld the constitutionality of the "switching sides" prohibition of the federal government's post-employment restriction found in 18 U.S.C. § 207(a). "[T]he purpose of protecting the government, which can act only through agents, from the use against it by former agents of information gained in the course of their agency, is clearly a proper one." 476 F.2d 1111, 1116 (7th Cir. 1973).

The Commission advised [Employee] that should she receive a formal job offer or decide to accept a consulting project, she should return to the Commission for more specific advice. In the meantime, she could work on matters related to the other 49 states without restriction.

As to [Employee's] questions regarding campaign speeches in which she could be called upon to discuss policies and procedures, the Commission did not have jurisdiction over such matters and declined to offer an opinion on the subject. However, she was advised of the prohibition against revealing *confidential* information gained during her employment with the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d).

17-38 Leah Woodall & Kathryn Tullis—Post Employment Waiver Request

(Because a waiver was granted, the opinion is published so the public is assured that the conduct has been approved.)

VIA EMAIL

January 5, 2018

17-38--Post Employment--WAIVER REQUEST (GRANTED)

Hearing and Decision By: *Bonnie Smith (Chair), William F. Tobin, Jr. (Vice-Chair), Michele Whetzel (Vice-Chair); Commissioners: Jeremy Anderson, Esq., Lisa Lessner, Andrew Gonser, Esq. (recusing)*

Dear Dr. Tullis and Ms. Woodall,

Thank you for attending the Commission meeting on December 19th, 2017. After careful consideration of the relevant facts and circumstances, the Commission decided to GRANT your request for a waiver to allow Dr. Tullis to accept a position with Nemours to administer the newborn screening program. The Commission's reasoning is set forth below.

I. FACTS

Dr. Kathryn Tullis was the Director of the Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs ("CYSHCN") program within the Department of Public Health ("DPH"). In that role she was the liaison between DPH and other State agencies who provide services to the same client population. As Director, Dr. Tullis supervised the Coordinator of the Newborn Screening Program ("NSP"). NSP contracts with birthing facilities to perform health screening tests on newborns. The program consists of the initial testing (laboratory) phase and the follow-up phase. NSP had been administered by DPH for 40 years and identified over 500 infants each year with potentially life-threatening diseases. During the past three years, Dr. Tullis had acted as the NSP program coordinator in addition to performing her own job duties.

The costs of maintaining the NSP had steadily increased and DPH chose to leave unstaffed positions vacant because of budgetary limits. Budget constraints, coupled with pressure from the birthing facilities to lower their fees, forced DPH to look for other ways to provide the program's services. As a result, DPH issued a Request For Proposal ("RFP") asking bidders to propose alternative ways of accomplishing the NSP's goals. Dr. Tullis assumed the lead role in the RFP process and was a member of the RFP review panel. The bids were independently scored by all members of the review panel and the successful bidder was Nemours.

Nemours posted the position of Manager of the Newborn Screening Program but did not find a qualified candidate. Even though she did not submit an application, Nemours offered the position to Dr. Tullis. Dr. Tullis believed that her knowledge of the program and her existing relationships with birthing facilities and other providers would help ensure a successful transition of the NSP from DPH to Nemours.

Leah Woodall, a DPH Section Chief, wrote separately to support Dr. Tullis' employment with Nemours. Ms. Woodall stated that DPH (and their clients) would benefit from Dr. Tullis' prior experience with the NSP would benefit the State by assuring continuity of care. She also noted that Nemours had reviewed any possible ethics dilemmas which may apply to the hiring of Dr. Tullis and had concluded that there were none. The Commission gave no weight to the fact that Nemours had conducted their

own ethics inquiry because their standards are not governed by statute, as is the State Code of Conduct.

Ms. Woodall and Dr. Tullis asked the Commission for a waiver of the two-year post-employment restriction to allow Dr. Tullis to work at Nemours as the coordinator of the revised NSP.

II. APPLICATION OF THE FACTS TO THE LAW

A. For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. *United States v. Medico*, 784 F.2d 840, 843 (7th Cir., 1986). Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. *Beebe Medical Center v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, C.A. No. 94A-01-004, J. Terry (Del. Super. June 30, 1995), *aff’d.*, No. 304 (Del. January 29, 1996). In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State, he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that particular matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. *Medico* at 843. To decide if Dr. Tullis would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. *Ethical Standards in the Public Sector: A Guide for Government Lawyers, Clients, and Public Officials*, American Bar Association, Section of State and Local Government Law, Publisher; p. 38. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially. *Commission Op. No. 96-75 (citing Medico at 842)*. See also *Beebe*.

To ascertain if there was a substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. In this case, Ms. Woodall and Dr. Tullis acknowledged that Dr. Tullis would be working on a matter for which she was directly and materially responsible while employed by the State, a violation of the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

The Commission next considered whether DPH or Dr. Tullis qualified for a waiver of the post-employment restriction.

B. Waivers may be granted if there would be an undue hardship on the State employee or State agency, or the literal application of the law is not necessary to serve the public purpose. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a).

(1) "Undue hardship," means "more than required" or is "excessive." *Commission Op. No. 97-18 (citing Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, p. 1290 (10th ed. 1992).*

Dr. Tullis has a background in genetics which, along with her historical knowledge of the NSP program, makes her uniquely qualified to manage the new program. In addition, her oversight will assure continuity of care while the program undergoes a seismic change from a state-run program to a privately-run program, paid for with State funds.

Another consideration which weighed in favor of a waiver was the impending change from testing samples at DPH's laboratory to testing at a private laboratory contracted by Nemours. The State's lab was scheduled to close-out their existing samples and all new samples were to be sent to the new laboratory effective January 1, 2018. The impending deadline made it impossible for Nemours to recruit and train a program manager in the seven remaining workdays between the date of the meeting and January 1st.

While some of the problems DPH encountered in transferring the NSP to a private provider appeared to be the result of poor planning by either DPH or Nemours, the Commission decided that the agency had adequately demonstrated the existence of an agency hardship. As a result, the waiver was GRANTED for the above reasons and for the important public policy considerations listed below.

(2) Is literal application of the law necessary to serve the public purpose?

The overall purpose of the Code of Conduct is to instill the public's confidence in its government. 29 Del. C. § 5802(1) and (2). In discussing the federal post-employment law, which is similar to Delaware's, the United States Congress noted that public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that government officials use their public office for personal gain, particularly after leaving the government. *"Ethics in Government Act," Senate Report No. 95-1770, p. 32.* In extending its post-employment law from one year to two years on matters within the official's former responsibility, Congress said the two-year requirement was justified because:

Today public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that officials use public office for personal gain, particularly after they leave government services. There is a sense that a "revolving door" exists between industry and government; that officials 'go easy' while in office in order to reap personal gain afterward.... There is a deep public uneasiness with officials who switch sides—.... Private clients know well that they are hiring persons with special skill and knowledge of particular departments and agencies. That is also the major reason for public concern. *Id.*

On the other hand, the Code also seeks to encourage citizens to assume public office and employment by not "unduly circumscribing their conduct." 29 Del. C. §

5802(3). Thus, in setting the post-employment standard, the General Assembly did not place a total ban on former employees representing or otherwise assisting a private enterprise on matters involving the State. It merely placed a restriction on post-employment activity involving matters for which the former employee (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) was otherwise directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d) . *Commission Op. 01-07*.

Delaware Courts have specifically noted that where government officials seek contracts with their governmental entity, that the award of such contracts "has been suspect, often because of alleged favoritism, undue influence, conflict and the like." *W. Paynter Sharp & Son v. Heller*, Del. Ch., 280 A.2d 748, 752 (1971). (See *Commission Op. 13-34*, State employee could not work for a private entity on a grant that employee wrote while a State employee). The Code of Conduct was subsequently enacted with restrictions, such as the post-employment law, which aids in avoiding those very types of allegations and suspicions.

In this case, Dr. Tullis, and Ms. Woodall, stated that the transfer of the NSP to a private entity would benefit the program and the families of newborns it serves. They anticipate that the Nemours program will provide better follow-up care because they have the resources to staff the positions DPH left vacant due to budget constraints. In addition, they expect the number of false positives in the testing phase to drop dramatically due to the introduction of a modern laboratory facility that was selected by Nemours. False-positive test results create stress and emotional trauma for the families who have been mistakenly advised that their child may have a life-threatening disease. Obviously, measures to reduce such stressful situations would outweigh any concerns amongst the public regarding the outsourcing of the NSP program.

Another factor which weighed in favor of a waiver was the fact that the decision is a matter of public record. That ensures that the public knows why a former State employee was allowed to work on a State contract in contravention of the Code. After consideration of all the relevant factors, the Commission decided that the public had an important interest in the sustainability of the NSP and the waiver was GRANTED.

III. CONCLUSION

Dr. Tullis is granted a waiver of the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct to allow her to accept the position as program manager at Nemours and to allow DPH to work with their former employee.

Sincerely,

/s/ Bonnie Smith

Bonnie Smith
Chair

17-37—Post Employment: On November 17, 2017, Commission Counsel sent [Employee] a guidance letter, at his request, regarding the applicability of the two-year post-employment restriction to his post-retirement position with [one of his Agency's] contractors. [Employee] requested the letter after the cancellation of the November 14, 2017, Commission meeting. He also requested a formal advisory opinion from the Commission. At the meeting, the Commission voted to endorse Commission Counsel's guidance letter in its entirety.

[Employee] worked for [Agency] and his most recent assignments were located in Sussex County. He retired from State service on November 29, 2017. To aid in determining the applicability of the Code of Conduct's post-employment restriction, [Employee] provided the Commission with a list of the [Agency's] projects on which he had most recently worked. [Employee] accepted an offer to work for [a private company] as a Manager. In that role, he would manage [new] projects, as well as work on existing projects. At the time of the meeting, [he had been] assigned him to work on projects in the State of Maryland. [Employee] asked if his employment with [the private company] violated the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the duties and responsibilities during State employment were compared to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission had approved post-employment positions for [Agency] workers who left State employment to work for one of the agency's contractors so long as they did not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09 and 13-41*. As long as [Employee] did not work on any of the projects on the list he provided, his employment with [the private company] did not violate the post-employment restriction. However, [Employee] could not appear before [his former Agency's] bid committees, staffed by employees from his former Section for a period of two years. That did not mean he could not work on those projects, only that he could not appear before the bid committee. It was permissible for him to appear before bid selection committees staffed by [Agency] employees who were not his direct co-workers (i.e. employees from other Sections or Divisions), thus ameliorating the concern he would be interacting with his former co-workers. The Commission also reminded him of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. *29 Del. C. § 5805(d)*.

17-36--Post Employment: [Employee] was [a manager of a State agency]. Her job duties included: overseeing the operations and implementation of service programs; rules and regulations compliance; budget preparation and monitoring; legislative drafting; representing her Division on various task forces and committees. [Employee] wanted to retire from State service and accept a position with [one of her agency's vendors].

[Employee] wanted to work as a manager in [the vendor's] Finance and Billing Department. According to the job description she provided her duties would include: preparing the annual budget; cost allocation planning; preparing and updating the monthly accounts receivable report; preparing and submitting invoices. The position was an internal finance position which required the same skill set as her State position but did not require her to have any contact with [her former agency]. [Employee] asked the Commission to decide if her proposed employment as a manager would be a violation of the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Both [the vendor and her State agency worked in similar fields]. However, the *Beebe* court ruled that subject matter overlap was not enough to trigger application of the post-employment restriction. Instead, the court looked at the specific facts and parties involved in each matter to determine if the employee had previously given an opinion about, or been materially responsible for, the same matter while employed by the government entity. *Beebe, supra*. While [Employee] had worked with [the vendor's] staff on a limited basis as a State employee, she denied associating with their employees on a personal basis. In addition, her proposed work appeared to be completely internal and did not require her to have contact with her former State co-workers. Subsequently, the Commission did not find there was sufficient overlap between her proposed position and her work as a State employee to support a violation of the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

17-35—Post Employment: [Employee] was [a] Manager [at a State agency]. [Employee] managed 15 employees; coordinated the Section training program; coordinated event management; and testified as a State expert when necessary. He retired from State service on December 31, 2017.

[Employee] was scheduled to begin employment with an [Agency] contractor on February 5, 2018. In his new position, [Employee] would be responsible for engineering and operations; data analysis; and systems. [Employee] anticipated he would be working on projects involving [his former Agency]. [Employee] provided a list of existing contracts between [the private company and the Agency], and also indicated which contract he worked on while still a [State] employee. In addition to their regular projects, [the private company] also provided training services to [the Agency's] employees. Other projects included consulting with [a regional entity] and work in Maryland and Pennsylvania. [Employee] asked the Commission to decide if his position with [the private company] would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during State employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission had approved post-employment positions for [Agency employees] who left State employment to work for one of the agency's contractors so long as they did not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09 and 13-41*. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions. 29 *Del. C.* § 5809(5).

The Commission decided that [Employee] could not work on [a specific project] for two years because he was materially responsible for, or gave an opinion about, that project while he was still employed by [the State]. While at the meeting, [Employee] asked the Commission about the possibility of returning to [his Agency] as a consultant where he would work with his former supervisor and former co-workers. The Commission determined that type of work would involve the same basic facts, parties and issues as those he was responsible for while employed at [the Agency]. As a result, the Commission decided he could not return to [the Agency] as a consultant until the expiration of the post-employment restriction.

[The company's] work in Maryland and Pennsylvania did not fall under the Commission's jurisdiction. Therefore, [Employee] could work on those projects without violating the post-employment restriction. As to consulting with [the regional entity], his ability to work on that project depended on his involvement, or lack thereof, while he was still an [Agency] employee. [Employee] stated that his prior involvement with [the regional entity] was limited to providing the raw data needed by the group to carry out their mission. The Commission decided his limited interaction with [the regional entity] was not substantial enough to qualify as a matter for which he was previously responsible and decided he could work on [those] projects without violating the post-employment restriction. The Commission also reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

17-30– Post Employment: [Employee] worked for [a State agency where he supervised 32 employees in two separate sections]. [Employee] did not work on individual projects. He retired on July 14, 2017.

[Employee] accepted a position with [a contractor of his former employer] effective September 5, 2017. He intended to open and manage a Delaware office. [Employee] would be seeking [agency] contracts on behalf of his new employer. He anticipated the contracts would be [with different sections of his former State agency]. [Employee] asked the Commission to decide if his new position violated the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To determine if there is substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for workers who leave State employment to work for one of the agency's contractors so long as they do not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09 and 13-41*. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions. 29 Del. C. § 5809(5).

It was clear to the Commission that [Employee] would not be working on any projects for which he was previously responsible while employed by the State because he did not work on any individual projects. In addition, he stated he would not be working on [a specific type of] project for the next two years. [Employee] mentioned that he planned to appear before [State] selection committees. However, he stated those committees would be staffed by State employees with whom he did not previously have professional responsibilities, thus ameliorating the concern he would be interacting with his former co-workers. The Commission also reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

17-26– Post Employment: [Employee] worked for [a State agency] as a Program Manager. He held that position from January 2016, until he resigned on September 8, 2017. [Employee] accepted a position with an [agency] vendor. [Employee] provided a list of the most recent [agency] contracts on which he worked as well as a list of [the vendor's] contracts. [Employee] asked the Commission to decide if his new position violated the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission had approved post-employment positions for [Agency] workers who left State employment to work for one of the agency's contractors so long as they did not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09 and 13-41*. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions. 29 *Del. C.* § 5809(5).

As long as [Employee] did not work on any of the projects he was previously responsible for while employed by the State, it was unlikely his new position would violate the post-employment restriction. He specifically asked about his ability to work on [a specific project] as a Project Manager. While at [his former agency] his involvement on the project was limited to reviewing one document. The Commission decided that his limited involvement did not entirely preclude him from working on the project on behalf of his new employer because it was not a project for which he was materially responsible. [Employee] also asked about his ability to work on [the agency's] Requests for Proposals ("RFP") for new projects. Because he had previously served on an [agency] selection committee and because selection committees were likely to be staffed by his former co-workers, the Commission decided he could not appear before the [agency's] selection committee until after the expiration of the two-year post-employment restriction. That prohibition did not affect his ability to work on bids, only that he could not be physically present when the bid was discussed with the [agency's] selection committee. The Commission also reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d).

17-25—Post Employment: [Employee] previously worked for the [State]. She retired on January 1, 2017. [Employee]'s prior duties were to [work directly with clients and to serve as a training instructor for other employees].

[Employee] was asked to return to [the location of her previous State employment to run a new program]. [Employee] expected to contract with [her former agency] to provide the services for four hours per week.

In this matter, [Employee] worked at [the same location] when employed by the State and also worked for the same supervisor. However, the *Beebe* court ruled that subject matter overlap was not enough to trigger application of the post-employment restriction. Instead, the court looked at the specific facts and parties involved in each matter to determine if the employee had previously given an opinion about, or been materially responsible for, the same matter while employed by the government entity. *Beebe, supra*. As a contractor [Employee] would be running a new program in which she had no previous involvement. When asked by the Commission about the possibility that she would be required to treat the same clients she treated while she was a State employee, [Employee] responded that it would be very unlikely that such a circumstance would occur because [her former clients had likely progressed through the system past the point where she would be involved]. As a result, she did not believe she would encounter a situation in which she would be required to treat a previous client. Therefore, the Commission found no potential violation of the Code of Conduct.

17-20—Post Employment: [Employee] previously worked for [a State agency as a section manager]. She retired in December 2016. During her employment with [the agency], she

worked [for 20 years in her section before being promoted to manager, a position she held for 10 years]. Her job duties included [general oversight of the section, its employees and contractors].

[Employee] had submitted a bid to [her former agency to work as a private consultant]. After submitting her bid, she was advised by [agency] staff to obtain a letter from the Commission confirming her eligibility to work [as a consultant] in the event she was selected as a successful bidder. [The agency] requested bids in an effort to increase their list of qualified [personnel for a specific position] to whom they could outsource various projects. [The agency] did employ [people in the same field of work] but they supplemented their full-time staff with contracted consultants. Successful bidders would be performing the same work as their State co-workers, but on an as-needed basis.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Based on the description of [Employee]’s previous job duties and the duties expected of the successful bidders, the Commission decided that [Employee] would be returning to [her former agency] as a consultant in a position almost identical to the position she retired from. The two-year post-employment restriction prohibits such ‘revolving door’ activities. In the managerial role, [Employee] had overarching responsibility for her entire section. While she was the [section manager] for the past 10 years, and did not [work on individual projects], she managed staff that [performed that type of work] and she helped manage and select applicants to be placed on [the agency]’s list of qualified [consultants]. Those previously qualified [consultants] would now be her competition for [agency] projects. Even if she submitted the lowest bid and/or was the most qualified candidate, her competitors and the general public would assume she had exerted influence over her former co-workers in order to: (a) be placed on the list of qualified [consultants] and (b) be awarded [agency] projects or assignments. One of the reasons for the imposition of the post-employment restriction is to assure the public that such inside dealings do not occur. See *Medico, supra*. While subject matter overlap is not always a disqualifying factor when determining the applicability of the post-employment restriction to a particular set of facts, the Commission decided that her previous work as a manager for [the agency] with responsibilities related to [those solicited in the bid request] created a significant overlap with [her previous job duties].

CONCLUSION: [Employee]’s proposed work [as a consultant] could lead the public to believe that her position was obtained as a result of upon undue influence over her former co-workers rather than her qualifications and skills. As a result, she could not work for [the agency as a consultant in the particular field] until after the expiration of the two-year post-employment restriction. If [the agency] had an urgent need for qualified applicants, they could apply to the Commission for a waiver.

17-18—Post Employment: [Employee] worked [for a Division] in the Department of Health and Social Services (“DHSS”). She was assigned to work in New Castle County. [Agency’s] mission is to serve [a specific population of citizens]. Her job duties included: oversight of [other Agency employees who worked directly with clients]. [Agency] recently issued an RFP seeking bidders to provide [a service] for their clients. The successful bidder to the RFP was [a private company]. [Employee] was considering leaving State employment to accept a position with [the private company].

[The private company] had proposed hiring [Employee] to work on their Quality Improvement team. She would work directly with other healthcare providers to “ensure the most current, clinically proven techniques and practices [we]re being put in place”. The position would also allow her to work directly with patients, an aspect of her State job that she missed. [The private company] was proposing that [Employee] work in Sussex County. [Employee] asked the Commission to determine if employment with [the private company] would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. [Employee]’s new position with [the private company] would require her to work in Sussex County, rather than New Castle County where she performed her State job duties. The geographic separation made it less likely that she would encounter her former State co-workers, or clients, while performing her new job duties. In addition, [the private company] provided services to clients [in a different setting than those Employee worked with in her State position]. The difference between the client’s demographic would provide her with an even greater separation between her new duties and those she performed while working for the State. In sum, the geographic and demographic separation between the two positions made it highly unlikely that she would be asked to work on matters for which she was previously responsible while employed by the State. As a result, the Commission decided that the position [with the private company] would not violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

17-15—Post Employment Violation: The matter was referred to the Commission via a letter from the State Auditor’s Office. While performing an audit, the Auditor’s Office discovered information which they believed was a violation the Code of Conduct’s post-employment restriction.

[Employee] was previously employed by [a school district]. He retired on July 1, 2015. [Employee] subsequently accepted employment with one of the District’s contractors. The Auditor’s office confirmed that [Employee] was working for [the contractor] in May 2016, but they believed he could have started working for [them] in August 2015.

While employed by the District, [Employee] had oversight of several projects and contracts, including one awarded to [his new employer]. The original contract was dated November 30, 2012. To avoid State procurement rules, the District added several other projects to the original contract through a “piggy-back” provision in 29 *Del. C.* § 6981(b). The first addendum to the original contract, dated October 16, 2013, added [other] renovation services to the contract. The second addendum, also dated October 2013, added [a second set of] renovations. Prior to making the addendums to the original contract, [Employee] sought legal advice from the District’s attorney who determined that the addendums were allowable under the original RFP and contract. The circumstances surrounding the modifications to the original contract were provided as background information because the Commission did not have jurisdiction over State procurement rules. However, the dates of the addendums were important in determining the applicability of the Code of Conduct’s post-employment restriction.

The Auditor did not file a formal Complaint. As a result, the Commission considered whether [Employee]’s conduct appeared to violate 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d) and, if so, decide upon a course of action. The issue had generated a lot of media coverage.

To determine if there is substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. [Employee] signed a contract with [the contractor] on behalf of the District and then left the District to work for [the company], on at least one project he was materially responsible for while employed by the State. His presence at the District's Pre-Construction meeting on behalf of [the contractor] in May 2016, only 11 months after leaving State employment was strong evidence that [Employee] violated the post-employment restriction.

The question then considered was what course of action the Commission should pursue? [Employee] was no longer a State employee. As a result, an administrative penalty was not a suitable remedy for his actions. Violations of 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d) are subject to a criminal penalty of "not more than one year in prison and by a fine not to exceed \$10,000." 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(f)(1). The Commission is authorized to refer matters to the Attorney General's office when there is substantial evidence of a criminal violation. 29 *Del. C.* § 5809(4). Referral was not contingent on whether the information was reviewed by the Commission in the context of an advisory opinion or a formal Complaint. *Id.* In a similar circumstance the Commission issued an advisory opinion to the Auditor's office and forwarded the opinion to the Attorney General's office for further investigation and prosecution (*Commission Op. 07-04*).

The Commission decided that based on the information provided, [Employee] had violated the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct and forwarded the matter to the Attorney General's Office, Office of Civil Rights and Public Trust for investigation and possible prosecution. The Auditor's office was copied on the referral letter.

17-02—Post Employment: [Employee] previously worked for [a school district] and retired on June 30, 2015. Prior to her retirement, she was responsible for administering the school's contracts. [She approved one specific program and then forwarded the contract to the finance office for approval, which it received].

Since her retirement, [Employee] had been teaching classes for the same program, originally for nominal pay and later on a volunteer basis. The District decided not to renew the contract when it expired but one of the District's schools sought to continue the program under a new contract. When the contract was forwarded to the District's finance office for approval, the request was denied. The District refused to allow renewal of the contract because of [Employee]'s involvement with the program within the two-year post-employment period in the Code of Conduct. In order for the contract to move forward, the District required [Employee] to obtain permission from the Commission. [Employee] asked the Commission to determine if her post-employment position with the [program] was a violation of the Code of Conduct.

To determine if there is substantial overlap, the Commission compares the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like most State employees who leave State employment, [Employee] sought employment in the same field as the one she worked in while employed by the State. In this case, her new position (whether paid or unpaid) was directly related to her former position with the District. She was primarily responsible for the initial contract between the [program] and the District. Now, she was asking the Commission's permission to return to the same District to teach classes for the private entity whose contract she previously approved. The Commission decided that [Employee] could not participate in the program in the District until after the expiration of the two-year post-employment restriction. Teaching or facilitating those classes would require her to have contact with the administration for which she previously worked, as well as contact with former co-

workers, some of whom she may see socially. However, the post-employment restriction did not prevent her from working in a different school district. Similarly, the [program] was not prohibited from contracting with the District. The post-employment restriction applied to [Employee] and not to the [program].

16-58—Post Employment: [Employee] retired from State service on January 1, 2017. She most recently worked as a Division [A] Director within [a State agency]. As Director, her job duties included developing, supervising and administering programs for children, adolescents and adults. Those programs were outsourced to contracted providers. [Employee] was also responsible for integrating those programs with resources provided through other [Divisions of the agency]. Between April 2012 and September 2015, [Employee] worked for [another Division within the same agency, Division B]. While working in [Division B], [Employee] supervised [several specific units] and was also responsible for the Division's quality improvement and licensing activities. Although her employment with [Division B] formally ended in September 2015, [Employee] was on leave from April to September of 2015, meaning the last date she actually worked for [Division B] was in April 2015.

Since her retirement, [Employee] had been pursuing employment with various programs. One of those employers was starting a new program in Delaware and [Employee] would be hired to write policies and procedures for the program, hire staff and oversee the regulatory start-up process. [Position #1]. As part of the start-up process, the [program had to apply for a license from Division A]. At the hearing [Employee] stated that [the program's] owner, or another employee, would handle the licensing duties so she would not be required to interact with her former co-workers. Once the initial licensing process was complete, other staff would be hired to monitor regulatory compliance with [Division A's] licensing standards. The [program] would not be contracting with the State.

The second opportunity [Employee] presented to the Commission was a partnership in a private [business] which would provide [services to a specific segment of the population]. [Position #2]. [Employee] anticipated that the business would be ready to begin offering those services in September or October of 2017. [Employee]'s partner had already begun negotiating a \$50,000 contract with [Division B] to provide a program to their clients. [Employee] previously worked for [Division B] but her last official contact with those co-workers was in April 2015.

The last opportunity [Employee] asked the Commission to consider was employment with [a State vendor]. [Position #3]. [The vendor] had a contract with [another State agency]. [Employee] would be responsible for general oversight of the program and supervision of the [program's] staff. [The entity] did contract with [Division A] but she would not be involved in those projects. [Employee] asked the Commission to determine if either of her post-employment positions would violate the Code of Conduct's two-year post-employment restriction.

The only identifiable overlap between [Employee]'s former State duties and [position #1] was the need to apply to [Division A] for a license and to comply with their regulatory standards. The owner of [the program] had already agreed to handle the licensing application process and other employees would be hired to ensure compliance with [State] regulations. As a result, there would be no overlap between her former state duties and position [#1].

[Employee]'s business partnership [position #2] was more problematic because that position could require her to have contact with her former [Division B] co-workers. While she

anticipated she wouldn't be accepting clients into the program until later in the year, her partner was already negotiating a contract with [Division B] for approximately \$50,000. [Employee]'s post-employment restriction as it related to [Division B] expires in April 2017. Until then she could not be involved with the negotiation of the contract to avoid creating the perception that the contract was awarded to her business because of undue influence over her former co-workers.

Lastly, as long as [Employee] did not work on any matters related to [Division A], her work [in position #3] on their contract [with a different State agency] did not appear to overlap with her former state job duties. Therefore, she would not be handling matters for which she was previously responsible while employed by the State and the position would not violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

In sum, [Employee]'s employment [in positions #1 and #3] did not appear to violate the Code of Conduct's post-employment restriction as long as she abided by the conditions set forth by the Commission. However, she could not be involved in contract negotiations [for position #2] until after April 2017. The Commission reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

16-55—Post Employment: [Employee] worked for [a] Division within the Department of Health and Social Services. The Division's mission was to serve [a specific segment of the population] by offering family supports, vocational training, and clinical case management, among other services. [Employee] was [a] Supervisor for Kent and Sussex Counties. [Employee] supervised seven [other employees] in the state's lower counties. Her job duties included: completing annual staff evaluations; authorizing service requests; updating policies and procedures; teaching and managing contracts for her [Division]. She rarely had direct contact with the [Division's] clients.

[Employee] planned to retire from State service on December 30, 2016. She had accepted a part-time position with [one of her Division's contracted providers]. In her new position, [Employee] would be assigned a client caseload which she would audit once a month to ensure the client's [other] providers were scheduling and keeping appointments, meeting the client's nutrition goals, and following all aspects of the client's treatment plan. [Employee] would also maintain all appropriate client records. [Employee] asked the Commission to determine if her part-time employment would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like most State employees who leave State employment, [Employee] would likely work in the same field she worked in while employed by the State. In this case, it appeared [Employee]'s new position was more client-oriented than her State position, which greatly diminished the likelihood she would encounter any State clients when performing her new duties. When asked by the Commission if she anticipated her new position would require her to have contact with her former State co-workers, she admitted that she would have contact with [some of the personnel] she was supervising at the time of the hearing. However, she also pointed out that she would not have any influence over her former co-workers. In her new position she would be one member of a team of individuals responsible for the client's care. As a result, she would not have sole decision-making authority over any aspect of the client's care and her ongoing contact with her former co-workers would be free of undue influence.

The Commission decided her part-time position was not a violation of the post-employment restriction and also reminded her of the Code of Conduct's prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

16-52A--Post Employment--WAIVER REQUEST (GRANTED): *As a waiver was granted, the Commission's opinion becomes a matter of public record so the public will know why the waiver occurred. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a).*

October 26, 2016

Joanne White
WIC Director
Division of Public Health
Department of Health and Social Services
655 Bay Road, Suite 1-C
Dover, DE 19901

Hearing and Decision By: *William F. Tobin, Jr., (Chair); Bonnie Smith (Vice Chair); Commissioners: Commissioner Mishoe, Jeremy Anderson, Esq., Michele Whetzel*

Dear Ms. White,

Thank you for attending the Commission meeting on October 18, 2016 where you were accompanied by Fred Gatto, your supervisor. After consideration of all the relevant facts and circumstances, the Commission decided to GRANT your agency's request for a one-year waiver of the Code of Conduct's post-employment restriction to allow you to contract with a former employee. The Commission's reasoning is set forth below.

I. FACTS

You are the Director of the Women, Infants and Children ("WIC") program within the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services ("PBHS"), Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families ("DSCYF"). WIC is a program designed to help low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children under the age of 5 who are at nutritional risk. WIC provides vouchers to qualified individuals so they can obtain nutritious foods to supplement their diet, provides information about healthy eating options including breastfeeding, and makes referrals to health care.

In order to qualify for a federal grant, the WIC program must have a Nutrition Coordinator. Laura Peppelman, Delaware's Nutrition Coordinator, retired on September

30th after 17 years of service. Two months prior to Ms. Peppelman's retirement, you posted the anticipated job vacancy on the State's website. To qualify for the position, candidates must be a Registered Dietician with three years of experience. In Delaware, there are 299 registered dieticians whose median annual salary is between \$47,000 and \$56,000. The posting resulted in only two qualified applicants. One applicant withdrew her application after learning of the offered salary, \$44,000 per year. The other applicant was interviewed and was offered the position but she declined when she too learned of the salary.

In addition to administering the Nutrition Assistance Program, the employee serves as a preceptor to Dietetic Interns at the University of Delaware and also serves on the University's Intern Selection Committee. Your Division often recruits employees from the University's intern program.

You were concerned that the continued job vacancy would affect WIC's ability to meet their obligations to the University and the current class of Dietetic Interns as well as maintaining WIC's eligibility for the federal grant. You asked the Commission for a waiver of the two-year post-employment restriction to allow PBHS to contract with Ms. Peppelman until you can fill her position.

II. APPLICATION OF THE FACTS TO THE LAW

A. For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. *United States v. Medico*, 784 F.2d 840, 843 (7th Cir., 1986). Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not "directly and materially responsible" for that matter. *Beebe Medical Center v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, C.A. No. 94A-01-004, J. Terry (Del. Super. June 30, 1995), *aff'd.*, No. 304 (Del. January 29, 1996). In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official's responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State, he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not "directly and materially responsible" for that particular matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that "matter" must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. *Medico* at 843. To decide if Ms. Peppelman would be working on the same "matter," Courts have held that it is the same "matter" if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. *Ethical Standards in the Public Sector: A Guide for Government Lawyers, Clients, and Public Officials*, American Bar

Association, Section of State and Local Government Law, Publisher; p. 38. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially. *Commission Op. No. 96-75 (citing Medico at 842)*. See also *Beebe*.

To ascertain if there is a substantial overlap, the Commission ordinarily compares the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. However, in this case, you acknowledge that your request to contract with Ms. Peppelman to perform her former job duties is a violation of the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. Instead, you asked the Commission, on behalf of PBHS, to consider a waiver based upon agency hardship.

B. Waivers may be granted if there would be an undue hardship on the State employee or State agency, or the literal application of the law is not necessary to serve the public purpose. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a).

(1) "Undue hardship," means "more than required" or is "excessive." *Commission Op. No. 97-18 (citing Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, p. 1290 (10th ed. 1992))*.

You posted the impending vacancy well in advance of Ms. Peppelman's retirement. Even so, the posting only attracted two qualified applicants. Both of those applicants withdrew their application because of the low salary. In response, you requested approval to hire an applicant above the \$44,000 minimum salary which was denied. The position is still posted on the State website and you have not received any new applications. At the meeting, the Commission suggested posting the vacancy on a national website in the hopes of attracting a larger pool of applicants. In the meantime, WIC is out of compliance with the federal grant requirements, unable to meet its obligations to the University and to the public (which is discussed below).

One factor the Commission evaluates when deciding to grant a waiver is whether the employee would be making more money as a contract employee than they were earning as a full-time State employee. Consideration of that factor is important when determining whether an employee, or ex-employee, has left State employment for the purpose creating a vacancy which would allow them to return as a contract employee at a higher salary. When asked about Ms. Peppelman's proposed compensation as a contract employee, you stated Ms. Peppelman would be earning less money than what she was earning when she left State employment.

Based on your difficulty recruiting qualified applicants, WIC's need to comply with the criteria of the federal grant, WIC's obligations to the University and the fact that the vacancy was not created to reap a financial benefit, the Commission decided to grant your agency's request for a hardship waiver of the post-employment restriction for a period of one year. In the meantime, you should consider posting the vacancy on other websites to attract a greater pool of applicants

(2) Is literal application of the law necessary to serve the public purpose?

The overall purpose of the Code of Conduct is to instill the public's confidence in its government. 29 Del. C. § 5802(1) and (2). In discussing the federal post-employment law, which is similar to Delaware's, the United States Congress noted that public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that

government officials use their public office for personal gain, particularly after leaving the government. *“Ethics in Government Act,” Senate Report No. 95-1770, p. 32.* In extending its post-employment law from one year to two years on matters within the official’s former responsibility, Congress said the two-year requirement was justified because:

Today public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that officials use public office for personal gain, particularly after they leave government services. There is a sense that a “revolving door” exists between industry and government; that officials ‘go easy’ while in office in order to reap personal gain afterward.... There is a deep public uneasiness with officials who switch sides—.... Private clients know well that they are hiring persons with special skill and knowledge of particular departments and agencies. That is also the major reason for public concern. *Id.*

On the other hand, the Code also seeks to encourage citizens to assume public office and employment by not “unduly circumscribing their conduct.” 29 *Del. C. § 5802(3)*. Thus, in setting the post-employment standard, the General Assembly did not place a total ban on former employees representing or otherwise assisting a private enterprise on matters involving the State. It merely placed a restriction on post-employment activity involving matters for which the former employee (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) was otherwise directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State. 29 *Del. C. § 5805(d)* . *Commission Op. 01-07.*

Here, it appears there are limited resources from which you can recruit to fill the vacancy. In the meantime, the public certainly has an interest in making sure that low-income individuals have access to resources which provide them with proper nutrition. Additionally, when the Commission grants a waiver, the decision becomes a matter of public record. That ensures that the public knows why a former State employee was allowed to contract with the State in contravention of the Code.

III. CONCLUSION

The Commission decided to GRANT your agency’s request for a hardship waiver for a period of one year. If the position remains vacant at the end of that year, you should return to the Commission for further advice.

Sincerely,

/s/ William F. Tobin, Jr.

William F. Tobin, Jr.
Chair

16-52B Joanne White—Post-Employment--Waiver Extension (*because a waiver was granted, the opinion is published so the public will know that the conduct has been approved*).

VIA EMAIL

October 31, 2017

Hearing and Decision By: *Willam F. Tobin, Jr., (Chair); Bonnie Smith (Vice Chair), Michele Whetzel (Vice Chair); Commissioners: Lisa Lessner, Jeremy Anderson, Esq.*

Dear Ms. White,

Thank you for attending the Commission meeting on October 17, 2017. After consideration of all the relevant facts and circumstances, the Commission decided to GRANT your agency's request for a six-month extension of the waiver previously granted to your agency in October 2016. The Commission's reasoning is set forth below.

I. FACTS

You are the Director of the Women, Infants and Children ("WIC") program within the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services ("PBHS"), Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families ("DSCYF"). WIC is a program designed to help low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children under the age of 5 who are at nutritional risk. WIC provides vouchers to qualified individuals so they can obtain nutritious foods to supplement their diet, provides information about healthy eating options including breastfeeding, and makes referrals to health care.

In order to qualify for a federal grant, the WIC program must have a Nutrition Coordinator. Laura Peppelman, Delaware's Nutrition Coordinator, retired on September 30th after 17 years of service. Two months prior to Ms. Peppelman's retirement, you posted the anticipated job vacancy on the State's website. To qualify for the position, candidates must be a Registered Dietician with three years of experience. In Delaware, there are 299 registered dieticians whose median annual salary is between \$47,000 and \$56,000. The posting resulted in only two qualified applicants. One applicant withdrew her application after learning of the offered salary, \$44,000 per year. The other applicant was interviewed and offered the position but she declined when she too learned of the salary.

In addition to administering the Nutrition Assistance Program, the employee serves as a preceptor to Dietetic Interns at the University of Delaware and also serves on the University's Intern Selection Committee. Your Division often recruits employees from the University's intern program.

You were concerned that the continued job vacancy would affect WIC's ability to meet their obligations to the University and the current class of Dietetic Interns as well as maintaining WIC's eligibility for the federal grant. You asked the Commission for a waiver of the two-year post-employment restriction to allow PBHS to contract with Ms. Peppelman until you could fill her position, which was granted.

At the October 2017, meeting you stated that you had been able to hire someone to replace Ms. Peppelman. Your new employee's start date is in December 2017. You asked the Commission to extend the previously granted waiver for six months to allow Ms. Peppelman to train the new employee.

II. APPLICATION OF THE FACTS TO THE LAW

A. For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. *United States v. Medico*, 784 F.2d 840, 843 (7th Cir., 1986). Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not "directly and materially responsible" for that matter. *Beebe Medical Center v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, C.A. No. 94A-01-004, J. Terry (Del. Super. June 30, 1995), *aff'd.*, No. 304 (Del. January 29, 1996). In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official's responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State, he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not "directly and materially responsible" for that particular matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that "matter" must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. *Medico* at 843. To decide if Ms. Peppelman would be working on the same "matter," Courts have held that it is the same "matter" if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. *Ethical Standards in the Public Sector: A Guide for Government Lawyers, Clients, and Public Officials*, American Bar Association, Section of State and Local Government Law, Publisher; p. 38. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially. *Commission Op. No. 96-75 (citing Medico at 842)*. See also *Beebe*.

To ascertain if there is a substantial overlap, the Commission ordinarily compares the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. However, in this case, you acknowledged that your request to contract with Ms. Peppelman to perform her former job duties was a violation of the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. Instead, you asked the Commission, on behalf of PBHS, to consider a waiver based upon agency hardship.

B. Waivers may be granted if there would be an undue hardship on the State employee or State agency, or the literal application of the law is not necessary to serve the public purpose. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a).

(1) "Undue hardship," means "more than required" or is "excessive." *Commission Op. No. 97-18 (citing Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, p. 1290 (10th ed. 1992).*

You posted the vacancy well in advance of Ms. Peppelman's retirement. Even so, the posting only attracted two qualified applicants. Both of those applicants withdrew their application because of the low salary. In response, you requested approval to hire an applicant above the \$44,000 minimum salary which was denied. The position remained posted on the State website during the year the waiver was in effect. You had also posted the vacancy on a national website in the hopes of attracting a larger pool of applicants. Prior to granting the original waiver, WIC was out of compliance with the federal grant requirements, unable to meet its obligations to the University and to the public.

One factor the Commission evaluates when deciding to grant a waiver is whether the employee would be making more money as a contract employee than they were earning as a full-time State employee. Consideration of that factor is important when determining whether an employee, or ex-employee, has left State employment for the purpose creating a vacancy which would allow them to return as a contract employee at a higher salary. When asked about Ms. Peppelman's compensation as a contract employee, you stated Ms. Peppelman was earning less money than what she was earning when she left State employment and that continues to be the case.

Based on your difficulty recruiting qualified applicants, WIC's need to comply with the criteria of the federal grant, WIC's obligations to the University and the fact that the vacancy was not created to reap a financial benefit, the Commission decided to grant your agency's request for a hardship waiver of the post-employment restriction for a period of one year. During that year, you continued to post the opening on the State website and also posted the vacancy on other websites to attract a greater pool of applicants. As a result, you have successfully recruited a candidate to fill the position. Her start date is in December 2017.

You asked the Commission to extend the original waiver for another six months to allow Ms. Peppelman to train your new employee. As you described during the 2016 meeting, there are very compelling reasons to make sure the WIC program continues to run efficiently. Your new employee, although qualified for the position, has never worked for state government. You believe Ms. Peppelman's assistance in training the new employee would be invaluable and would prevent any lapses in services provided by your Division. The Commission agrees for all of the reasons supporting the original waiver.

(2) Is literal application of the law necessary to serve the public purpose?

The overall purpose of the Code of Conduct is to instill the public's confidence in its government. 29 *Del. C.* § 5802(1) and (2). In discussing the federal post-employment law, which is similar to Delaware's, the United States Congress noted that public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that government officials use their public office for personal gain, particularly after leaving the government. *"Ethics in Government Act," Senate Report No. 95-1770, p. 32.* In extending its post-employment law from one year to two years on matters within the

official's former responsibility, Congress said the two-year requirement was justified because:

Today public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that officials use public office for personal gain, particularly after they leave government services. There is a sense that a "revolving door" exists between industry and government; that officials 'go easy' while in office in order to reap personal gain afterward.... There is a deep public uneasiness with officials who switch sides—.... Private clients know well that they are hiring persons with special skill and knowledge of particular departments and agencies. That is also the major reason for public concern. *Id.*

On the other hand, the Code also seeks to encourage citizens to assume public office and employment by not "unduly circumscribing their conduct." 29 Del. C. § 5802(3). Thus, in setting the post-employment standard, the General Assembly did not place a total ban on former employees representing or otherwise assisting a private enterprise on matters involving the State, It merely placed a restriction on post-employment activity involving matters for which the former employee (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) was otherwise directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d) . *Commission Op. 01-07.*

Here, there were limited resources from which you could recruit to fill the vacancy. Now that you have filled that vacancy, the employee should be properly trained. In the meantime, the public has an interest in making sure that low-income individuals have access to resources which provide them with proper nutrition. Additionally, when the Commission grants a waiver, the decision becomes a matter of public record. That ensures that the public knows why a former State employee was allowed to contract with the State in contravention of the Code.

III. CONCLUSION

The Commission decided to GRANT your agency's request to extend your hardship waiver for a period of six months.

Sincerely,

/s/ William F. Tobin, Jr.

William F. Tobin, Jr.
Chair

16-44—Post Employment: [Employee] had been employed by the State since 1981 and had worked for a variety of State agencies. Since 2012, [Employee] had been the Deputy Director of [the Division] within [the Department]. She was appointed to her position by the Division Director. [The Division's] mission was to serve [a specific segment of] the population. [The Division] also operated [a specific facility in Sussex County]. [Employee]'s job duties included

representing the Division at public meetings or on various committees, working with client issues, collaborating with other state agencies, ensuring all federal and state rules were followed, and assessing the performance of the Division's programs.

[Employee] was considering leaving State employment and working as a consultant for two different private companies. While both companies contracted with the State, neither of them contracted with her Division. The private contracts were with agencies [Employee] never worked for, or agencies she stopped working for in 2005 and 2012. Her work for those agencies did not involve vendor bidding and contracting processes, or they involved contracts which expired in 1995. [Employee] asked the Commission to provide guidelines to help her understand what types of consultant work she could perform after leaving State employment without violating the two-year post-employment restriction.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like most State employees who leave State employment, [Employee] would likely find work in the same field she worked in while employed by the State. However, while she could work in the same general field, [Employee] recognized she could not work as a consultant on any [Division] contracts prior to the expiration of the two-year post-employment restriction. That was especially true given [Employee]'s executive position and decision-making ability while employed by [the Division]. Of the two companies she anticipated working for, neither company contracted with [the Division]. The contracts the private companies had with the State were with agencies [Employee] had not worked for since 2005 and 2012. As a result, it was highly unlikely that [Employee] would be asked to work on a matter she was previously responsible for while employed by the State.

Having determined the scope of the post-employment restriction as it applied to her State position as Deputy Division Director, the Commission then considered additional facts she presented at the hearing. One of the companies, [Company A], she anticipated working for had a contractual relationship with [the Division] in the past. As discussed earlier, she could not work on that project. [Company A and Company B's] most recent contracts with the State were with agencies she had not worked for since 2005 and 2012. Given the length of time she had been away from those agencies, if she worked on those contracts, it was highly unlikely she would encounter a matter for which she was previously responsible. Even if she did encounter such a matter, she had not worked for those agencies in at least four years, well beyond the applicability of the two-year post-employment restriction. The Commission also reminded [Employee] of the blanket prohibition (without a time limitation) against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

16-43 Post Employment: [Employee] previously worked for [a specific Division of a State Agency]. Generally speaking, he was responsible for oversight of in-house [professionals and outside firms contracting with his Division]. More specifically, he was responsible for designing, preparing and reviewing plans, specifications and estimates for [specific projects]. He coordinated the design of those activities with other Divisions of [Agency] involved in the project. [Employee] left State employment on July 18, 2016.

[Employee] began working for [one of the Agency's] contractors, on August 15, 2016. He was hired as a [project manager]. Some of the projects [Employee] expected to be assigned to were [Agency] projects. [Employee] submitted a table which identified those [Agency] projects [the contractor] had worked on in the past two years. [Agency projects are broken

down into smaller subparts]. [Employee] identified the [projects assigned to the contractor that he had worked on while employed at the Agency].

[Employee] understood that the post-employment restriction prevented him from working on those [projects] for a period of two years. However, [some projects] were open-ended and new [work] could be added to the [current projects] for a period of three years. The [work] in each [project] were usually independent of one another in scope, budget and location. [Employee] asked the Commission to consider whether he could work on the three open-ended [projects] he identified as long as he did not work on the [smaller subparts] for which he was previously responsible while employed by [the Agency]. He also asked the Commission whether he could appear in front of [the Agency's] bid committees on behalf of [the contractor].

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission had approved post-employment positions for [Agency] workers who left State employment to work for one of the [Agency's] contractors, so long as they did not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09; 13-41; 16-10; 16-11; and 16-12*. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions. 29 Del. C. § 5809(5).

[Employee]'s job duties at [the Agency] appeared to be very similar to the duties he was performing for [the contractor]. However, he identified those [smaller subparts of each project] for which he was previously responsible while working at [the Agency]. He then informed [the contractor] that he could not be assigned to those projects. [Employee] expressed concern that he would be assigned to new [work that was added to existing projects]. However, the Commission reminded him that while the [smaller subparts may be identified as being part of a specific project, the subparts were] unrelated to each other. As a result, [Employee] was advised he should compare newly assigned [work to the work] for which he was previously responsible in order to determine the applicability of the two-year post-employment restriction.

As to his ability to appear before [the Agency's] bid committees, the Commission decided he could not participate in presentations before a bid committee for a period of two years. The prohibition against doing so would protect him and his former co-workers from allegations of undue influence.

16-36--Post Employment: [State official had duties related to the economic vitality of the State. The official also sat on the Board of a state-owned Corporation. The Corporation had characteristics of both a private company and a government entity. However, the Corporation's employees were not considered State employees for purposes of the Merit Employment Rules, benefits, or salaries. [Citation omitted]. Conversely, they were considered State employees for participation in the group medical risk pool, Worker's Compensation Insurance Fund and deferred compensation. While the Corporation's employees were permitted to participate in the group insurance risk pool, the Corporation reimbursed the State the cost of their employee's medical coverage. The Corporation was required by statute to establish an employee pension plan]. [The official] was contemplating retirement and asked the Commission to consider whether he could accept a [management] position with the Corporation.

As to whether the statute applied to [the official], the key term in the statute was "private enterprise" because if the Corporation was not a private enterprise, then the post-employment

restriction did not apply to [the official's] post-retirement position. Private enterprise is defined as "any activity conducted by any person, whether for profit or not for profit and includes the ownership of real or personal property. Private enterprise does not include any activity of the State or of any political subdivision or of any agency, authority or instrumentality thereof." 29 *Del. C.* § 5804(9). State agency is defined as "any office, department, board, commission, committee...and all public bodies existing by virtue of an act of the General Assembly..." 29 *Del. C.* § 5804(11). The Commission considered the structure, powers and purpose of the Corporation and concluded it was not a "private enterprise" as defined in the Code of Conduct.

The Commission decided the post-employment restriction did not apply to [the official's] proposed post-employment position with the Corporation. However, the Commission did remind [the official] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d).

16-34—Post Employment: [Employee] worked for [a State agency]. [Employee] reviewed and approved [specifications for specific projects]. [He was able to provide the Commission with a list of projects he had worked on in the past two years]. [Employee] resigned from State service on July 21, 2016.

[Employee] accepted a job with [a private company, which was also one of his former agency's contractors]. [Employee] was hired to be a project manager for projects in Delaware and Maryland. [The private company had three contracts with Employee's former State agency at the time of the hearing].

In his letter request, [Employee] asked the Commission to consider whether his employment with [the private company] would violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. However, at the hearing he amended his request substantially to include: (1) whether he could consult with [his former agency] (for pay or on a voluntary basis) and (2) the level of involvement he would be permitted to have with [the agency's contract selection committee] when [the private company's contracts] expired in October 2017.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter, project planning and oversight, while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission approved post-employment positions for [agency] workers who left State employment to work for one of the agency's contractors so long as they did not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09 and 13-41*. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions. 29 *Del. C.* § 5809(5).

[Employee]'s work for [the agency] was limited to one of the contracts between [the agency] and [the private company]. Within that contract [Employee] had worked on [three out of ten projects]. He did not work on the [other two contracts between the private company and the State agency]. As a result, they were not "matters" for which he was previously responsible while working for the State and would be excluded from application of the two-year post-employment restriction. So long as [Employee] recused himself from the [projects] he worked on while employed by the State, his proposed employment with [the private company] did not violate the post-employment restriction.

The Commission discussed whether he would be permitted to consult with his former agency. It was decided he would be permitted to answer brief administrative and operational questions posed by his former co-workers during his replacement's leave, as long as those questions were limited to ministerial tasks such as where to locate a particular file, etc. The Commission decided he could not appear in person before the [contract bid committee] for two years from the date of his resignation. That was to avoid a perception he would receive favorable treatment from his former colleagues and co-workers. However, the Commission limited that restriction to his physical presence. He was permitted to be listed among 'key personnel' on Letters of Interest filed with the committee, except for those matters in which he had prior involvement as an [agency] employee. [Employee] was also reminded of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

16-30--Post Employment: [Employee] was employed by [a State agency] as a Manager. She retired from State service on June 1, 2015. While working for [the agency], [Employee] developed policies, procedures and guidelines for the [agency's payment system]. The [system] was responsible for setting reimbursement rates for care provided to people receiving [benefits from the agency]. [Employee] was also the [agency's] representative on [a panel] where she was called upon to explain the [system] to other stakeholders. It appeared [Employee] was responsible for the creation and oversight of the entire system.

Post-retirement, [Employee] wanted to contract with [her former agency] by submitting proposals to work on new projects. She stated the projects would not be ones she had previously worked on. When asked to describe any possible overlap between her former State position and her proposed employment with [the agency] as a contractor, [Employee] stated that the [agency] had a new Manager who had changed many of the policies and procedures that were in place when she was employed by [the agency]. In addition, she pointed out that most of the staff at [the agency] had changed since her retirement, meaning she would not have the benefit of relying on former co-workers, diminishing the appearance of any conflict. [Employee] was also considering working for providers who needed assistance navigating the [system].

[Employee] asked the Commission to consider whether she may contract with [the agency], or consult with providers about [the system], without violating the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, unlike the matter in *Beebe*, she was unable to separate the work she performed at [the agency] into discrete projects. She was primarily responsible for the creation of the [system], as well as all of the related policies, procedures, and training requirements. Despite her assertion that she would work on 'new' projects, the projects she cited at the hearing encompassed the work she had previously performed at [the agency]. As a consequence of the overarching job duties she previously performed, the Commission could see no way for [Employee] to avoid working on matters for which she was responsible as an employee of [the agency]. The Commission's finding applied to work she would perform as a contractor, as well as work she would perform for a private company.

16-28—Post Employment: [Employee] worked for [a State Agency and was located in Dover]. [Employee]’s statewide job duties included assisting with project development/design schedules, reviewing final plans to establish project [timing]. [Employee] was considering retiring from State service.

[Employee] wanted to accept a job [working for one of the Agency]’s contractors. He would be hired to perform quantity and cost estimating services projects throughout the State. [Employee] asked the Commission to consider whether his proposed employment would violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. [Employee]’s work at [the Agency] was limited to establishing time-lines for projects. His involvement with each project ended after the timeline was established. Because the [Agency] projects he previously worked on had progressed beyond the [timing] process, the work being performed on those projects at the time of the meeting was not related to the work he performed in his State position. As a result, [Employee] would not be prohibited from working on those projects, or any other project, [his private employer] may assign to him in his post-retirement position. In other words, [Employee]’s State job was sufficiently different from the work he would perform for [the private company] to conclude that there was no overlap between the two positions and [his new position with a private employer] would not be prohibited by the two year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. The Commission also reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

16-27—Post Employment: [Employee] worked as a [professional employee for a State Agency]. In addition to being [his Agency]’s liaison with private companies, [Employee] developed, coordinated, and constructed [specific and specialized] projects. He was also the Executive Director of a private organization which promoted [industry] safety. [Employee]’s job responsibilities extended across the State. [Employee] provided the Commission with a list of projects he was responsible for while employed by the State.

[Employee] was considering retiring from State service and contemplating employment with [federal entities] and private companies [in a particular industry] in Delaware. He asked the Commission to provide guidance as to what types of projects he could work on after he left State employment.

The policy interests served by enforcement of the post-employment restriction on employees leaving government service to work in the private sector have been clearly defined by the Courts. In *United States v. Nasser*, the U.S. Court of Appeals upheld the constitutionality of the “switching sides” prohibition of the federal government’s post-employment restriction found in 18 U.S.C. § 207(a). “[T]he purpose of protecting the government, which can act only through agents, from the use against it by former agents of information gained in the course of their agency, is clearly a proper one.” 476 F.2d 1111, 1116 (7th Cir. 1973). Another interest of the government in revolving door restrictions is to limit the appeal that lucrative private employment, or the prospect of such employment, may have on an official when dealing with prospective private clients or future employers while still with the government. *Brown v. District of Columbia Board of Zoning*, 423 A.2d 1276, 1282 (D.C. App. 1980).

In both of those cases, the Court emphasized the preservation of the government's interests when government employees leave to work in the private sector. However, those concerns carry less weight when an employee moves between two government positions. In fact, the federal government provides a specific exception to the post-employment restriction for employees moving from federal employment, to one working for state or local government. 18 U.S.C.A. § 207(2)(A) ("The restrictions...shall not apply to acts done in carrying out official duties as an employee of...an agency or instrumentality of a State or local government if the appearance, communication, or representation is on behalf of such government..."). *Id.*

Although Delaware's post-employment statute is modeled after the federal statute, it is silent as to whether it applies to post-retirement employment with the federal government. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). The statute specifically addresses former employees representing "private enterprises". *Id.* The definition of 'private enterprise' is broad and excludes "any activity of the State or of any political subdivision or of any agency, authority or instrumentality thereof". 29 *Del. C.* § 5804(9). Existing statutory language must be interpreted consistent with the General Assembly's manifest intent. 1 *Del. C.* § 301. If a statutory interpretation "would lead to an absurd and undesirable result," the terms should agree with legislative intent. *Law v. Developmental Child Care, Inc.*, 523 A.2d 557, 560 (Del. Super., 1987); *Helmand v. Gambee*, 136 A.2d 558, 561 (Del. Ch., 1957); 2A Sutherland Stat. Constr. § 46.07 (5th ed. 1992); *Comm Op 07-63*.

The post-employment restriction does not apply to State workers who leave or retire to work for "any political subdivision." 29 *Del. C.* 5804(9). That term has been defined to include the counties and municipalities of the State. While the federal government is not a 'political subdivision' of the State, it would lead to an 'absurd result' should the Commission apply the post-employment restriction to the federal government, but not to county or municipal government. As a result, the Commission determined that the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct did not apply to post-retirement federal employment.

In his written submission, [Employee] indicated he may seek employment with private companies or engineering firms. The post-employment restriction is applicable to those entities in Delaware, but do not apply to work that would be performed outside the state.

To ascertain if there was 'substantial overlap' of duties, in violation of the post-employment restriction, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. The Commission was unable to determine if there would be substantial overlap between [Employee]'s State position and a position in the private sector because he did not have a job description on which to base the analysis. Generally speaking, there was a high potential for overlap if he decided to work for a private company in Delaware because, as a State employee, he was responsible for all of the [specific projects] in the state. However, until there was a specific job description for the Commission to consider, they could only recommend that he return for further advice if he intended to accept post-retirement employment with a private company in Delaware. The Commission reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d).

16-25—Post-Employment: [Employee] worked for [a State agency] as an Assistant Administrator/Clinician. [Employee worked at a State facility that provided services to a specific segment of the population]. [Employee]'s job duties included: coordinating programs; providing staff development training; interpreting policies and procedures for the staff. [Employee] left State service in December 2014.

[Employee] wanted to accept a contractual position with [a different State agency providing services to clientele in a different geographic location and with a different age demographic]. [Employee] asked the Commission to consider if her acceptance of the position would violate the Code of Conduct's post-employment restrictions.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. As a [contractor], [Employee] would be performing many of the same job duties as those she performed while working [for the State]. However, she would be assigned to work in [in a different county]. The geographic separation between the two locations greatly reduced the possibility she would encounter her former State clients while working as a [contractor]. In addition, the clients [were of a different age demographic than those in her State position]. As a result, there was little reason to believe she would be performing the same job duties she was previously responsible for while employed by the State.

16-24—Post Employment: [State Employee] worked for [a State Agency] in the Dover office. She retired from State service on May 31, 2016. Before retirement, her job was to [perform an administrative function related to the Agency's bidding process].

[Employee] accepted a job at a [private business], one of [Agency]'s sub-contractors. [Employee]'s new job included checking site readiness, approximating job duration and reporting that information to [the private business'] installers. She also collected documentation used in [the private business'] billing processes and occasionally would be required to pick up and/or deliver materials to job sites. [Employee] asked the Commission to consider whether her post-retirement job with [the private business] violated the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. [Employee]'s position with [her Agency was limited to an administrative function]. She did not have decision-making authority over those projects. As a result, while she did have an administrative role on many [Agency] projects, those projects were not "matters" on which she offered an opinion, or was materially responsible for, while employed by the State. As a consequence, there was no overlap between her former State job and her new position at [a private business]. The Commission reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

16-22--Post Employment: [Employee] was employed by a State [Agency that provides services to a specific segment of the population]. He worked in Sussex County. [The Agency] set funding levels for services provided in the private sector. [The work performed by private sector employees] was overseen by [State employees]. [The Agency] also monitored the services delivered to their clients through [various committees]. [Employee was a member of one of those] committees. The committee ensured that services provided by private sector [employees] conformed to [the Agency]'s policies and industry standards. [Employee]'s job involved: setting funding rates for services; training and education; helping [private sector employees] navigate the State system in order to provide care for individuals who were served

by multiple agencies. [Employee] was considering retiring from State service and working for one of his Agency's contractors.

[Employee] expected his proposed position would involve some overlap with his State position in the sense that there is a finite population of individuals served by [the Agency]. Additionally, he anticipated he would work in Sussex County, as he did in his State job. On the other hand, he would not be performing the same tasks he performed while employed by the State. Clients served by [the Agency] requested funding for specific services and then selected a specific [contractor] to provide that service. [Employee] would be one of those [contractors] and he would provide services directly to his clients. [Employee] asked the Commission to consider whether his proposed post-retirement position would violate the Code of Conduct's post-employment restrictions.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter, services for [the Agency's] clients, while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. As a [contractor], [Employee] would be serving the same population of citizens as he did while working for the State. However, in his State position [Employee] was an administrator and did not provide services directly to [the Agency's] clients. [Employee]'s proposed post-retirement position was more clinical in nature, reducing the likelihood he would be asked to work on matters for which he was previously responsible. In addition, the contracts he managed for the State involved [a different type of service] which was not provided by [the Agency's contractors]. The Commission decided there was a suitable level of separation between the duties he performed in his State position and those he would be performing [as a contractor]. The Commission reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

16-13—Post Employment: [Employee] worked as a Superintendent for [a specific Agency] in New Castle County. He retired from State service on October 1, 2015. Before retirement, his primary responsibility was to assign work [to subordinates] and to make sure the work was completed. [Employee] stated he only worked with [Agency] employees and did not have responsibility for outside contractors.

[Employee] wanted to accept a job with [Company X], one of [Agency]'s contractors. [As an employee for Company X, Employee] would monitor the work of sub-contractors to verify they are meeting project specifications and are compliant with the terms of their contract(s). [Employee] believed [Company X] would assign him to work in New Castle County. [Employee] asked the Commission to consider whether his proposed employment would violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during government employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission approved post-employment positions for [Agency] workers who left State employment to work for one of the agency's contractors so long as they did not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09 and 13-41*. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions. 29 Del. C. § 5809(5).

[Employee]’s position with [Agency] did not involve working with the agency’s sub-contractors. As a result, it was extremely unlikely he would be asked to work on a project for which he was previously responsible while employed by the State. The Commission could see no overlap between the State position and the proposed job with [Company X].

16-12—Post Employment: [Employee] worked as a supervisor for [a State Agency] and [was assigned to New Castle County]. His duties included: scheduling, job assignments, coordinating [certain] events, tracking work orders, and maintenance of in-house projects. [Employee] was considering leaving State employment.

[Employee] wanted to accept a job [Company X], one of the [Agency]’s contractors. [Employee] would monitor the work of sub-contractors to verify they were meeting specifications and were compliant with the terms of their contract(s). [Employee] believed his prospective employer would assign him to work on projects in Kent County. [Employee] asked the Commission to consider whether his proposed employment with [Company X] would violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission approved post-employment positions for [Agency] workers who left State employment to work for one of the agency’s contractors so long as they did not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09 and 13-41*. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions. 29 Del. C. § 5809(5).

[Employee]’s position with the [Agency] was limited to a specific geographic area and he was assigned to work on two specific [projects]. As a result, he would be able to clearly delineate his post-employment restrictions for his new employer. In addition, [Employee] anticipated his primary assignment would be in Kent County, eliminating any possibility of overlap between his former State position and his new job.

The Commission decided [Employee]’s proposed employment with [Company X] would not violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct as long as he did not work on [the same projects] for a period of two years. The Commission also reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

16-11--Post Employment: [Employee] worked as a [professional for a State Agency]. He coordinated with in-house [employees], as well as outside consultants, to complete his assigned projects. His day-to-day responsibilities included reviewing project schedules, estimates, plans and proposals; monitoring the project’s status; and providing guidance. [Employee] resigned from State employment on April 1, 2016. Over the past three years, [Employee] provided services for [a specific project]. [Employee] understood that he would be prohibited from working on that project for a period of two years because of his involvement with it while employed by the State.

[Employee] accepted a job as a manager for [Company X], one of the [Agency]'s contractors. He was aware that his post-employment activities would be limited by the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. During the hearing [Employee] stated that his new employer was also aware of the fact that he was subject to post-employment restrictions and would be willing to accommodate his need to avoid specific projects. He asked the Commission to consider whether he could work on the following projects [omitted]:

At the hearing, [Employee] advised the Commission that he had minimal involvement with [one specific project] in April 2013 when he performed some [minor preparatory work]. Since that time, he had not had any further involvement with that project.

To determine if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission approved post-employment positions for [Agency] workers who left State employment to work for one of the agency's contractors so long as they did not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09 and 13-41*. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions. *29 Del. C. § 5809(5)*.

Based upon the documentation provided by [Employee] it was obvious he could easily identify and delineate the project(s) for which he was materially responsible while employed by the State. As a result, he could communicate that information to [Company X] so that he would not be assigned to work on that project as a private contractor. The Commission also discussed [Employee]'s prior involvement with [the project in April 2013] and decided that his minimal work, which occurred almost three years ago, did not qualify as a project for which he was materially responsible while employed by the State.

The Commission decided [Employee]'s employment with [Company X] would not violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct so long as he did not work on [a specific] project for the next two years. The Commission also reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. *29 Del. C. § 5805(d)*.

16-10—Post Employment: [Employee] worked for the State for 31 years. He planned to retire in August of 2016. For the past 13 years he worked [as a professional] for [Agency] and was assigned to work in Kent and Sussex Counties. [Employee had responsibility for some, but not all of the Agency's projects]. [Employee] was the chief decision-maker for his assigned projects and he also controlled whether [the amount of work to be performed on other projects. To add additional work to another project, other managers would request permission to add the new work. Employee would then evaluate whether the contractor on the project would be able to accommodate the additional work. Based upon that evaluation he would either approve or deny the addition of the [work to the project]. At the time of the hearing [Employee] was the 'gatekeeper' for two [projects] but only had direct supervision over certain [parts of the project]. The contractor for both [projects was Company X].

[Employee] asked the Commission to consider whether he could accept a position [with Company X, performing the same work he performed for the State]. He was aware that his post-employment activities would be subject to the restrictions in the Code of Conduct.

Specifically, he asked the Commission to provide guidance as to what projects he may or may not work on after he left State employment.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission approved post-employment positions for [Agency] workers who left State employment to work for one of the agency's contractors so long as they did not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09 and 13-41*. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions. *29 Del. C. § 5809(5)*.

After discussing the depth of his involvement related to his [projects, as well as those for which he had general oversight], the Commission decided that [Employee] was materially responsible for both [types of projects]. Obviously, [he would be prohibited from working on those projects for which he was primarily responsible. However, he was also prohibited from working on those projects for which he had general oversight because he was the primary decision-maker as to whether work would be added to those projects].

[Employee] could accept a position with [Company X] as long as he did not work on the same [projects] he worked on while employed by the State for a period of two years. In addition, the Commission reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. *29 Del. C. § 5805(d)*.

16-09—Greg McClure—Post-Employment Waiver Request: *As a waiver was granted, the Commission's opinion becomes a matter of public record so the public will know why the waiver occurred. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a)*.

May 17, 2016

Hearing and Decision By: Mark Dunkle, Esq., Vice Chair (Acting Chair); William F. Tobin, Jr., Chair; Commissioners: Dr. Wilma Mishoe, Bonnie Smith

Dear Dr. McClure,

Thank you for attending the Commission meeting on May 17, 2016, where you were accompanied by Dr. Robert Sundquist. After careful consideration of all the relevant facts and circumstance, the Commission decided to grant a waiver of the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct to allow Dr. Sundquist to contract with the Division of Public Health (DPH) for a period of one year.

I. FACTS

You are the Dental Director for the Division of Public Health (DPH) within the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS). DPH provides dental services for children receiving Medicaid as well as other needy children who would not otherwise have the resources for dental care. You estimated that DPH provides dental services to 1500 students from 50 different schools over the course of a year. In your written submission, as well as your comments at the hearing, you advised the Commission that Delaware's dental licensing standards are among the strictest in the country. As a consequence, it is difficult for DPH to recruit dentists from an already small pool of potential applicants.

One of DPH's dentists, Dr. Sundquist, retired from State service on April 1, 2016. You intend to hire a replacement but anticipate the hiring process will be fairly lengthy given Delaware's strict licensing requirements. In the meantime, Dr. Sundquist has agreed to a part-time employment contract with DPH to provide services for approximately 75 days per year. However, Dr. Sundquist is prohibited by the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct from contracting with his former agency for a period of two years. You stated DPH would suffer a hardship if not allowed to contract with Dr. Sundquist because DPH would be unable to meet the needs of children seeking dental care in the State and community clinics. To alleviate the hardship, you asked the Commission to consider a waiver of the post-employment restriction to allow Dr. Sundquist to contract with DPH prior to the expiration of the two-year post-employment restriction.

II. APPLICATION OF THE FACTS TO THE LAW

A. For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. *United States v. Medico*, 784 F.2d 840, 843 (7th Cir., 1986). Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not "directly and materially responsible" for that matter. *Beebe Medical Center v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, C.A. No. 94A-01-004, J. Terry (Del. Super. June 30, 1995), *aff'd.*, No. 304 (Del. January 29, 1996). In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official's responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the state, he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not "directly and materially responsible" for that particular matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that "matter" must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. *Medico* at

843. To decide if Dr. Sundquist would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. *Ethical Standards in the Public Sector: A Guide for Government Lawyers, Clients, and Public Officials, American Bar Association, Section of State and Local Government Law, Publisher*; p. 38. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially. *Commission Op. No. 96-75 (citing Medico at 842)*. See also *Beebe*.

To ascertain if there is a substantial overlap, the Commission compares the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. In this case you acknowledge, and the Commission concurs, that Dr. Sundquist’s part-time employment as a private contractor with DPH would, in fact, violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

The Commission next considered whether DPH qualified for a waiver of the post-employment restriction.

B. Waivers may be granted if there would be an undue hardship on the State employee or State agency, or the literal application of the law is not necessary to serve the public purpose. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a).

(1) "Undue hardship," means "more than required" or is "excessive." *Commission Op. No. 97-18 (citing Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, p. 1290 (10th ed. 1992))*.

Delaware’s strict licensing standards will likely have an adverse effect on the number of applicants responding to DPH’s job posting. In addition, Delaware does not offer licensing reciprocity with any other State. Under a reciprocity agreement, participating states allow professionals licensed in one state to practice in another participating state. Both of these factors are likely to complicate the search for Dr. Sundquist’s replacement. As discussed at the meeting, DPH already has an opening for a full-time dentist at the Seaford location and that posting is scheduled to accept applications for four months. It is highly unlikely that DPH can expect to replace Dr. Sundquist in a more concise time frame. In the interim the Milford clinic, where Dr. Sundquist worked prior to his retirement from State service, was expected to treat approximately 250 needy children from 10 different schools.

Given the length of time needed to find a replacement for Dr. Sundquist, as well as the issues discussed below, the Commission agrees that DPH would suffer an ‘undue hardship’ if not allowed to contract with Dr. Sundquist. The length of the waiver is one year.

(2) Is literal application of the law necessary to serve the public purpose?

The overall purpose of the Code of Conduct is to instill the public’s confidence in its government. 29 Del. C. § 5802(1) and (2). In discussing the federal post-employment law, which is similar to Delaware’s, the United States Congress noted that public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that government officials use their public office for personal gain, particularly after leaving the government. *“Ethics in Government Act,” Senate Report No. 95-1770, p. 32*. In extending its post-employment law from one year to two years on matters within the

official's former responsibility, Congress said the two-year requirement was justified because:

Today public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that officials use public office for personal gain, particularly after they leave government services. There is a sense that a "revolving door" exists between industry and government; that officials 'go easy' while in office in order to reap personal gain afterward.... There is a deep public uneasiness with officials who switch sides—.... Private clients know well that they are hiring persons with special skill and knowledge of particular departments and agencies. That is also the major reason for public concern. *Id.*

The Commission also considered the fact that Dr. Sundquist would be contracting with his former agency. Delaware Courts have specifically noted that where government officials seek contracts with their governmental entity, that the award of such contracts "has been suspect, often because of alleged favoritism, undue influence, conflict and the like." *W. Paynter Sharp & Son v. Heller*, Del. Ch., 280 A.2d 748, 752 (1971). The Code of Conduct was subsequently enacted with restrictions, such as the post-employment law, which aids in avoiding those very types of allegations and suspicions.

It was apparent to the Commission that there will likely be a long period of time between Dr. Sundquist's retirement and recruiting a suitable candidate to fill his position. In the meantime, the public has an interest in making sure that needy children have access to dental care. The Commission also recognizes that dentists not only provide dental care but also refer children to physicians in appropriate cases. As a result, the loss of dental care, as well as potential identification of other medical issues requiring the services of a physician, would adversely affect the children in the community. Next, the Commission considered the relatively short duration of the proposed contract between DPH and Dr. Sundquist, one year. Lastly, the Commission noted that waivers granted by the Commission are a matter of public record. That ensures that the public knows why Dr. Sundquist was allowed to contract with the State in contravention of the Code.

After considering all the relevant factors, the Commission decided that a waiver of the post-employment restriction in this matter would better serve the public purpose than enforcement of the post-employment restriction.

III. CONCLUSION

The Commission granted a waiver of the post-employment restriction to allow DPH to contract with Dr. Sundquist to provide part-time dental services for a period of one year. If, at the end of one year, DPH has not been able to recruit a full-time dentist, you should seek further advice from the Commission. A complete copy of this opinion will be published so the public is aware of the waiver.

Sincerely,

/s/ Mark Dunkle, Esq. /s/

Mark Dunkle, Esq.
Acting Chair

16-08—Post Employment: [Employee] worked as [a State employee for a specific State agency]. He was assigned [to perform a specific task related to outside contractors working on State property]. [Employee worked on a specific type of project]. [Employee] was considering retiring from State service and wanted to explore what options were available to him.

[Employee wanted to apply for a position with two of the Agency's contractors]. [Employee anticipated he would be assigned to a different type of project than those he worked on while employed by the State but would still be in the same field]. [Employee] would not be involved in the contracting or bidding processes. [Employee] asked the Commission to decide if he could consider a post-retirement position with one of the [Agency's] contractors without violating the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for [Agency] workers who leave State employment to work for one of the agency's contractors so long as they do not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09 and 13-41*. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions. *29 Del. C. § 5809(5)*.

It appeared [Employee's] position with the [Agency] was very limited in scope. As a result, it was very unlikely a post-retirement position would require him to work on a project he had previously been responsible for while employed by the State. In the unlikely event he was confronted with such a circumstance, the Commission informed [Employee] that he would be required to recuse himself. The Commission also reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. *29 Del. C. § 5805(d)*.

The Commission decided [Employee's] potential employment with an [Agency] contractor, based upon the facts as they existed on the day of the hearing, did not appear to violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. [Employee] was instructed that if his position at the [Agency] changed before he retired, he should return to the Commission for further advice.

16-07—Post Employment: [Employee] worked for a State [Agency]. He was assigned [to perform a specific task related to outside contractors working on State property]. [Employee] was considering retiring from State service.

[Employee] wanted to accept a job with one of the [Agency's] contractors. At the time of the meeting, he had not completed any employment applications but he anticipated applying with [two private companies]. He anticipated he would be assigned to [projects that were different from those he performed for the State, but in the same general field]. [Employee] would not be involved in the contracting or bidding processes. [Employee] asked the



Commission to decide if his acceptance of a position with one of the [Agency]'s contractors would violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for [Agency] workers who leave State employment to work for one of the agency's contractors so long as they do not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09 and 13-41*. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions. 29 Del. C. § 5809(5).

It appeared that [Employee's] position with the [Agency] was very limited in scope. As a result, it was very unlikely his post-retirement position would require him to work on a project he had previously been responsible for while employed by the State. In the unlikely event he was confronted with such a circumstance, the Commission informed [Employee] that he would be required to recuse himself. The Commission also reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

16-04—Post Employment: [Employee] worked [at a State agency performing a specific monitoring task on small projects]. [Employee] stated he was retiring from State service on March 31, 2016. He wanted to accept a position with [a company that contracted with his State agency]. He was offered a job [performing many of the same functions he performed in his State job]. [Employee] asked the Commission to decide if his acceptance of a position with [contractor] would violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for [agency] workers who leave State employment to work for one of the agency's contractors so long as they do not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09 and 13-41*. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions. 29 Del. C. § 5809(5).

The Commission considered the fact that [Employee] would be assigned to large projects in his new position rather than small projects, like those he worked on while employed by the State, and decided there was little likelihood he would be working on projects for which he had previously been responsible while a State employee. As a result, there was no substantial overlap between the two positions. [Employee] stated that [contractor] was aware of his need to recuse himself from working on projects he worked on while employed by the State and they were willing to accommodate his request, if needed. The Commission also reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

16-02—Post Employment: [Employee] worked for [a] Division of the Department of Health and Social Services [in a clinical position]. In that position she provided services to 18-25 families in

crisis, completed assessments to aid with treatment planning and maintained case files for documentation purposes. [Employee] planned to retire from State service on January 31, 2016.

[Employee] was offered a contract position [with a different Division of the agency]. In that position she would help clients and their families secure [a particular service]. Typical tasks she would be responsible for included maintaining progress notes, making referrals for day services, providing information about housing options and respite services. The anticipated effective date of the contract position was March 1, 2016.

The Commission was initially contacted by [a] Supervisor for [the Division]. She asked the Commission to consider whether [Employee]'s acceptance of the contract position would be a violation of the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. [Supervisor] accompanied [Employee] to the meeting.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In her State position, [Employee] worked with families in crises and her clients were usually in the 0-13 years age group. In the contractual position, [Employee] would be working with a different population of clients. It was very unlikely, although not completely impossible, that she would encounter one of her State clients while working in the contractual position. Should such a circumstance occur she stated she would ask that the client be assigned to a different [employee]. [Supervisor] confirmed that there were 27 other [employees] to whom she could assign the client. As a result, [Employee] would not be required to work on matters for which she was previously responsible while employed by the State. The Commission reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

15-31—Post Employment: [Employee] first requested an informal opinion from Commission Counsel due to time constraints. That letter was sent to [Employee] on December 14, 2015. He then asked to be placed on the agenda for the next meeting so he could obtain a formal opinion from the Commission.

[Employee] worked for [a State agency]. He retired from State service in December 18, 2015. His primary responsibility was to manage [specific projects within the agency]. [Employee] was offered, and accepted, a position with [one of the agency's contractors]. His duties were similar to those he performed at his State job [but he would not be assigned to any of the same projects he worked on while employed by the State].

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has approved post-employment positions for [agency] employees who leave State employment to work for one of the agency's contractors so long as they do not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09 and 13-41*. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions. 29 Del. C. § 5809(5).

[Employee] worked on [specific, enumerated projects] while employed by the State and he indicated that he would [not be working on the same portions of the project] during his employment with [contractor]. For that reason, it did not appear that his proposed work for [contractor] would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. [Employee] was also reminded about the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d). That prohibition does not have a time limit.

15-24—Post Employment: Over the past year, [Employee] worked [for a Division of a State agency]. Prior to that assignment, [Employee] worked in a similar position in [a different Division of the same agency]. His job duties included: [various management and administrative tasks]. [Employee] changed job assignments after he returned from a leave of absence. Ongoing projects [Employee] worked on in his State capacity included [specifically listed projects] and he stated he would not work on those projects prior to the expiration of the two-year post-employment restriction. He planned to retire from State service on October 31st.

[Employee] had been offered a job with a private consulting company to work on the construction oversight team for [a new project]. At the time of the meeting [Employee] had not had any involvement in the project while employed by the State. [Employee] asked the Commission to decide if he could work on the [new project] without violating the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. He also asked the Commission to consider whether he could work on projects initiated by [the agency] after his retirement date.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission had approved post-employment positions for [Agency] workers who left State employment to work for one of the agency's contractors so long as they did not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09 and 13-41*. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions. 29 Del. C. § 5809(5).

At the hearing [Employee] told the Commission he did not have any involvement whatsoever in the [new project]. Therefore, the project was not one he was materially responsible for while employed by the State. As a result, he could accept employment working on that project after he retired from the State without violating the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. The same reasoning applied to [Agency] projects that began after he retired from State employment. The Commission wanted to clarify that the two-year post-employment restriction began the day after he retired from State service and not the day he left his first [State] position [for a leave of absence]. [Employee] was also reminded of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

15-16—Post Employment: [Employee] worked as a manager in [a State agency]. He managed [a particular system] and supervised a team of personnel. [Employee]'s unit collected data about [relevant] projects, generated project reports, reviewed project progress, and made recommendations about project scope. Each manager was assigned to assist specific state agencies. [Employee]'s customer agencies included [various agencies]. One member of [Employee]'s staff was assigned to assist [a specific state agency] and [Employee] served as a

backup to that agency. In his written submission, [Employee] stated that he had not worked on any [of the customer-agency's] projects while employed by [his agency] except to provide [some equipment for an old project].

[Employee] wanted to leave State service and accept a position with [a vendor company]. [Vendor] contracts with [a specific State agency] and had an [employment opportunity that required Employee's job skills]. In that position [Employee] would document [various information collected by the agency]. [Employee] learned about the contractual position from his former supervisor [who worked at the agency that hired the Vendor]. [Employee] had reached out to his former supervisor to see if there were any open positions at [the agency]. According to [Employee], the contractual position had already been created prior to his conversation with his former supervisor. At the hearing, [Employee] stated that he would be interviewed for the position, but he would not be interviewing with his former supervisor. [Employee] asked the Commission to determine if acceptance of the position [with the Vendor working for a former customer-agency] would violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the employee in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while employed by the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. [Employee] would be contracting with an agency for which he did not provide any direct management services while employed by the State. Therefore, the Commission found it difficult to foresee a circumstance in which [Employee] would be working on a project that he was previously responsible for while working for the State. While [Employee] heard about the position from his former supervisor, he was the one who initiated the contact rather than his former supervisor trying to 'poach' employees from other State agencies.

The Commission asked [Employee] if he anticipated having any contact with his colleagues at his former agency if he accepted the position with [Vendor]. [Employee] stated he estimated the probability that he would interact with anyone from his former agency at 5%. He opined that it may be possible he would be asked to pass along [information] to someone at [his former State agency] but he felt it was a very remote possibility. He further stated that if he was required to pass information to a [former colleague], it would not be related to anything he worked on while employed by [his former agency].

The Commission decided that other than the fact both jobs involved working in the same field there did not appear to be any overlap between the two positions. As a result, the post-employment position with [Vendor] would not violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. [Employee] was reminded of the prohibition against revealing confidential information he learned during the course of his employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(e).

15-15—Post Employment: [Employee] worked for a [State agency]. [Employee] had been a State employee for over 9 years. In 2013, before returning to her current position, she worked in a pilot program at a middle school in New Castle County. In that position, she worked with middle school students who were referred to the program by school staff, parents, peers, or through self-referral. Students and families underwent consultations and screening assessments to identify underlying issues and needs. The students and families were then linked to community services when necessary.

[Employee] wanted to accept a contractual position with [her current State agency working in the same capacity she had previously served in the pilot program or in a supervisory position in the program. However, she would be assigned to a different school and would not be involved with the same students]. The position was created in response to the success of the pilot program in which she previously worked. If [Employee] was selected for either position she would resign her State position. She asked the Commission to consider if acceptance of either position would violate the Code of Conduct's post-employment restriction.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. If selected for the [supervisory] position [Employee] would be working in a different position than the one she previously held. As a result, there was little likelihood she would encounter matters for which she was previously responsible. If selected for [the position she previously worked] [Employee] would be performing the same job duties as those she performed while working in the pilot program as a State employee. However, she would be assigned to a different school. Under those circumstances it was highly unlikely she would encounter any of her former students, thus alleviating the post-employment concerns related to her reviewing matters for which she was previously responsible. In analogous situations the Commission had decided that former State employees were permitted to work as a contractor for their former State agency as long as they did not [interact with] their former clients. *Commission Ops. 13-52 and 14-07*. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions. *29 Del. C. § 5809(5)*.

The Commission concluded acceptance of a contractual position would not violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct as long as [Employee] did not work with any of her former [students].

15-13A—Post Employment: [Employee] worked for [a State agency in a statewide supervisory position]. Despite repeated emails from Commission Counsel asking him to describe his State job duties in greater detail, he did not provide any additional information until July 13th when he was informed that failure to provide more information would result in his removal from the meeting agenda. When he did respond, his description was limited to [a very short, generic description of his job duties]. (*Email dated July 13, 2015*). He did not include information about specific projects he was working on or even a general geographic area where he was assigned. In fact, he provided more information about the tasks his job did *not* include such as bidding, contracts, or hiring.

According to his request, [Employee] was offered a job with a private consulting company that contracted [with the State]. Again, no additional information was provided in his request including the name of the company, the projects they worked on, what his job description would be, etc. When asked at the hearing, he indicated the job would be with [a private company] and he would be hired [in a field position]. During the course of the hearing the Commission asked additional questions which elicited the following facts: [Employee] heard about the job opportunity through "word of mouth"; in his State position he worked in Kent County; his State job involved monitoring [a specific component of an agency project]; if hired by [the private company] he would be responsible for [keeping specific records]; he planned to retire from his State job on July 31, 2015, if the Commission approved his position with the private company. Upon learning that his State job required him to work on projects in Kent

County, the Commission asked whether he would consider working for the private company in New Castle or Sussex counties so he could avoid projects he had worked on while employed by the State. [Employee] responded with an adamant “no” and stated he had conditioned his employment with [the private company] upon the fact that he be assigned to work in Kent County. When asked if he felt the two jobs were similar or different, [Employee] vacillated and said that they were similar and not similar. He did not seem to have any firm idea of what type of work he would be doing at [the private company].

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. Without knowing [Employee]’s exact job responsibilities, it was difficult to determine the exact amount of overlap, if any, between the two positions. In analogous situations the Commission has routinely approved post-employment positions for workers who left State employment to work for one of the agency’s contractors so long as they did not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09 and 13-41*. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions. 29 Del. C. § 5809(5).

Without knowing the specific projects that [Employee] worked on in his State job, and the specific projects that he would work on [for the private company], the similarity between his State job and his prospective position was a concern to the Commission. The Commission was also concerned about [Employee]’s unwillingness to provide any geographic separation between the two jobs. Those two factors taken together led to the conclusion that [Employee] could end up working on projects for [the private company] that he was previously responsible for while employed by the State. As a result, [Employee]’s request to work for [the private company] after July 31, 2015 was denied. [Employee] did not present any facts that would indicate that his inability to accept the position with [the private company] would create a hardship and so the Commission did not consider a waiver.

15-13B--Post Employment (Reconsideration): *Note: [Employee]’s Post Employment request was denied by the Commission on July 21, 2015. See Commission Op. 15-13A. [Employee] was very unhappy and asked Commission Counsel what recourse was available. Commission Counsel explained to [Employee] he could ask the Commission for reconsideration if he was going to provide adequate information from which the Commission could render a decision. [A few days later], Employee asked Commission Counsel to place him on the agenda for the August meeting and provided more detailed information about both his State job and his post-retirement position.*

[Employee] worked for [a State agency]. To explain his job duties, [Employee] submitted his Performance Plan that detailed the tasks by which his job performance was measured. *[The various job duties are omitted to preserve his anonymity]*.

[Employee] was offered a job [with Vendor], a private consulting company that contracted with [his State agency]. According to the job profile [Employee] submitted he would be responsible for: [duties in the same general field, but not in the same role, Employee worked in while employed by the State]. [Employee] would not be involved in the contracting or bidding processes.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter, highway and road construction, while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In analogous situations the Commission has routinely approved post-employment positions for [agency] workers who left State employment to work for one of the agency's contractors, so long as they did not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09 and 13-41*. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions. *29 Del. C. § 5809(5)*.

At the reconsideration hearing, [Employee] brought photographs, charts and diagrams to explain the specifics of his State job more clearly. The additional information helped define the specifics of his State job, as well as those of the position [with Vendor]. Once the parameters were made clear, the Commission was able to engage in a meaningful analysis of whether there was any overlap between the two positions. In his State job [Employee]'s unit travelled to vendor's sites to examine and analyze [products]. At the work site his employees [performed a specific analysis]. As an employee of [Vendor], [Employee] would monitor job sites, verify that the work performed complied with project specifications, building codes, and contract terms. He would also keep records [to determine] vendor reimbursements.

Both jobs involved [a specific job field] and although the [tasks] related to those [duties] were different, there was a degree of overlap between the two. As a result, the Commission decided [Employee] should not work on a job site that he previously worked on in his State capacity. He could work on [projects in a related, but different, field] because he had not previously worked on those projects. He was also reminded that any confidential information he learned through his State employment should remain confidential. *29 Del. C. § 5805(d)*.

15-12--Karryl McManus—Post Employment (Waiver Request): Because a waiver was granted, the opinion will be published in its entirety so the public will know why the waiver was granted. *29 Del. C. § 5807(b)(4)*.

July 28, 2015

Karryl McManus, Director
Division of Management Support Services
Department of Services for Children, Youth, and their Families
1825 Faulkland Road
Admin Bldg. Room 152a
Wilmington, DE 19805

15-12 Post Employment—WAIVER GRANTED

Hearing and Decision By: *William F. Tobin, Jr., Chair; Andrew Gonser, Esq., Vice Chair; Commissioners: Jeremy Anderson, Esq., Dr. Wilma Mishoe*

Dear Ms. McManus,

Thank you for attending the Commission meeting on July 21, 2015 to which you were accompanied by Matthew Payne. Based upon your written submissions and your comments at the hearing, the Commission decided to grant a waiver to allow your agency to contract with Mr. Payne, a former employee of the Department of Technology and Information (DTI). Ordinarily, under your circumstances contracting with a former State employee before the expiration of the two-year post-employment restriction is prohibited, but the Commission decided to grant a 90-day waiver based upon agency hardship.

FACTS

You work for the Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families (DSCYF) as Director of the Division of Management Support Services (DMSS). DMSS provides administrative and technical support to the other four divisions of DSCYF. Your Division is responsible for human resources, information technology, facilities management, and fiscal management services. In carrying out those duties, DMSS is the principle contact with the State's central agencies and government offices.

DSCYF is in the process of re-vamping their case management system. The 20-year-old system manages, tracks, and coordinates services to children and families across the Department's four service divisions. The current system, Family and Child Tracking System ("FACTS"), relies on an aging platform and infrastructure that is no longer supported by DMSS's Management Information Unit. Additionally, FACTS did not facilitate information sharing across the divisions. The ability for interdivisional information sharing is important given the number of children who require coordinated services from multiple divisions.

In addition to providing day-to-day case management services, the database must meet federal Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) and other Federal reporting requirements, such as the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD), the National Child Abuse and Data System (NCANDS) and the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) process. Failure to comply with any of the above requirements could result in administrative and monetary penalties to be levied against the State. Additionally, the database provides a medium through which your agency pursues Medicaid and other service reimbursements which allows the State to recover federal funds for child welfare and mental health related services. If DMSS suffers a system failure the State would be unable to recover those federal funds. Between 2011 and 2014, the State recovered more than \$22 million in that manner.

In 2011, the Department obtained funding for a project, titled "FACTS II," to replace the FACTS system. The goal of the project is to provide an integrated system that is updated, reliable, supportable, and that allows for information sharing across Divisions. Deloitte was selected as the vendor to develop the system. DTI Secretary

Jim Sills was a co-executive sponsor of the FACTS II project, along with your Department's Cabinet Secretary, Jennifer Ranji. However, DTI did not play a central role in the project, opting to select a contractor to manage the project.

In late Winter and Spring 2014, when the State began testing the FACTS II system, it was discovered that there were significant issues with the system that had thus far been developed by Deloitte. Over 4,000 defects were discovered during testing, and the State had concerns regarding the Deloitte project leadership. In late Spring 2014, user acceptance testing was halted due to the high number of defects. Throughout the Summer of 2014, Deloitte and the State worked to correct the problems by adding additional personnel to the project. The State contracted with Computer Aid Incorporated (CAI) to develop test scripts to facilitate testing of the system and Deloitte added a new project leader. In October, the State expanded its contract with CAI to hire a new project manager, replacing the individual contractor who had served as the FACTS II project manager since the project's inception.

In late Summer/early Fall 2014, Secretary Sills left DTI, and Secretary Ranji and newly confirmed DTI Secretary James Collins agreed to increase DTI's involvement in the project. As a result, Secretary Collins assigned Matthew Payne, a DTI employee to the project. Until then, Mr. Payne had not worked on FACTS II. Mr. Payne attended his first meeting related to the FACTS II project in November 2014. In June 2015, Mr. Payne left State service and accepted a position with CAI.

Prior to his retirement Mr. Payne's primary role in the FACTS II project was to help ensure that the Department's and the State's interests were being represented. Because of Mr. Payne's technical and project management experience, his assistance was invaluable to DSCYF for planning purposes and in negotiations with Deloitte. Since the Fall of 2014, the State team and CAI have made significant progress towards continued development of the FACTS II project. The State completed a technical analysis to identify the areas in which the system does not meet the Department's needs. Over the next 2-3 months, DMSS will be re-engaging in negotiations with Deloitte to remediate the deficiencies identified during the testing period and to develop a timeline and budget for completion of the project.

You believe that Mr. Payne's experience with FACTS II and his previous involvement during negotiations with Deloitte are critical to the success and completion of the project. This is especially true as you continue negotiations with Deloitte and plan for completion of the project. However, you also recognize that Mr. Payne would be violating the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct by working on the FACTS II project while employed in the private sector. As a result, you are requesting a hardship waiver on behalf of DMSS and DSCYF.

APPLICATION OF THE FACTS TO THE LAW

A. For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. *United States v. Medico*, 784 F.2d 840, 843 (7th Cir., 1986). Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not "directly and materially responsible" for that matter. *Beebe Medical Center v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, C.A. No. 94A-01-004, J. Terry (Del. Super. June 30, 1995), *aff'd.*, No. 304 (Del. January 29, 1996). In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official's responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State, he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not "directly and materially responsible" for that particular matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that "matter" must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. *Medico* at 843. To decide if Mr. Payne would be working on the same "matter," Courts have held that it is the same "matter" if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. *Ethical Standards in the Public Sector: A Guide for Government Lawyers, Clients, and Public Officials*, American Bar Association, Section of State and Local Government Law, Publisher; p. 38. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially. *Commission Op. No. 96-75* (citing *Medico* at 842). See also *Beebe*.

To ascertain if there is substantial overlap, the Commission compares the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Mr. Payne worked on the FACTS II project while he was employed by the State. At the hearing he stated that he served in an advisory role for the project rather than providing technical expertise. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Mr. Payne's continued presence on the project after leaving State service is a violation of the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. This job switch is exactly the type of situation the statute was designed to prevent.

The Commission then turned to a consideration of whether there are adequate facts and circumstances to justify a waiver based upon agency hardship.

B. Waivers may be granted if there would be an undue hardship on the State employee or State agency, or the literal application of the law is not necessary to serve the public purpose. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a).

(1) "Undue hardship," means "more than required" or is "excessive." *Commission Op. No. 97-18* (citing *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, p. 1290 (10th ed. 1992)).

Deloitte is an international consulting conglomerate with over 70,000 employees and \$14.91 billion dollars in revenue in fiscal year 2014. Since DSCYF suspended user testing of FACTS II, due to the high number of product defects, the relationship between Deloitte and your negotiating team has been contentious with each party blaming the

other for the end result. Your agency has already invested over three years and a substantial amount of money into the development of the FACTS II project. You stated that Deloitte's representatives have an advantage during the on-going negotiations because of their familiarity with the highly technical issues involved. This is knowledge that neither you, nor your colleagues, possess. The knowledge gap is not pointed out in a disparaging manner but only to highlight the disadvantage your agency experiences while involved in this contentious contract dispute. It is those particular skills that you believe Mr. Payne can provide during the next few months while your agency and Deloitte attempt to come to an agreement regarding the completion of the FACTS II project.

At the hearing, Mr. Payne stated that prior leaving the State he had been employed by DTI for six years. Before he began working for the State, Mr. Payne worked in the private sector and acquired job experience which is relevant to your current situation. However, Mr. Payne is now employed by CAI, the company that your agency retained to write test scripts and provide project management services for FACTS II. When asked, Mr. Payne stated he left State employment because he did not have confidence that he would be able to retain his position when the current administration changes with the 2016 election.

The Commission is concerned about the conflicts of interest that may arise if your agency accepts contractual advice from Mr. Payne as a representative of CAI, a company that is providing ancillary services on the FACTS II project. When asked if CAI could apply to replace Deloitte if the contract negotiations failed, you indicated that they would be welcome to bid on the project like any other interested vendor. Mr. Payne indicated he did not know how CAI would proceed under those circumstances. While it was clear to the Commission that the waiver request was made at the behest of your agency rather than at Mr. Payne's request, and although the scenario is not ideal, contracting with Mr. Payne as a private contractor places some degree of separation between the contract negotiations and CAI.

Taking into consideration all the relevant facts and circumstances, as well as the huge investment your agency has already put into the FACTS II project, the Commission decided to grant a waiver based upon agency hardship. However, there are two caveats. First, Mr. Payne must agree to contract with your agency as an independent contractor and not as a representative of CAI. At the hearing, neither you nor Mr. Payne knew if CAI would allow such an arrangement but wanted to resolve the ethics issue prior to approaching CAI. Second, the waiver is granted for only 90 days from the date of the hearing. Such a time constraint is designed to minimize the length of time Mr. Payne will be allowed to violate the Code of Conduct and to promote an expeditious end to the contract negotiations with Deloitte.

(2) Is literal application of the law necessary to serve the public purpose?

The overall purpose of the Code of Conduct is to instill the public's confidence in its government. 29 Del. C. § 5802(1) and (2). In discussing the federal post-employment law, which is similar to Delaware's, the United States Congress noted that public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that government officials use their public office for personal gain, particularly after leaving the government. *"Ethics in Government Act," Senate Report No. 95-1770, p. 32.* In extending its post-employment law from one year to two years on matters within the

official's former responsibility, Congress said the two-year requirement was justified because:

Today public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that officials use public office for personal gain, particularly after they leave government services. There is a sense that a "revolving door" exists between industry and government; that officials 'go easy' while in office in order to reap personal gain afterward.... There is a deep public uneasiness with officials who switch sides—.... Private clients know well that they are hiring persons with special skill and knowledge of particular departments and agencies. That is also the major reason for public concern. *Id.*

On the other hand, the Code also seeks to encourage citizens to assume public office and employment by not "unduly circumscribing their conduct." 29 *Del. C.* § 5802(3). Thus, in setting the post-employment standard, the General Assembly did not place a total ban on former employees representing or otherwise assisting a private enterprise on matters involving the State, It merely placed a restriction on post-employment activity involving matters for which the former employee (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) was otherwise directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d) . *Commission Op. 01-07.*

The public does have an interest in preventing the failure of DSCYF's technical infrastructure. First, a great deal of money is recovered from the Federal government for the State through use of the agency's computer system. Next, DSCYF has already expended significant resources towards the development of the project. All of those resources would be wasted if the contract negotiations between Deloitte and DSCYF were to proceed under circumstances in which you acknowledge your agency is operating at a disadvantage. Also weighing in favor of serving the public purpose is the fact that if the Commission grants a waiver the decision becomes a matter of public record. That ensures that the public knows why this former State employee was allowed to contract with a State agency in contravention of the Code.

CONCLUSION

DMSS, and by extension, DSCYF is granted a 90-day waiver of the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct based upon agency hardship. The waiver is to allow your agency to contract with Mr. Payne, as an individual, to assist you in contract negotiations with Deloitte. Because the Commission has granted a waiver, this opinion will be printed in its entirety on our website. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

/s/ William F. Tobin, Jr. /s/

William F. Tobin, Jr.
Chairman

15-14--Post Employment: [Employee] worked as a casual/seasonal employee for the [the State]. Her job duties included grant monitoring and serving as a staff member for [a State committee]. As a staff member for the [committee] she attended and scheduled meetings; organized the agenda; recorded minutes; and conducted research as requested. As a staff member she did not have any direct input on [a new program developed by the committee] and did not participate in writing the grant application to fund the program.

[Her State agency] recently approved a grant to [another agency] to fund the [new] program. [Employee] wanted to leave State service and accept a contractual position with [the agency that received the grant] as the program's Coordinator. Her duties would include contacting assigned community providers to monitor participant compliance; determining participant eligibility; collecting and analyzing program data; and building community support for the program. [Employee] indicated she had previous experience working [in this particular field] when she lived in [another state].

To ascertain if there is a substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during State employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, she worked on the subject matter, the [newly developed] program, while employed by the State. However, her involvement with [the program] was limited to providing administrative support to the [committee], rather than direct participation in the decision-making process.

The overlap between her state job duties and those of the Coordinator position were not substantial enough to violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. [Employee] was reminded of the prohibition against revealing confidential information she learned through her State position. 29 Del. C. § 5805(e).

15-09—Dr. Trimzi—Post Employment (Waiver Request): *Because a waiver was granted, the opinion will be published in its entirety so the public will know why the waiver was granted.* 29 Del. C. § 5807(b)(4).

June 22, 2015

15-09 Post Employment—WAIVER GRANTED

Hearing and Decision By: *William F. Tobin, Jr., Chair; Commissioners: Jeremy Anderson, Esq., Dr. Wilma Mishoe, Bonnie Smith;*

Dear Dr. Trimzi,

Thank you for attending the Commission meeting on June 16, 2015. Based upon your written submissions and your comments at the hearing, the Commission decided to grant a waiver to allow you to contract with your former State agency once you leave State employment. However, the Commission is concerned that in the past two months two Delaware Psychiatric Center (DPC) employees have requested hardship waivers on behalf of their agency without any justification from the agency itself. Going forward, no other waivers will be granted based upon agency hardship unless the request is made, and substantiated, by DPC leadership. The burden of obtaining a waiver based upon agency hardship is the responsibility of the agency and not the employee. You should know that because a waiver was granted, this opinion will be published in its entirety on our website. 29 Del. C. § 5807(b)(4). Additionally, a copy of this opinion will be forwarded to Dr. Gallucci, Medical Director for the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS).

FACTS

You are a psychiatrist currently working for DHSS as the Residency Training Director at DPC. The residency program trains physicians to specialize in psychiatry with a primary focus on community psychiatry and public service. You currently spend 26 to 30 hours per week working as the program's director. Originally, your position also entailed clinical duties at a facility that has since been closed. You want to leave State employment and contract with DPC for 25 hours per week to continue as the Residency Training Director. You requested that the Commission consider a waiver if it was determined your contract with DPC would violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. You stated that if a waiver were denied DPC would suffer a hardship if they had to find a replacement for your position because no other psychiatrists at DPC perform the same administrative functions required by your position. You also asserted your request for a hardship waiver was supported by Dr. Gallucci, the Medical Director for DHSS.

APPLICATION OF THE FACTS TO THE LAW

A. For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. *United States v. Medico*, 784 F.2d 840, 843 (7th Cir., 1986). Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not "directly and materially responsible" for that matter. *Beebe Medical Center v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, C.A. No. 94A-01-004, J. Terry (Del. Super. June 30, 1995), *aff'd.*, No. 304 (Del. January 29, 1996). In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official's responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State, he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency

for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that particular matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. *Medico* at 843. To decide if you would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. *Ethical Standards in the Public Sector: A Guide for Government Lawyers, Clients, and Public Officials, American Bar Association, Section of State and Local Government Law, Publisher*; p. 38. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially. *Commission Op. No. 96-75 (citing Medico at 842)*. See also *Beebe*.

To ascertain if there is a substantial overlap, the Commission compares the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. You made no effort, nor could you have, to distinguish your current State position from the contractual position. You would be leaving State employment to perform the exact same job with the same duties and responsibilities. As a result, the contractual position with your former agency would violate the two-year post-employment restriction.

The Commission next turned to a consideration of whether the facts presented qualified as a hardship necessitating a waiver. In order to qualify for a waiver, the law requires a showing of hardship to either the employee or the agency, or facts demonstrating that enforcement of the post-employment restriction is not necessary to effectuate the public purpose. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(a) and (b).

B. Waivers may be granted if there would be an undue hardship on the State employee or State agency, or the literal application of the law is not necessary to serve the public purpose. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(a).

(1) "Undue hardship," means "more than required" or is "excessive." *Commission Op. No. 97-18 (citing Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, p. 1290 (10th ed. 1992))*.

At the hearing, you denied any demonstrable hardship to yourself if you were not permitted to accept the contractual position with DPC. Although it was a close call, the Commission found you did present facts establishing a hardship on the agency. DPC would be placed in the position of having to find a psychiatrist qualified to manage the Residency Training Program. You stated that when the job was first posted you were the only applicant who applied for the position. When asked why there were so few applicants for the position, you indicated that large urban hospitals in close proximity to Delaware offer more opportunities to psychiatrists seeking employment. Further complicating the search for a suitable candidate is the fact the contract is for a part-time position. If the agency were fortunate enough to find a qualified psychiatrist in Delaware, the part-time, contractual nature of the position would likely create further difficulty in the recruitment process. In this instance, you are willing to work part-time for DPC and your switch from a full-time employee to a part-time contractor would leave a vacancy for a full-time budgeted position which is more likely to appeal to potential job applicants.

(2) Is literal application of the law necessary to serve the public purpose?

The overall purpose of the Code of Conduct is to instill the public's confidence in its government. 29 *Del. C.* § 5802(1) and (2). In discussing the federal post-employment law, which is similar to Delaware's, the United States Congress noted that public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that government officials use their public office for personal gain, particularly after leaving the government. "*Ethics in Government Act*," *Senate Report No. 95-1770*, p. 32. In extending its post-employment law from one year to two years on matters within the official's former responsibility, Congress said the two-year requirement was justified because:

Today public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that officials use public office for personal gain, particularly after they leave government services. There is a sense that a "revolving door" exists between industry and government; that officials 'go easy' while in office in order to reap personal gain afterward.... There is a deep public uneasiness with officials who switch sides--.... Private clients know well that they are hiring persons with special skill and knowledge of particular departments and agencies. That is also the major reason for public concern. *Id.*

On the other hand, the Code also seeks to encourage citizens to assume public office and employment by not "unduly circumscribing their conduct." 29 *Del. C.* § 5802(3). Thus, in setting the post-employment standard, the General Assembly did not place a total ban on former employees representing or otherwise assisting a private enterprise on matters involving the State, It merely placed a restriction on post-employment activity involving matters for which the former employee (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) was otherwise directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d) . *Commission Op. 01-07.*

In considering the public purpose, the fact that you would be contracting with your former agency weighed against granting the waiver. It would be obvious to even the most casual observer that you obtained the contract because of your prior employment with the State. Another factor weighing against a waiver is the fact that your position is administrative. A vacancy in your position would not appear to have a significant or immediate impact on DPC's ability to provide services to their clients.

On the other hand, it is clear there would be a limited pool of applicants from which DPC could recruit to fill your position. As a result, the Commission determined that DPC's ability to administer the Residency Training Program would be seriously hindered if you were unable to contract with your former agency. While you do not treat patients directly, you administer a program which brings psychiatrists to the State who, in turn, provide treatment to Delaware's citizens. Also weighing in favor of serving the public purpose is the fact that if the Commission granted the waiver the decision becomes a matter of public record. That ensures that the public knows why you were allowed to contract with your former agency in contravention of the Code.

CONCLUSION

After considering all the relevant facts and circumstances, the Commission decided to grant a hardship waiver to allow you to contract with your former agency as the

Residency Training Director. No further waivers will be granted to DPC employees without a showing of agency hardship by DPC's leadership.

Sincerely,

William F. Tobin, Jr.

/s/ William F. Tobin, Jr.
Chair

Cc: Gerard Gallucci, M.D.

15-10—Post Employment: [Employee] worked for a Division within the Department of Services for Youth, Children and their Families (DSYCF). [Employee] was a casual/seasonal worker [providing a particular service to a specific segment of the population] in Dover. Her work required her to coordinate services with other State agencies and vendors. [Employee] reported directly to a supervisor who, in turn, reported to the Regional Manager. [Employee] had contact with the Regional Manager during trainings and meetings. The Regional Manager also evaluated [Employee]'s job performance.

[Employee] wanted to leave State service and accept a contractual position with her State agency [as Coordinator of a new program]. [Employee] stated she had worked on a similar program when she lived in [another state]. [Employee] would work with [the same segment of the population she worked with in her State position, but limitations on participation in the program made it unlikely she would encounter previous clients]. [Employee] would continue to [perform some of the same job duties] as well as collecting and analyzing data related to the success of the program and educating [other agencies] about the nature of the program. As the program's coordinator, [Employee] would report to the same Regional Manager who had oversight of her State position. However, she would be assigned to a work location in Wilmington. When asked about the benefits of leaving State employment to become a contractor, [Employee] indicated she would be paid at a higher rate which would enable her to purchase health insurance, a benefit she did not receive in her State job because she was a casual/seasonal worker.

To ascertain if there is a substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee], had worked on the subject matter, managing [programs aimed at a specific segment of the population]. As a result, [Employee] would be required to work with some of the same State employees she worked with in her State position. However, it was unlikely [Employee] would have any oversight of clients she worked with in her State position because [of the participation requirements in the new program].

The Commission considered the fact that [Employee] would be contracting with her former agency. Delaware Courts have specifically noted that where government officials seek contracts with their governmental entity, that the award of such contracts "has been suspect, often because of alleged favoritism, undue influence, conflict and the like." *W. Paynter Sharp & Son v. Heller*, Del. Ch., 280 A.2d 748, 752 (1971). The Code of Conduct was subsequently

enacted with restrictions, such as the post-employment law, which aids in avoiding those very types of allegations and suspicions.

The Commission compared [Employee]’s situation to others they have considered in the past. The Commission routinely approves post-employment positions for DeIDOT workers who leave State employment to work for one of the agency’s contractors so long as they do not work on the same projects. *Commission Ops. 12-09 and 13-41*. In those matters, the new employer was contracting with the agency, not the former State employee.

In this instance, [Employee] would become a contractor and personally contract with her former agency. Her matter was similar to recent decisions made by the Commission which allowed former casual/seasonal workers to leave their counseling positions at various middle schools to contract to provide services in other middle schools so long as they did not treat the same clients. However, in those matters, the former State employees were not supervised by the same staff that supervised them while working for the State. *Commission Ops. 13-52 and 14-07*.

The Commission weighed and compared the issues from those previous opinions to determine if [Employee] should contract with her former agency. The Commission is to strive for consistency in their opinions. 29 *Del. C. § 5809(5)*. After consideration of all the relevant facts and circumstances, the Commission determined [Employee]’s situation was more analogous to that of the DeIDOT employees. The contractual position offered her ample opportunity to work on [the new program] without encountering matters for which she had previously been responsible when employed by the State. Additionally, there was no evidence [Employee] was leveraging her State position to gain an opportunity as a contractor. She was merely trying to improve her economic circumstance which was understandable given the fact she was not receiving State benefits.

15-06—Andrew Donohue, M.D.—Post Employment (Waiver Granted): *As a waiver was granted, the Commission’s opinion becomes a matter of public record so the public will know why the waiver occurred.* 29 *Del. C. § 5807(a)*.

April 21, 2015

Andrew Donohue, M.D.
DHSS
1906 Maryland Avenue
Canby Park—Room 137
Wilmington, DE 19805

15-06 Post Employment—WAIVER GRANTED

Hearing and Decision By: *William F. Tobin, Jr., Chair, Mark Dunkle, Esq., Vice Chair; Andrew Gonser, Esq, Vice Chair.; Commissioners: Lisa Lessner, Jeremy Anderson, Esq., Dr. Wilma Mishoe, Bonnie Smith*

Dear Dr. Donohue,

Thank you for attending the Commission meeting on April 21, 2015. Based upon your written submissions and your comments at the hearing, the Commission decided to grant a waiver to allow you to contract with your former State agency once you leave State employment.

A. FACTS

You are a forensic psychiatrist employed by the Division of Health and Social Services (DHSS). Your duties are split between the Wilmington Community Mental Health (WCMHC) Center and the Delaware Psychiatric Center (DPC). Approximately 80% of your time is spent treating patients at WCMHC and 20% is spent conducting court-ordered psychiatric evaluations at DPC. The demand for court-ordered psychiatric evaluations has doubled in the past four years while DHSS's need for community treatment providers has changed due to increased outsourcing to private providers. You want to leave State service and contract with DPC as a forensic evaluator working approximately one day per week performing court-ordered evaluations. DHSS plans to find a replacement for you once you resign and they will hire a full-time psychiatrist to work at WCMHC treating patients. You would then fill DPC's need for a part-time forensic evaluator as a contract employee. When not working for the State, you plan to work in private practice.

You asked the Commission to decide if a contract with your former agency would violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. Should the Commission determine that a contractual position with DHSS would constitute a violation, you requested a waiver on the grounds the agency would suffer a hardship if they lost your services. In your comments to the Commission you stated that Delaware has a shortage of psychiatrists and less than one percent of all psychiatrists are board certified in forensic psychiatry. As a result, you anticipate DPC would have a difficult time recruiting a psychiatrist with the proper credentials which would be further complicated by the fact the position is part-time with no benefits. Dr. Gallucci, Medical Director for DHSS agreed with your assessment of the agency's needs. In an email to our office Dr. Gallucci stated:

Dr. Donohue would most likely also be involved in some of the training activities associated with the University of Pennsylvania forensics Fellows who rotate at the Mitchell Building of DPC. Dr. Donohue is a valuable employee with expert skills in forensics psychiatry. We would have difficulty replacing him and the functions he performs should he not be allowed to continue his work with us.

B. APPLICATION OF THE FACTS TO THE LAW

1. For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. *United States v. Medico*, 784 F.2d 840, 843 (7th Cir., 1986). Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. *Beebe Medical Center v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, C.A. No. 94A-01-004, J. Terry (Del. Super. June 30, 1995), *aff’d.*, No. 304 (Del. January 29, 1996). In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State, he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that particular matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. *Medico* at 843. To decide if you would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. *Ethical Standards in the Public Sector: A Guide for Government Lawyers, Clients, and Public Officials*, American Bar Association, Section of State and Local Government Law, Publisher; p. 38. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially. *Commission Op. No. 96-75* (citing *Medico* at 842). See also *Beebe*.

To ascertain if there is a substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the proposed post-employment activities. In your case, the overlap is substantial. You would work for the same agency, with the same director, performing the same tasks you performed while employed by the State. When asked if there would be occasion for you to evaluate the same patients you treated while employed by the State or to evaluate patients you treat in private practice you stated:

Delaware is a small state, so some of the same individuals I have seen at the clinic as their treatment provider may require an evaluation from time to time as the years go by. We make every effort not to have such individuals evaluated by someone who has treated that person in the past, mainly to avoid creating any confusion with regard to the sometimes competing goals of treater (sic) (i.e. trying to help the patient) and evaluator (i.e. trying to objectively answer the judge’s question).

You indicated you would recuse yourself where possible but DPC may not have the staff necessary to recuse yourself in every instance and if you did so, an individual may be forced to wait an extended period of time for an evaluation, to their detriment.

The Commission also considered the fact you would be contracting with your former agency. Delaware Courts have specifically noted that where government officials seek contracts with their governmental entity, that the award of such contracts "has been suspect, often because of alleged favoritism, undue influence, conflict and the like." *W. Paynter Sharp & Son v. Heller*, Del. Ch., 280 A.2d 748, 752 (1971). The Code of Conduct was subsequently enacted with restrictions, such as the post-employment law, which aids in avoiding those very types of allegations and suspicions. In this case, it appears you were offered the contract because of your former association with the agency as well as the fact you possess a very specific set of skills required to perform the job.

Considering all those factors, the Commission decided it would violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct for you to accept the contractual position with DPC. However, for the reasons below, the Commission decided to grant a waiver based on agency hardship.

2. Waivers may be granted if there would be an undue hardship on the State employee or State agency, or the literal application of the law is not necessary to serve the public purpose. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a).

(a) "Undue hardship," means "more than required" or is "excessive." *Commission Op. No. 97-18 (citing Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, p. 1290 (10th ed. 1992).*

In granting a waiver, the Commission may consider a hardship to either the employee or to the State agency. If you were prohibited from contracting with DHSS, the agency would be placed in the position of having to recruit a psychiatrist qualified to perform court-ordered evaluations from a shallow pool of resources. Further complicating the search for a suitable candidate would be the fact the contract is for a part-time position. If the agency were fortunate enough to find a qualified psychiatrist in Delaware the part-time, contractual nature of the position may create further difficulty (i.e. lack of benefits, etc.). Failure to locate a suitable candidate would create a backlog of individuals waiting for psycho-forensic evaluations.

(b) Is literal application of the law necessary to serve the public purpose?

Having decided you qualified for a waiver based on agency hardship, the Commission need not consider the public purpose served by the law. However, those considerations are an equally important reason for the Commission to grant the waiver.

The overall purpose of the Code of Conduct is to instill the public's confidence in its government. 29 Del. C. § 5802(1) and (2). In discussing the federal post-employment law, which is similar to Delaware's, the United States Congress noted that public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that government officials use their public office for personal gain, particularly after leaving the government. *"Ethics in Government Act," Senate Report No. 95-1770, p. 32.* In extending its post-employment law from one year to two years on matters within the official's former responsibility, Congress said the two-year requirement was justified because:

Today public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that officials use public office for personal gain, particularly after they leave government services. There is a sense that a “revolving door” exists between industry and government; that officials ‘go easy’ while in office in order to reap personal gain afterward.... There is a deep public uneasiness with officials who switch sides—.... Private clients know well that they are hiring persons with special skill and knowledge of particular departments and agencies. That is also the major reason for public concern. *Id.*

On the other hand, the Code also seeks to encourage citizens to assume public office and employment by not “unduly circumscribing their conduct.” 29 *Del. C.* § 5802(3). Thus, in setting the post-employment standard, the General Assembly did not place a total ban on former employees representing or otherwise assisting a private enterprise on matters involving the State. It merely placed a restriction on post-employment activity involving matters for which the former employee (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) was otherwise directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d) . *Commission Op. 01-07.*

Court-ordered psycho-forensic evaluations are most often ordered for people accused of crimes. Here, the public has an interest in swift and just resolutions to criminal cases. The need for a court-ordered psycho-forensic evaluation, which provides the court direction on which programs or treatments would most benefit the defendant, often prevents inmates from litigating their cases and being released from custody. If you were prevented from accepting the contractual position with DHSS, it is likely the wait time for an evaluation would rise dramatically and ultimately delay the release of defendants who are presumed innocent until proven guilty. Also weighing in favor of serving the public purpose is the fact that this waiver will be published in its entirety. That ensures that the public knows why you were allowed to contract with the State in contravention of the Code.

C. CONCLUSION

Based upon the agency’s hardship and in considering the public purpose of your application, the Commission grants a waiver to allow you to contract with your former State agency.

Sincerely,

/s/ William F. Tobin, Jr.

William F. Tobin, Jr.
Chair

15-02 – Post Employment: [Employee] retired from [his State position] on September 1, 2014. Before his retirement [Employee] was the Director of [a specific Division]. The Division provided (or contracted to provide) [services to a specific segment of the population]. The Division was made up of [numerous employees with various job descriptions] who reported to [the head of

each county]. The [head of each county] reported directly to [Employee]. [Employee] was generally responsible for the division's policies, personnel, and budget.

[Employee] wanted to accept a contract with his former agency to review reimbursement [rates related to a specific service]. Originally, the reimbursement amounts were determined by an independent agency contracted by [the State agency]. Over time, additional monies were requested for specific [clients] and those requests were reviewed by [Employee] while he still worked for the State. [The State agency] was seeking to hire a contractor to [review the previously approved reimbursement rates]. The contract offered to [Employee] was for approximately \$5000. The agency's procurement rules did not require the contract to be publicly noticed and bid because it fell below the threshold dollar amount. The Code of Conduct only requires public notice and bidding for contracts awarded to current State employees. 29 Del. C. § 5805(c). According to [Employee], he was asked to do the contract work because of his "historical knowledge and familiarity with the system." [Employee] asked the Commission to determine if his acceptance of the contract would violate the post-employment restrictions in the Code of Conduct. [Employee] could not attend the meeting. However, he was available by telephone if the Commission had additional questions.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] previously worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, unlike *Beebe*, it appeared there was substantial overlap between [Employee]'s State duties and the contract work. As a contractor, [Employee] would be identifying [reimbursement levels] he had personally approved as a State employee. That is exactly the type of job switch the statute was designed to prevent. To permit him to engage in such activities would distort the purpose of the post-employment provision by allowing [Employee], as a contractor, to get a "leg up" on other private enterprises that deal with the State. *Commission Op. No. 95-11*. As to the specific issue of contracting with his former agency, Delaware Courts have noted that where government officials seek contracts with their governmental entity, that the award of such contracts "has been suspect, often because of alleged favoritism, undue influence, conflict and the like." *W. Paynter Sharp & Son v. Heller*, Del. Ch., 280 A.2d 748, 752 (1971). The Code of Conduct was subsequently enacted with restrictions, such as the post-employment law, which aids in avoiding those very types of allegations and suspicions. In this case, [Employee] was offered the contract specifically because of his former association with the agency.

The Commission decided it would violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct for [Employee] to contract with his former agency.

14-49 -- Post Employment: [Employee] worked for the Delaware Department of Transportation (DeIDOT) on large construction projects. He had recently retired from State service. [Employee] was generally responsible for the oversight of [specific employees] to ensure that work was completed pursuant to specifications and to ensure it was completed in a timely manner. [Employee] would [coordinate with other entities involved in the project]; he oversaw and recorded daily activities; and he kept records of work completed and material used for invoicing purposes.

[Employee] wanted to accept a position with one of DeIDOT's contractors. He asked the Commission to consider allowing him to work for [the contractor] doing the exact same job he performed for the State. [Employee] was accompanied to the meeting by [one of the contractor's employees].

A. For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. *United States v. Medico*, 784 F.2d 840, 843 (7th Cir., 1986). Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. *Beebe Medical Center v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, C.A. No. 94A-01-004, J. Terry (Del. Super. June 30, 1995), *aff’d.*, No. 304 (Del. January 29, 1996). In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State, he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that particular matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. *Medico* at 843. To decide if [Employee] would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. *Ethical Standards in the Public Sector: A Guide for Government Lawyers, Clients, and Public Officials*, American Bar Association, Section of State and Local Government Law, Publisher; p. 38. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially. *Commission Op. No. 96-75 (citing Medico at 842)*. See also *Beebe*.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during State employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter and made no attempt to hide the fact that he would be performing the same job duties while working for [the contractor] that he was primarily responsible for while he worked for the State.

The Commission asked [the contractor’s employee] if it would be possible for [Employee] to work on projects that he was not involved with while he was employed by the State. Generally, the Commission has been of the opinion that former DelDOT employees could work on DelDOT-related projects in the private sector as long as they did not work on the same projects they were involved with while employed by the State. See *Commission Ops. 13-41, 12-09, 11-58*. [The contractor’s employee] indicated there were no other opportunities at that time. He also indicated he had been trying to actively recruit [Employee] since before his retirement.

B. Waivers may be granted if there is an “undue hardship” on the State Employee or the State agency. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a). They also may be granted if the literal application of the law is not necessary to serve the public purpose. *Id.*

[Employee] claimed the post-employment restriction was creating a personal hardship because his pension did not pay him enough money. He also argued that a waiver would benefit the State because the agency was suffering from a lack of experienced manpower.

(1) “Undue Hardship”

The statute permits the Commission to grant a waiver if there is a hardship on either the agency or the employee. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(a). The common and ordinary meaning of “undue hardship” is “more than is required” or is “excessive.” *Commission Op. No. 97-18* (citing Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, p. 1290 (10th ed. 1992)). The mere fact that a former employee cannot work on the same matters for which they were responsible, is not, by itself, an “undue hardship.” *Commission Op. No. 97-18*. Rather, it is the very hardship imposed by the statute. *Id.*

[Employee] did not provide any information about his inability to secure other employment. Nor did he provide any information which would suggest he had even attempted to seek other employment. As a result, the Commission decided he had not offered any facts which would justify a hardship waiver. The agency itself did not request a waiver.

(2) Literal Application Is Not Necessary to Serve the Public Purpose

The overall purpose of the Code of Conduct is to instill the public’s confidence in its government. 29 *Del. C.* § 5802(1) and (2). In discussing the federal post-employment law, which is similar to Delaware’s, the United States Congress noted that public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that government officials use their public office for personal gain, particularly after leaving the government. “*Ethics in Government Act*,” *Senate Report No. 95-1770*, p. 32. In extending its post-employment law from one year to two years on matters within the official’s former responsibility, Congress said the two-year requirement was justified because:

Today public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that officials use public office for personal gain, particularly after they leave government services. There is a sense that a “revolving door” exists between industry and government; that officials ‘go easy’ while in office in order to reap personal gain afterward.... There is a deep public uneasiness with officials who switch sides—.... Private clients know well that they are hiring persons with special skill and knowledge of particular departments and agencies. That is also the major reason for public concern.
Id.

On the other hand, the Code also seeks to encourage citizens to assume public office and employment by not “unduly circumscribing their conduct.” 29 *Del. C.* § 5802(3). Thus, in setting the post-employment standard, the General Assembly did not place a total ban on former employees representing or otherwise assisting a private enterprise on matters involving the State, It merely placed a restriction on post-employment activity involving matters for which the former employee (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) was otherwise directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d) .
Commission Op. 01-07.

[Employee] did not present any information that would lead the Commission to believe that application of the law was not necessary to serve the public purpose. As a result, the Commission decided application of the two-year post-employment restriction to [Employee]’s

situation struck an appropriate balance between the public's interests and the State's interests. Therefore, a waiver was inappropriate.

14-42 - Post Employment: [Employee] was retiring from State employment. He was [a manager for a specific Division of a State agency]. [Employee] was generally responsible for overall operations [related to his Division]. His specific job duties included: setting priorities; measuring workloads; estimating and shifting manpower as needed; estimating equipment and materials needed; developing budgets. He also assisted his supervisor with planning and scheduling regular and special operations on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Projects which required special skills were referred to outside contractors. [Employee] was responsible for identifying those projects which required out-sourcing but he was not involved in the contract process.

[Employee] wanted to accept a position working with [a private company]. [The private company] contracted with [his Division] to provide [certain] services for long-term projects. His job responsibilities would include: conducting field observations and writing observation reports; monitoring compliance with [specific] requirements; reviewing payment requests and change orders, reviewing and responding to contractor requests for information; traveling to various sites. He asked the Commission to determine whether his proposed employment with [the private company] would be a violation of the post-employment restriction.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. In addition, [Employee]'s contact with [the private company] must be substantial enough to support a finding that [Employee] would be 'assisting' [the private company] by accepting the post-retirement position. A practical definition of "assist" must be limited to substantial activity on behalf of the private enterprise which has a direct influence on the State. Peripheral help that does not directly interact with the state or take advantage of the prior state employment, is not enough to constitute a violation of 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). To do so would be too strict an interpretation of the public policy reasons for the post-employment restrictions and would unfairly hinder job opportunities and negatively impact the desire of individuals to work for the state.

Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In his State position, [Employee] was responsible for the orchestration of resources, manpower, and scheduling of [specific] projects. He was also responsible for identifying those projects which required outside contractors. The projects undertaken by outside contractors were [reviewed] by [Employee]'s prospective employer, [the private company]. However, other than identifying the projects that needed to be outsourced, [Employee] did not interact with [the private company's employees] nor was he responsible for overseeing the State's contract with [the private company]. As a result, there was no overlap in job duties between [Employee]'s State position and the post-retirement position. As a result, [Employee] did not have contact with [the private company]'s employees substantial enough to support a finding that [Employee] would be assisting [the private company] when he began working in his post-retirement position.

The Commission decided [Employee] would not violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct by accepting the post-retirement position with [the private company] and he was reminded of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d).

14-38 - Post Employment: [Employee] retired from State employment on February 1, 2014. He was employed as the Director of [a State agency] for over 28 years. [Employee]'s responsibilities included: operational and policy decisions; strategic planning; supervision of senior managers; hiring and promotion decisions; drafting legislation; working with the Governor's office, private businesses, and the federal government regarding policy matters; interpreting various rules and case law and its application to his Division.

As a retiree, [Employee] wanted to consult with private entities about [his area of expertise]. Prior to the meeting he presented three specific consulting scenarios in which he asked the Commission to consider the applicability of the two-year post-employment restriction. If the Commission found a conflict with any of the three opportunities, he requested a waiver. [Employee] told the Commission he felt the post-employment restriction prevented him from being employed. He said [the work he did for the State] was his area of expertise and the only reason an employer would want to hire him. The Commission explained the statute is necessary to prevent State workers from making official decisions based upon their post-retirement opportunities.

Scenario 1: A national organization that advocated for employers on [a specific topic and related areas] contacted [Employee] on behalf of [a Delaware organization] to discuss a recent change to [one of his former Division's policies]. The previous policy was established based upon [Employee]'s interpretation of several Delaware Superior Court decisions. The national organization suggested the [Delaware organization] hire [Employee] to explain his interpretation of those cases and the Division's policy while [Employee] was Director. In addition, the [Delaware organization] wanted [Employee] to advise them during meetings between representatives of the [organization] and representatives of his former Division regarding the same issue.

Scenario 2. A national company that provided businesses with [certain services] may want to hire [Employee] as the Agency Liaison Director for [a particular division related to his past State employment]. In that position, his primary duty would be to serve as a liaison between the company and state officials [with oversight of a particular area] across the country to gather information and cultivate relationships. In addition, he would be responsible for analyzing "emerging trends/forces shaping agency/legislative/regulatory change and identify potential product opportunities." If [Employee] was offered the position he asked the Commission to determine if he may interact with Delaware officials or if he would be required to recuse himself.

Scenario 3: As an employee of, or as a consultant to, a private entity, [Employee] wanted to advise companies about matters related [to his previous State employer]. Those activities would include: [general management duties related to the employer's business which was directly related to the Employee's former State job].

Scenario 4: At the meeting [Employee] made the Commission aware of a fourth employment option. He asked about the possibility of working [as a liaison between the federal government and the citizens of Delaware]. He described the position as a federal job paid with federal dollars. In that position he would contact citizens to gather information and provide advice when necessary.

A. For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. *United States v. Medico*, 784 F.2d 840, 843 (7th Cir., 1986). Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. *Beebe Medical Center v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, C.A. No. 94A-01-004, J. Terry (Del. Super. June 30, 1995), *aff’d.*, No. 304 (Del. January 29, 1996). In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State, he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that particular matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. *Medico* at 843. To decide if [Employee] would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. *Ethical Standards in the Public Sector: A Guide for Government Lawyers, Clients, and Public Officials*, American Bar Association, Section of State and Local Government Law, Publisher; p. 38. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially. *Commission Op. No. 96-75 (citing Medico at 842)*. See also *Beebe*.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while employed by the State. In fact, for the past 28 years he was the policymaker for the entire Division. [Citation omitted]. As Division Director and policymaker, [Employee] was materially responsible for most, if not all, of the agency’s procedures. His job as a State employee, and its impact on his ability to work as a consultant in any of the four scenarios was discussed by the Commission.

Scenario One: The [Delaware organization] wanted to hire [Employee] to consult on matters for which he had previously given an opinion and for which he was materially responsible while he was Division Director. As Director, the agency’s policies were applied based on [Employee]’s interpretation of the case law affecting his agency. It was for that exact reason the [organization] wished to hire him as a consultant. The [organization] wanted [Employee] to attend meetings with his former agency to discuss why his interpretation of the case law was justified and cast doubt on the current Director’s interpretation and application of the law. Because of the overlap in duties between this job and [Employee]’s state job, the Commission determined this position would violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

Scenario Two: Working with the other 49 states on matters concerning [a specific topic] did not involve matters for which [Employee] was previously responsible. However, if [Employee] works as a liaison between the private company and Delaware, he would put other companies at a disadvantage by leveraging his relationship with officials who were previously his colleagues and subordinates. That would contravene one of the goals of the post-employment law which is to allay the public's concern that government employees may exercise undue influence over their previous government co-workers. *Commission Op. No. 96-75 (citing United States v. Medico, 7th Cir., 784 F.2d 840, 843 (1986))*.

[Employee]'s request indicated he would be able to accept the position as an agency liaison with the understanding he would need to recuse himself from any matters involving Delaware officials. Recusal would allow him to work in his area of expertise while still honoring the boundaries of the post-employment provision in the Code of Conduct. The Commission decided the position did not violate the post-employment restriction as long as [Employee] recused himself appropriately.

Scenario Three: The job description provided by [Employee] indicated he would be hired to advise a private company about the inner workings of his prior Division. All of the responsibilities included in the job description required [Employee] to use his knowledge about the inner workings of the agency to the advantage of a private company. To permit him to engage in such activities would distort the purpose of the post-employment provision by allowing his private employer to get a "leg up" on other private enterprises that deal with the State. *Commission Op. No. 95-11*. Furthermore, his specialized knowledge was a direct consequence of his prior employment with the Division where he was directly and materially responsible for all policy matters. The Commission decided the position would violate the post-employment restriction because it would require [Employee] to review policy matters for which he was materially responsible while employed by the State.

Scenario Four: Delaware's post-employment statute is silent as to whether it applies to post-retirement employment with other governmental entities. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). The statute specifically addresses former employees representing "private enterprises". *Id.* The definition of 'private enterprise' is broad and only excludes "any activity of the State or of any political subdivision or of any agency, authority or instrumentality thereof". 29 *Del. C.* § 5804(9). Delaware Courts have held that where the legislature is silent, additional language will not be grafted onto the statute. *Goldstein v. Municipal Court*, 1991 WL 53830 (Del. Super.) (citing *State v. Rose*, 132 A. 864, 876 (Del. Super., 1926); *Commission Op. 07-63*). Existing statutory language must be interpreted consistent with the General Assembly's manifest intent. 1 *Del. C.* § 301. If a statutory interpretation "would lead to an absurd and undesirable result," the terms should agree with legislative intent. *Law v. Developmental Child Care, Inc.*, 523 A.2d 557, 560 (Del. Super., 1987); *Helfand v. Gambee*, 136 A.2d 558, 561 (Del. Ch., 1957); 2A Sutherland Stat. Constr. § 46.07 (5th ed. 1992); *Comm Op 07-63*. In deciding legislative intent, Courts look first to the statutory language. *Goldstein, supra*. Where the persons and things to which a statute refers are affirmatively or negatively designated, it infers the legislative intent. *Id.* (citing *Norman v. Goldman*, 173 A.2d 607, 610 (Del. Super., 1961)); *Commission Op. 07-47*.

The plain language of the statutes comprising the Code of Conduct indicated the legislature did consider those entities to which the Code would not apply. 29 *Del. C.* § 5804(9). The federal government was not excluded. For the Commission to decide the post-employment restriction did not apply to subsequent employment with the federal government would be to graft additional language onto the statute. Similarly, the Commission did not conclude that the Legislature's failure to provide for the exclusion would lead to an absurd and undesirable result.

It was entirely possible there were circumstances under which subsequent federal employment could be detrimental to the State's interests. Based on the foregoing, the Commission found that, generally speaking, Delaware's post-employment restriction *does* apply to federal employment. As a result, the Commission considered the facts of [Employee]'s proposed employment to determine the restriction's applicability.

The Commission decided [Employee] would be able to accept the [federal liaison] position without violating the post-employment restriction. As a liaison he would be contacting citizens to gather, and provide, information about [issues unrelated to his former State job]. Acting as a liaison for issues unrelated to [his previous Division] was not problematic. As Director [of his Division], he was not materially responsible for the regulations and laws promulgated by the other Divisions. Therefore, the post-employment restriction did not apply to those matters. As to citizen inquiries about [his area of expertise], the Commission decided he could answer questions and provide information as long as he was careful to avoid handling citizen inquiries related to general policy decisions that he was previously responsible for while employed by the State. Because [Employee] was not involved in the day-to-day [tasks of his Division], assisting individual citizens with procedural questions or relaying information to [his employer] would be permissible as long as he limited himself as described above. The Commission also reminded [Employee] of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

B. Waivers may be granted if there is an “undue hardship” on the State Employee or the State agency. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a). They also may be granted if the literal application of the law is not necessary to serve the public purpose. *Id.*

[Employee] claimed the post-employment restriction created a hardship because he was having a difficult time finding employment in his area of expertise that did not run afoul of the Code. He further stated “my area of subject matter expertise with its depth, breadth, and years of experience in [his area of expertise] is so specialized, this expertise, knowledge and experience is the primary reason a prospective employer would be interested in hiring me as an employee or consultant. Without a waiver, future employment is unlikely unless I change my field of endeavor.” The Commission then considered his request for a waiver.

(a) “Undue Hardship”

The statute permits the Commission to grant a waiver if there is a hardship on either the agency or the employee. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a). Because [Employee] was no longer employed by the State, the issue was whether the two-year post-employment restriction imposed an undue hardship on him personally. The common and ordinary meaning of “undue hardship” is “more than is required” or is “excessive.” *Commission Op. No. 97-18* (citing Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, p. 1290 (10th ed. 1992)). The mere fact that a former employee cannot work on the same matters for which they were responsible, is not, by itself, an “undue hardship.” *Commission Op. No. 97-18*. Rather, it is the very hardship imposed by the statute. *Id.*

[Employee] identified two employment opportunities which would allow him to capitalize on his expertise while also complying with the post-employment restriction. He also told the Commission about a job opportunity he had been offered working in New Jersey. He did not accept the position because he did not want to move away from Delaware. The Commission determined [Employee] opportunities were limited by his own unwillingness to work outside [his

preferred subject area] or outside the geographic boundaries of Delaware and denied his request for a waiver based on undue hardship.

(b) Literal Application Is Not Necessary to Serve the Public Purpose

The overall purpose of the Code of Conduct is to instill the public's confidence in its government. 29 Del. C. § 5802(1) and (2). In discussing the federal post-employment law, which is similar to Delaware's, the United States Congress noted that public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that government officials use their public office for personal gain, particularly after leaving the government. "*Ethics in Government Act*," Senate Report No. 95-1770, p. 32. In extending its post-employment law from one year to two years on matters within the official's former responsibility, Congress said the two-year requirement was justified because:

Today public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that officials use public office for personal gain, particularly after they leave government services. There is a sense that a "revolving door" exists between industry and government; that officials 'go easy' while in office in order to reap personal gain afterward.... There is a deep public uneasiness with officials who switch sides—.... Private clients know well that they are hiring persons with special skill and knowledge of particular departments and agencies. That is also the major reason for public concern.
Id.

On the other hand, the Code also seeks to encourage citizens to assume public office and employment by not "unduly circumscribing their conduct." 29 Del. C. § 5802(3). Thus, in setting the post-employment standard, the General Assembly did not place a total ban on former employees representing or otherwise assisting a private enterprise on matters involving the State. It merely placed a restriction on post-employment activity involving matters for which the former employee (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) was otherwise directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d) .
Commission Op. 01-07.

In this case, the Commission decided the post-employment restriction was serving its intended purpose. Former State employees cannot leverage their previous State employment in order to secure post-retirement employment. The Commission denied [Employee]'s request for a waiver because enforcement of the restriction was necessary to serve the public purpose.

C. Decision

[Employee] could not accept the employment opportunities in Scenario One or Three. His request for a waiver was denied. [Employee] could accept employment under Scenario Two as long as he recused himself from matters related to the State of Delaware. Employment under Scenario Four was permissible as long as [Employee] did not involve himself in matters related to policy and procedures for which he was previously responsible.

14-36 - Post Employment: [Employee] worked for the State as a casual/seasonal employee from June 2013 to October 2013. During that time, she was employed by [a State agency] [involved in a seasonal program]. [The agency] received funds for the program from the [federal government] and awarded those funds to sub-grantees responsible for implementation of the program. At the time, the only sub-grantee of the program was [a private company].

During her employment with the State, [Employee] reviewed invoices submitted by the sub-grantees; performed statistical analysis; interpreted data related to policies, procedures, organization, managerial and operational practices; defined and made recommendations for correcting problems. In 2013 the sub-grantees for [the program were not the same as the current sub-grantee]. [Employee] was supervised by the program administrator.

[Employee] accepted employment with [the private company] as a Billing Coordinator for [the program]. Her responsibilities included: oversight of operational practices; statistical analysis, interpretation of collected data, creating and maintaining documents; performance tracking; submitting invoices. She had limited contact with her former supervisor. [The private company] instructed [Employee] to seek the advice of the Commission as to whether her new position violated the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the program had different sub-grantees during the time [Employee] was employed by the State. At the meeting, [Employee] indicated she was not involved in developing [the agency's] policies and procedures that she was required to comply with as an employee of [the private company]. She also stated her contact with her previous supervisor was through another employee. He was merely responsible for approving the invoices submitted to [the State agency], she did not have direct contact with him.

The Commission decided that [Employee]'s position at [the private company] did not involve matters for which she had previously given an opinion or was materially responsible for while employed by the State and was not a violation of the post-employment restriction. She was reminded of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d).

14-34 - Post Employment: [Employee] retired from State employment. While employed by the State she worked [at a particular State agency]. She was primarily responsible for two federal grant programs. [The private company] was an agency which received grant money from [her former State agency]. With the grant money, [the private company] provides assistance to their clients based upon various income calculation standards set by the State. As part of her duties, [Employee] would visit [the private company's] sites to [review information relevant to her State job]. Her contacts for [those visits] were the managers of each county. [Employee] would verify the income calculations were done appropriately. If she felt the income calculation was not done correctly, she would write to [the private company] and ask them to research their calculation methodology.

[Employee] wanted to accept a position with [the private company] as an intake worker. She would be working one-on-one with clients to complete applications for assistance. [Employee] would collect the needed documentation and determine the appropriate income calculation for each client's application. She would then enter the information into a computer which would determine if the client was "income eligible." The applications processed by [Employee] would be reviewed by another staff member. [Employee] would not have any contact with her former State agency. If one of [Employee]'s applications was selected for a [review], the State worker completing [the review] would deal with the site manager, not

[Employee]. [Employee] asked the Commission to decide whether acceptance of the new position would violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In her State position, [Employee] conducted random [reviews] to determine if the receiving agency was correctly applying State income eligibility standards. She did not interact with [the private company's] clients. In her post-retirement position with [the private company], [Employee] would be working with the same federal program but she would not be interacting with her former co-workers. Any questions about the applications she processed would be handled by the [the private company's] site manager obviating the need for her to interact with her former co-workers. It was possible that one of the applications [Employee] worked on would be selected for [a review]. When the Commission asked if her former co-workers would be able to identify her by her signature on her application, she acknowledged that could be possible. However, the review would be limited to the method of income calculation used on the application which would be handled by the site manager.

In the unlikely event [Employee] was confronted with a matter for which she was previously responsible while employed by the State, she would recuse herself. Under the law, recusal has been broadly interpreted. The Commission advised her to leave the room and not participate in any discussions concerning the matter. *Beebe Medical Center v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, C.A. No. 94A-01-004 (Del. Super. June 30, 1995), *aff'd.*, No. 304 (Del., January 29, 1996). This is to ensure her colleagues are not influenced by nonverbal cues such as gestures, etc.

The Commission found acceptance of the position with [the private company] would not violate the Code of Conduct's post-employment restriction as long as she recused as necessary. Additionally, [Employee] was reminded of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

14-31 - Post Employment: [Employee] worked for [a State agency] as a Program Evaluator. Her primary duties included reviewing: [various program providers]. Reviews were based on compliance with regulations. She reported her findings to each provider and the provider then submitted a Plan of Improvement to [her agency]. Once the Plan of Improvement was verified, she would then recommend/not recommend continued licensing of the [provider to the person responsible for issuing their licenses].

[Employee] planned to retire from State employment in the near future. She wanted to accept a position with a provider currently contracting with her Division. At [the private company] [Employee] would be responsible for internal quality assurance. As part of her duties, she would oversee managers and supervisors as well as collect and report data to [the private company's] corporate office. She would not be working on any Plans of Improvement for two years. Nor would she be involved in the contract negotiation process. [Employee] asked the Commission to decide whether acceptance of the new position would violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter while employed by the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. [Employee]'s work with the State involved certification and improvement plans. She stated she would not work on any improvement plans for [the private company] during the next two years. [Employee] further stated her new position would involve overseeing managers/supervisors and collecting data to report to [the private company's] corporate office. Those types of tasks appeared to be completely distinct from the work she performed while with the State.

The Commission decided that as long as [Employee] confined her work at [the private company] to internal quality control she would be unlikely to encounter a matter for which she previously gave an opinion, conducted an investigation, or was otherwise directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State. If such a circumstance should occur, she was instructed to recuse herself. Under the law, recusal has been broadly interpreted. The Commission advised her to leave the room and not participate in any discussions concerning the matter. *Beebe Medical Center v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, C.A. No. 94A-01-004 (Del. Super. June 30, 1995), *aff'd.*, No. 304 (Del., January 29, 1996). That is to ensure that her colleagues are not influenced by nonverbal cues such as gestures, etc. [Employee] was also reminded of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

14-29 - Post Employment: [Employee] worked for [a State agency as an administrator]. One of his responsibilities was to work with [a private entity]. [The private entity] was a registered non-profit organization and was not a State agency. [The private entity] was comprised of three [subdivisions]. Each [of the subdivisions] was created by statute as a "governmental subdivision of the State." [citation omitted]. Although entirely comprised of 'governmental subdivisions of the State', [the private entity] itself was not a statutory entity. The mission of the [three subdivisions] was to further [a goal serving a public purpose]. *Id.* [Each of the subdivisions] had an independent Board which was both elected and appointed. *Id.* [Employee]'s job was to assist the three [subdivisions] in carrying out their mission and serve as the liaison between [Employee's agency] and the [subdivisions]. He attended meetings [of the private entity] in an "advisory role."

[A staff member of the private entity (X)], retired in March. At the meeting [Employee] stated that [X] was actually an employee of [one of the subdivisions] but was "working on behalf of [the private entity]". [X] reported to [Employee] for daily supervision which included signing her time sheets and vacation slips. When the Commission asked [Employee] why [X] reported to him, his response was "because of the relationship between [his agency] and the [private entity]." [X] also reported to the [the private entity's] president "for policy and general guidance." She was physically located at the [Employee's agency]. Due to [X's] retirement, [Employee] had been helping [the private entity] with some of their routine business and the [leaders of each subdivision] had been asked to make staffing recommendations to the [private entity's] Board. The Board had been discussing expanding the duties and responsibilities of [X's vacant position] into a newly created position. During those discussions [Employee] voluntarily excused himself from the meetings so he would not be part of the decision-making process.

PIC received an anonymous letter alleging [Employee] was contemplating applying for the newly created position [with the private entity]. The letter alleged his acceptance of the

position would violate the post-employment provision of the Code of Conduct. A copy of the job description was attached to the letter. Commission Counsel contacted [Employee] to see if he was, in fact, contemplating applying for the position. He acknowledged he was considering retirement and wanted to apply for the job but had not yet seen a job description. Commission Counsel provided [Employee] with a copy of the job description. According to the job description [Employee] would be responsible for the day-to-day operations of [the private entity], manage the budget, compile financial reports, develop fundraising activities, apply for grants, and act as a liaison to the General Assembly and other State agencies, including [Employee's agency]. The position had been posted and [Employee] had applied. [Employee] agreed to seek the advice of the Commission as to whether his acceptance of the position would violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter while employed by the State. While [Employee] represented the State's interests when working as [his agency's] liaison to [the private entity], he was also heavily involved in [the private entity's] day-to-day work. [The private entity's employee, X,] reported to [Employee] on a daily basis and since the employee's retirement, he had been assisting [the private entity] with those duties. In addition to his advisory role with the [individual subdivisions] and [the private entity], [Employee] had also been involved in overarching policy matters which affected both [his agency] and [the private entity]. [As the private entity's new employee] he would be working with leadership [of his current agency] to facilitate achievement of mutual goals. At the meeting he also indicated he would likely be required to work with his former co-workers. [Employee] emphasized the fact his duties related to [the private entity] were only part of his job responsibilities.

The Commission decided [Employee's] work with [his current agency] and the proposed position with [the private entity] involved the same basic facts, the same parties and the same issues. His argument that his current duties related to [the private entity] and the [individual subdivisions] were only a portion of his total responsibilities was unavailing. First, the [private entity's newly created position] was posted as a part-time position. Second, the law's application is not limited to post-retirement positions which are entirely identical to an employee's government job. The law is applied to matters for which an employee previously gave an opinion, conducted an investigation, or was otherwise directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d). The Commission decided [Employee] would be changing jobs but the facts and the matters under his purview would remain the same. This type of job exchange was exactly the type of issue the two-year prohibition was designed to prevent.

14-29—Consideration for Referral to the AG's Office--*[Former Employee] appeared before the Commission on September 16, 2014. Commission Op. 14-29. [Former Employee] requested an opinion as to whether a post-retirement position would violate the two-year post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d). The Commission decided that accepting the position would be a violation of the post-employment prohibition and a letter to that effect was sent to [the former Employee] shortly after the meeting. Commission Counsel checked to see if [Employee] had complied with the Commission's ruling.*

While researching [Employee's compliance], Commission Counsel located a reference about [Employee working in the position he was told would violate the post-employment prohibition in the Code of Conduct]. After finding the reference, Commission Counsel emailed

[the former Employee] to see if the information on the website was correct and that he had accepted the position against the Commission's advice. He responded that he was not employed by [the entity in question]. Commission Counsel then located a copy of a recent press release which referred to [the former Employee] as [a management employee of the entity in question]. Commission Counsel then contacted [the party responsible for the press release] to see if they had any pictures of [the former Employee] at the event, but they did not.

The Code of Conduct provides criminal sanctions for violation of the post-employment restriction of up to one year in jail and/or a \$10,000 fine. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(f)(1). The Commission is required to report to State authorities "substantial evidence" of a criminal violation. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(d)(3). Substantial evidence is defined as "less than a preponderance of the evidence, but more than a mere scintilla of evidence. It does not mean "a large or significant amount of evidence, but rather such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion." *Pierce v. Underwood*, 487 U.S. 552, 555 (1988). The Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit has further clarified, "a single piece of evidence will not satisfy the substantiality test" if it fails to resolve a conflict by created by countervailing evidence, if it is overwhelmed by other evidence, or if it is merely a conclusion." *Kent v. Schweiker*, 710 F.2d 110, 114 (3d Cir. 1983).

At the time, the information gathered led toward the conclusion that [the former Employee] did, in fact, accept the [prohibited] position against the advice of the Commission and contrary to 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). Nonetheless, it was not likely the information gathered met the 'substantial evidence' requirement. As a result, referral of the matter pursuant to 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(d)(3) would likely fail to meet the statutory evidentiary requirement. However, that did not end the inquiry.

Not required, but permitted, under 29 *Del. C.* § 5808A(4) Commission Counsel may recommend to the Commission that "possible violations" of the Code of Conduct "be referred...to the Attorney General...for investigation and prosecution. Matters may be so referred to the Attorney General...only upon a determination by at least a majority of the Commission that there are reasonable grounds to believe that a violation may have occurred. *Id.* The Commission considered whether there were reasonable grounds to believe [the former Employee] accepted the [prohibited position]. After a brief discussion the Commission decided there were reasonable grounds to believe [the former Employee] accepted the post-retirement position in violation of the Code. The matter was referred to the AG's office for further investigation and possible prosecution.

14-29 – Post-Employment--Update: The AG's office determined that [Employee's] new position was not in violation of the Code of Conduct because his post-retirement employer was not a 'private enterprise' as defined in 29 *Del. C.* § 5804(9).

14-28 - Post Employment: [Employee] worked for [a State agency] and was planning to retire in the near future. [Employee] worked in Kent and Sussex counties. His duties included: [certification of facilities providing services to his agency]; reviewing improvement plans submitted by providers in response to reviews; recommending provider's certifications. He also served on several committees and boards related to [his agency's] mission. While [Employee] was involved in the provider certification process, he did not have any responsibilities related to the terms of the contract between the provider and [his agency].

Post-retirement, [Employee] wanted to work [for] a provider contracting with [his agency]. [Employee] would be [doing other tasks unrelated to his State job]. [Employee] would primarily work with [one of his State agency's employees]. [Employee] claimed his duties at [the agency] did not involve contact with [those employees]. [The provider] was subject to random audits by [his State agency]. As a result, there was a possibility one of [Employee]'s cases could be selected for audit by his former agency. According to [Employee], [the] audit process involved a determination as to whether specific services were provided to the client rather than a subjective critique of the service itself. As a result, his former colleagues would not be evaluating his work. Nor would [Employee] be required to interact with his former co-workers. Any audit inquiries would be handled by administrators [at the provider's office].

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] worked on the subject matter, services [for particular clients], while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. In his State position, [Employee] regulated and certified service providers. He was seeking post-retirement employment with one of those same providers. In his post-retirement position [Employee]'s responsibilities would be client-oriented and focused on treatment rather than licensing and certification. He would not be involved in the certification process he was responsible for in his position with the State.

The Commission discussed the remote possibility that [Employee] would be confronted with a matter he was previously responsible for while employed by the State. The Commission instructed [Employee] that if such a circumstance occurred, he should recuse himself. Under the law, recusal has been broadly interpreted. As a result, the Commission advised him to leave the room and not participate in any discussions concerning the matter. *Beebe Medical Center v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, C.A. No. 94A-01-004 (Del. Super. June 30, 1995), *aff'd.*, No. 304 (Del., January 29, 1996). This is to ensure that his colleagues are not influenced by nonverbal cues such as gestures, etc.

The Commission decided it would not violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct for [Employee] to accept a position with [the provider] as long as he recused as necessary. He was also reminded of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 Del. C. §5805(d).

14-16 - Post Employment Waiver Request—William Love: GRANTED

Waivers granted by the Commission are published in their entirety and confidentiality is waived. 29 Del. C. § 5807(b)(4).

Hearing and Decision By: *Dr. Wilma Mishoe (Chair); William Tobin, Vice Chair; Andrew Gonser, Esq., Vice Chair; Commissioners: Mark Dunkle, Esq., Bonnie Smith*

Dear Mr. Love,

Thank you for attending the Commission meeting on May 20, 2014. Based upon your written submissions, your comments at the hearing, as well as the comments

of Mr. Robert Martine and Mr. Michael Price, the Commission decided to grant the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner a waiver of the post-employment restriction applicable to Mr. Robert Martine for 90 days effective June 1, 2014. Because a waiver was granted, this entire opinion will be published to assure the public that the appropriate interests were considered. 29 Del. C. § 5807(b)(4).

FACTS

You are the Director of the Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities (DSAAPD) within the Department of Health and Social Services. You are temporarily working with the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) due to the absence of the OCME's Director. The OCME is comprised of multiple departments, some of which are currently the subject of a criminal investigation. You assured the Commission your request was not related to the Chemical Testing Laboratory which has been closed while the pending investigation is completed.

The OCME is faced with an urgent staffing situation in their Death Investigation Unit serving New Castle County. If fully staffed, the unit has one manager, Michael Price, and four forensic death investigators. Currently, three of the four forensic death investigators are not available: one investigator is on FMLA and expected to return to work in June; a second position is filled but the incumbent is suspended with pay due to an ongoing criminal investigation, return date is unknown; a third position is vacant and a candidate has been offered, but not yet accepted, the position and if accepted, his training will take several weeks; the fourth position is filled and the incumbent is working. The manager and the one staff member on duty are working excessive hours given the lack of normal staffing and the number of deaths requiring investigation. As an example, Mr. Price stated during a one-week period earlier this month, there were eight automobile fatalities which required the services of a Forensic Investigator on the scene.

Forensic investigators assist in determining circumstances surrounding certain deaths listed in State statute which include accidents, suicides, suspicious deaths, and industrial and aircraft disasters. Investigations include conducting interviews, photographing the scene and body, gathering and preserving evidence, and transporting the body. Investigations must comply with forensic investigation laws, rules, regulations, standards, and policies. The responsibilities require competencies in medical terminology, anatomy, as well as investigative skills. Once an applicant is hired, a process that takes up to 60 days, the incumbent undergoes 300 hours of field training before being able to work independently. Typically, the agency has hired from a limited pool of retired law enforcement personnel. Mr. Price stated that was because of the investigative skills required for the position. The medical expertise needed for the position is gained through on-the-job training and self-study.

You and your staff are working on a short-term solution to the vacancies which would help with some of the staffing issues through the end of May 2014. The OCME is planning to hire Robert Martine, currently a State employee with Capitol Police, who is scheduled to retire on June 1st. Mr. Martine is now on leave (vacation/compensatory time) through the end of May. The Capitol Police have authorized him to work with the OCME while on leave in May. He will be hired as a State seasonal/casual employee through the end of May. However, the OCME would like to contract with Mr. Martine beginning on June 1st for a period of six months. Mr. Martine previously worked for the OCME as a Forensic Death Investigator as a Casual/Seasonal employee from 2007 to

2013. He would be able to step into the job and provide the skilled services the agency needs without delay. You are asking the Commission, on behalf of the OCME, to consider a waiver of the two-year post-employment restriction to allow Mr. Martine to contract with the OCME.

APPLICATION OF THE FACTS TO THE LAW

A. For 2 years after leaving State employment, State employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State, if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation, or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

One reason for post-employment restrictions is to allay concerns by the public that ex-government employees may exercise undue influence on their previous co-workers and colleagues. *United States v. Medico*, 784 F.2d 840, 843 (7th Cir., 1986). Nevertheless, Delaware Courts have held that although there may be a subject matter overlap in the State work and the post-employment work, that where a former State official was not involved in a particular matter while with the State, then he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter. *Beebe Medical Center v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, C.A. No. 94A-01-004, J. Terry (Del. Super. June 30, 1995), *aff’d.*, No. 304 (Del. January 29, 1996). In *Beebe*, while with the State, an official’s responsibilities were to review and make decisions on applications from hospitals to expand their services. It was alleged that he was violating the post-employment law because after he left the State, he was representing a hospital on its application. However, the Court found that as to the particular application before his former agency for Nanticoke Hospital, he had not been involved in that matter while with the State, so he was not “directly and materially responsible” for that particular matter.

The Federal Courts have stated that “matter” must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. *Medico* at 843. To decide if Mr. Martine would be working on the same “matter,” Courts have held that it is the same “matter” if it involves the same basic facts, the same parties, related issues and the same confidential information. *Ethical Standards in the Public Sector: A Guide for Government Lawyers, Clients, and Public Officials*, American Bar Association, Section of State and Local Government Law, Publisher; p. 38. Similarly, this Commission has held that the facts must overlap substantially. *Commission Op. No. 96-75 (citing Medico at 842)*. See also *Beebe*.

There is no question that contracting with Mr. Martine would be a violation of the post-employment restriction. He last worked at the agency one year ago, performing the exact same job. Therefore, as a Forensic Investigator, he was directly and materially responsible for matters in the OCME, a position which is now being offered to him as a contractual worker. A waiver would be necessary to allow Mr. Martine to contract with the OCME within the two-year time frame of the post-employment restriction.

B. Waivers may be granted if there is an “undue hardship” on the State Employee or the State agency. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a). They also may be granted if the literal application of the law is not necessary to serve the public purpose. *Id.*

(a) “Undue Hardship”

The common and ordinary meaning of “undue hardship” is “more than is required” or is “excessive.” *Commission Op. No. 97-18* (citing Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, p. 1290 (10th ed. 1992)). The Forensic Investigators positions are only 25% staffed. The result is the remaining employees are required to work excessive hours. At this point, Mr. Price indicated that both he and the only other investigator are working 24-hour shifts. Complicating the staffing issue is the fact the job requires special skills and 300 hours of field training, a standard recommended by the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (ABMDI) of which the OCME is a member. To cope with the staffing shortage, Mr. Price indicated he had checked with numerous past employees to see if anyone would be interested in returning on an interim basis but was not successful. He also stated that the position is not one which could be outsourced to a private contractor because the nature of the job requires an immediate ability to respond anywhere in the State 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

When determining the existence of a hardship, the Commission considers the cause and the agency’s role in creating the hardship. As stated earlier, the Forensic Investigator position requires a blend of investigative and medical skills. When the Commission asked about the recruitment process for the vacant positions, Mr. Price stated the OCME has almost exclusively hired retired law enforcement personnel because of their investigative skills. The retired officers obtain the necessary medical training by observing and assisting with autopsies and through independent study. By limiting the applicant pool to such a narrow segment of the population, the Commission believes that much of the agency’s hardship was created by the agency itself. When asked why the agency does not consider hiring trained medical professionals, Mr. Price dismissed them as unqualified because they typically don’t have the investigative skills required for the position. In contrasting the two pools of potential applicants it appears the OCME is willing to hire personnel with investigative experience and teach them the medical aspects of the job, but they are not willing to hire an applicant with medical experience and teach them the investigative side of the job. Interestingly, ABMDI’s website states there are no formal requirements for a position as a death investigator other than those set by each medical examiner’s offices. www.abmdi.org. The ABMDI goes on to say that degrees in “Forensic Science, Natural Science, *Nursing, or any other medically related field would be useful.*” *Id. (emphasis added)*. The OCME’s short-sighted view of qualified applicants has contributed greatly to the current situation in which they now find themselves.

While it appears the OCME has an inherently flawed hiring process, there are other contributing factors to the staffing shortage which could not have been anticipated. One is the loss of an employee on medical leave and the other is the loss of the suspended employee. The combination of the hiring practices, the employee on medical leave, and the suspended employee have caused an emergency staffing situation in a critically important area. With his previous experience, Mr. Martine would be able to step into the position and begin work immediately. There would be no need for training or orientation. Therefore, the Commission decided to grant a 90-day waiver of the post-employment restriction as it applies to Mr. Martine effective June 1, 2014. During the next 90-day period, at least one employee should be returning from medical leave. Additionally, at the hearing Mr. Price indicated it may be possible to fill one of the other vacancies from a pool of applicants who have already been through the interview process. Therefore, the waiver will help the OCME through the worst part of the staffing

shortage. However, the OCME is cautioned that the waiver is a short-term solution to a long-range problem. If the OCME continues its current hiring practices, the Commission expects they will face similar issues in the future. The Commission strongly urges the OCME to explore other hiring options, including partnerships with previously untapped resources such as nursing schools, colleges, and even law students. While we do not have oversight of personnel matters outside the realm of the Code of Conduct, failure to make significant progress in the remedial process will weigh heavily on the Commission's decision-making process if the OCME should again ask for a waiver of the Code of Conduct.

(b) Literal Application Is Not Necessary to Serve the Public Purpose

The overall purpose of the Code of Conduct is to instill the public's confidence in its government. 29 *Del. C.* § 5802(1) and (2). It is difficult to imagine anything that could be more detrimental to the public's confidence in their government than the OCME's inability to respond to crime scenes, car accidents, and suspicious deaths in order to conduct their investigations in a timely and professional manner, and to provide information on cause and circumstances of a suspicious death. To the contrary, it would appear that the OCME's inability to fulfill this important mission would be more detrimental to the public's confidence in their government than the perception created by contracting with an employee in violation of the two-year post-employment restriction. However, the request for a six-month waiver seems excessive. A 90-day waiver balances the hardship of the OCME with the public's interest in prohibiting former employees from contracting with their State agency after they leave State service.

CONCLUSION

The Commission grants a 90 waiver, effective June 1, 2014, to the OCME for the purpose of contracting with Robert Martine, a former employee. The purpose of the waiver is to allow the OCME to continue to perform critical services during the immediate staffing shortage.

Sincerely,

/s/ Wilma Mishoe

Dr. Wilma Mishoe
Chair

The Commission granted a 90-day waiver but cautioned the agency not to apply for another waiver unless they had taken remedial steps to address their hiring practices. The Commission found that part of the agency's hardship was caused by institutional and cultural problems. The 90-day waiver will allow for the return of the employee out on medical leave and give the agency time to hire another investigator.

14-10 - Post Employment: [Employee] worked for the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) as [a manager of a specific department]. His job duties were split between [two different areas]. [Employee] acquired [a resource for his department]. The [resources] for all of the projects were acquired through donations and the entire process generally took 3 or 4

months. He also helped [outside businesses acquire the same resource]. [Employee] did not work for [a different department which handled larger projects which take years to complete].

[Employee] planned to retire from his State position. He anticipated the projects he would have worked on at DeIDOT would be completed within 30 days of his retirement. After retirement, he planned to work for himself as a contracted consultant to DeIDOT, developers, and utility companies. He described his new venture as [helping various private industries acquire resources related to long-term projects]. He was seeking the guidance of the Commission to determine if his proposed consulting business would violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. [Employee] would continue to work in the [same acquisition of a particular resource] field. However, he indicated that within 30 days of his retirement, any projects in which he gave an opinion, conducted an investigation, or was materially responsible for, would be complete. Therefore, it was very unlikely he would have any involvement in those projects after he transitioned to the private sector. The Commission has previously decided other matters related to post-employment restrictions on DeIDOT employees. Generally, the Commission has been of the opinion that a former DeIDOT employee could work on DeIDOT-related projects in the private sector as long as they did not work on the same projects they were involved with while employed by the State. *See Commission Ops. 13-41, 12-09, 11-58.*

The Commission decided [Employee]'s planned business would not violate the post-employment restriction. However, he was reminded of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). Additionally, [Employee] should recuse himself in the event he is asked to contract on a project he was involved with while employed by DeIDOT.

14-07 - Post Employment: [Employee] had worked for the State of Delaware as a Seasonal/Casual employee since August 2012. In her seasonal position, she was a [consultant] at [a school]. She was employed in a pilot program to assist middle school students with behavioral, social, emotional, and academic issues they may be dealing with at home, school, or in the community. Students were referred to the program by school staff, parents, peers, or through self-referral. Students and families underwent consultations and screening assessments to identify underlying issues and needs. The students and families were then linked to community services when necessary.

[Employee] wanted to accept a contractual position as a [consultant] which was the subject of a Request for Proposal (RFP) by DSCYF. The position was created in response to the success of the pilot program in which she previously worked. She wanted to continue to work at [her school] with students and their families in the school environment assessing needs, assisting with the development of interventions (within the school), and make referrals for additional services. She did not want to transfer to a different school and her duties and responsibilities under the contract would remain the same as when she was employed by the State.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*,

[Employee] had worked on the subject matter, the pilot program, while working for the State. However, the public interests that gave rise to the post-employment prohibitions were not implicated in this instance. [Employee] went into the pilot program knowing that it would become a contractual position if the program was successful. She was not trying to leverage her State position to gain a benefit as a contract employee. Additionally, the purposes of the pilot program served the State's [interests] by demonstrating whether the program was likely to be successful before it was fully implemented. It would defeat the purposes of a pilot program if those who worked to make it successful were later denied employment. In fact, it would discourage employees from working in pilot programs if there were a blanket application of the post-employment restriction which would disqualify them from subsequent employment.

The Commission had previously held that leaving State employment to continue the same position for a higher rate of pay would be a violation of the post-employment restriction. *See Commission Op. 13-05*. In that matter, a full-time State employee wanted to leave her permanent position in a school district to work as a contract employee in the same school district performing the same job duties. As a contractual employee she would have been earning three times her regular salary. Therefore, it appeared her sole reason for wanting to become a contractual employee was to earn more money for doing the same job. The Commission did not approve the request, nor did it issue a waiver of the post-employment restriction. The Commission is to strive for consistency in its opinions. 29 *Del. C.* § 5809(5). That matter can be distinguished from [Employee]'s situation because she was working in a temporary position where the stated purpose of the position was to determine the feasibility of implementing the pilot program as a permanent program. If she did not apply for the contractual position, her employment would be terminated.

The Commission decided under the circumstances that it would not be appropriate to apply the post-employment restriction to [Employee]'s situation. Her position was for a limited term and served the public purpose by determining the viability of the program before it was fully implemented.

14-05 - Post Employment: [Employee] worked [at a] High School Wellness Center from July 2013, to February 2014. While the job was with a school district, she was not a State employee, she was a contract employee. In that position she provided counseling to students and coordinated programs for the school. [Employee]'s most recent State employment was in [a division] under the Department of Health and Social Services from June 2012, to June 2013. In that position, she worked with the families of children with [certain] disabilities. [Employee] also owned a part-time counseling business.

[Employee] wanted to accept a contractual position as a [consultant] which was the subject of a Request for Proposal (RFP) by DSCYF. She would work with middle school students and their families in the school environment focusing on behavioral, social, emotional, and academic issues they may be dealing with at home, school, or in the community. Students were referred to the program by school staff, parents, peers, or through self-referral. Students and families underwent consultations and screening assessments to identify underlying issues and needs. The students and families were then linked to community services when necessary.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. In [employee]'s most recent State [position] she worked with very young children in the field of disabilities. The contractual position would require her to work with middle school students in the behavioral

health context. The facts that [employee] would be working with a different population of clients, in a different area of treatment, greatly reduced the chance she would be required to review matters in which she had previously given an opinion, conducted an investigation, or for which she had been directly and materially responsible. However, because the contractual position required the [consultant] to work with the entire family unit, she could find herself in a position where she would be required to work with a family she had previously been involved with while working for [her State agency]. In that unlikely event, she would need to recuse herself from that client.

The Commission explained the scope of “recusal” has been broadly interpreted. When there is a personal or private interest, an employee is to recuse from the outset and even neutral and unbiased statements are prohibited. *Beebe Medical Center v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, C.A. No. 94A-01-004 (Del. Super. June 30, 1995), *aff’d.*, No. 304 (Del., January 29, 1996). This is to ensure that her co-workers are not influenced by nonverbal cues such as gestures, etc. She was also reminded of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

14-02 - Post Employment: [Employee] [worked for a Division] within the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS). His duties included managing grants received by the [Division]. That included oversight of the completion of the grant applications, oversight of the hiring of the contractors under the grants, managing the budgets, reporting, and financial reports for the grants. He was also responsible for ensuring that all purchases made under the grants were allowable, verifying processes were in place to expend the funds received, and all project reviews conducted by the granting agencies. He was the chairperson for [one of the Department’s committees] and was on [another committee]. He coordinated the development of plans by each Division and directed the development of planning for [his Division].

[Employee] intended to retire from his State position in Oct. 2014. He submitted a proposal for a contract [position] under an RFP issued by the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DSCYF). The [successful candidate] would be responsible for all aspects of statewide grant project implementation and management. His responsibilities would include: coordinating, supervising, and managing, the work of the grant project team to ensure compliance with negotiated agreements; monitoring the grant to ensure compliance with federal requirements; serve as a representative to the grant governing body and provide information/reports requested; overall responsibility for the training and oversight of mental health services to children and their families which are funded through the grant. [Employee] would also prepare an annual grant continuation application to [a federal agency] to be approved by DSCYF and foster collaborative relationships between agencies and organizations to support the mental health treatment of children in Delaware.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter, administering grants, while working for the State. However, the court in *Beebe* drew a specific line between the subject matter and its application to specific facts. [Employee] would be administering a grant program for mental health services, much like he did in his State position. However, there were important distinctions between the two positions. The grants administered in the post-employment position were related to treatment for juveniles while the grants he administered in his State position were related to adult treatment. Additionally, in the post-employment position, he would not be required to work with his current division. The Commission discussed the fact that some of the grants in the

post-employment position were passed to DSCYF through [his Division]. However, those grants were historically subcontracted to outside agencies. The Commission compared the situation to one in which DelDOT employees are given permission to work with vendors after their State employment ends as long as they do not work on the same projects.

The Commission found that there would not be a violation of the post-employment restriction if [Employee] accepted the contract position with DSCYF.

13-52 - Post Employment: [Employee] had worked for the State of Delaware as a Seasonal/Casual employee since October 22, 2012. In her seasonal position, she was a consultant at [a school]. She was employed in a pilot program to assist middle school students with behavioral, social, emotional, and academic issues they may be dealing with at home, school, or in the community. Students were referred to the program by school staff, parents, peers, or through self-referral. Students and families underwent consultations and screening assessments to identify underlying issues and needs. The students and families were then linked to community services when necessary.

In December 2013, [Employee] applied for a contractual position as a consultant which was the subject of a Request for Proposal (RFP) by DSCYF. The position was created in response to the success of the pilot program in which she previously worked. [Employee] would continue to work with middle school students and their families in the school environment assessing needs, assisting with the development of interventions (within the school), and make referrals for additional services. However, she was transferred to a different school and will work with a new population of students. The contract cannot be finalized until the Commission decides whether acceptance of the contract position would be a violation of the post-employment restrictions. Until then, she has moved into the new position but is still paid by the State.

[Employee] also asked the Commission to consider whether she would have a conflict if she accepted a [management] position. The [manager] oversaw the work of the consultants and was not directly involved in client therapy. Therefore, she would not have contact with any students she worked with during the pilot program.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter, the pilot program, while working for the State. However, the Commission noted that [Employee] would be working in a new school with a new set of students. Therefore, any counseling she provided to those students would not be matters over which she had previously given an opinion, conducted an investigation, or was materially responsible for handling. [Employee] was not involved in the funding of the program and she did not supervise any employees while employed in the pilot program. The Commission also discussed the fact that it would be contrary to the public purpose to exclude employees in pilot programs from applying for employment once the program was funded on a full-time basis. As to the [management] position, [Employee] did not appear to have any conflict as the job duties of that position were not similar to the duties she performed in the pilot program.

The Commission decided that [Employee] would not violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct if she accepted the contractual position. However, she was reminded of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during her employment with the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d).

13-40 - Post-Employment—State Employee: [Employee] worked for the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH). As part of her job duties she was responsible for the review of all licensed treatment programs throughout the state to evaluate their compliance with DSAMH licensure standards. [Employee] also reviewed the contracts of each program to evaluate their compliance with the contract requirements. After a review had been conducted, she reported her findings to the program providers and suggested corrective actions as needed. [Employee] was planning to retire from State service and wanted to accept a position working for [a private company].

[Private company] was a provider of treatment services and was licensed by DSAMH. They were hiring a Quality Assurance Coordinator. The employee would be responsible for the development and implementation of a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Plan for community mental health, substance abuse, employment, and intellectual disability programs. As part of the CQI, the coordinator would assure compliance with all DHSS, DOL, DSCYF, CARF, [the private company] and any accrediting bodies' policies, procedures and standards of care; develop audit tools for community programs; monitor licensure and accreditation; review and analyze monthly program audits, draft reports and performance improvement plans based on audit results.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter while working for the State. In comparing the two job descriptions, it appeared [employee] would be working in the private sector doing essentially the same job she performed for the State. At the hearing, she stated she conducted contract and licensure reviews of [the private company's] treatment programs. Those reviews, and [Employee]'s subsequent recommendations, would qualify as matters in which she had previously given an opinion and conducted investigations. As a result, [Employee] was directly and materially responsible for [the private company's] licensure and contractual compliance as they related to their [treatment programs] while working for the State. [Employee] stated it would be possible for her to accept the position under the condition she not have any involvement with matters related to DSAMH. Recusal is often used to correct conflicts of interest. [Employee] asked for guidance in selecting possible employment opportunities if the Commission found a conflict of interest.

The Commission decided [employee] could accept the position with [the private company] without violating the Code of Conduct's post-employment restriction if she was able to recuse herself from all matters related to her current agency.

13-36 - Post-Employment—State Employee: [Employee] worked for the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families (DSCYF) within the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services (DPBH). Her duties were to provide support to agencies offering treatment to State clients. She supported them through contract management and oversight, along with providing liaison services between the clinical teams, billing departments and leadership. [Employee] also worked to foster relationships between the division and the agencies with whom they contracted. Her contacts were CEO's, CFO's, and others in management positions. She did not interact with therapists. [Employee] did not manage contracts or provide supervision to the individual providers at the contracting agencies.

[Employee] applied for a contractual position with DSCYF as a Behavioral Health Services Contract Manager. The Contract Manager would develop and negotiate contracts with the Behavioral Health Consultants who would provide services to middle school students and their families. The Behavioral Health Consultants were also under the same DSCYF contract. She sought advice from the Commission as to whether accepting the position would violate the Code of Conduct's post-employment restrictions.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter while working for the State. At the hearing, [Employee] stated the only similarity between her position and the contractual position would be her work on contracts. In the contractual position, she would be negotiating contracts with individual providers. In her State position, she negotiated with members of upper level management representing various agencies. It was possible she would negotiate contracts with individuals currently contracting with State agencies but they were not workers she was directly and materially responsible for in her State position.

The Commission decided the contractual position did not violate the post-employment restrictions in the Code of Conduct. [Employee] was cautioned against revealing confidential information she learned during her employment with the State.

13-34 - Post-Employment & Conflict of Interest—State Employee: [Employee] was employed at [a school] as a mental health counselor. She had accepted a position to work as a family counselor in a separate program which would be in the same school and was funded by a grant from the State. The position was contractual and would report to the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services (PBH) and [the school]. The goal of the program was to promote children's mental health and to engage families in their children's education with the expectation that children would have fewer behavioral issues and perform better in school. The program offered assessment, therapeutic support and case management. A list of potential students was created at the beginning of the school year. The students were selected based on absenteeism, behavior, academics and information gathered from staff. Families of the students were asked if they would like to participate in the program. The families stay in the program the entire school year. The program was not open to students who were receiving other mental health services through the State. [Employee] asked the advice of the Commission as to whether her acceptance of the [contractual] position (and pending resignation with [the school]) would violate the post-employment restrictions in the Code of Conduct.

[Employee] also volunteered as Chair of a Board. The Board was a Governor's advisory board which had oversight of [a specific child-related issue] for the State of Delaware. In addition to reviewing issues regarding [the child-related issue], the Board reviewed difficult cases that were not moving forward. In the eight months she had been on the Board there had been five cases reviewed. Since the [contractual] program did not accept students who were receiving other services, a [child connected to the advisory board] would not be offered a position in the program. [Employee] asked the Commission to determine if maintaining her position on the Board would create a conflict of interest with her contractual position.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter while working for the State. At the hearing, [Employee] said she was the person responsible for the creation of the [contractual] program

and she wrote the grant which funded the program. She interviewed for the position with the supervisor of her State job. [Employee] would work in the same building, at the same desk, with the same school population she currently served. The only discernible difference between her current job and the contractual position was that she would provide services in the client's homes, in addition to the school setting.

The Commission found [employee]'s acceptance of the contractual [position] would violate the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct. As program creator and grant-writer, she would be assisting [the program] when, in her State position, she had given opinions related to the program and was directly and materially responsible for the program's existence. Because of the finding of a conflict of interest, the Commission did not address the issue of a conflict between [the contractual] position and her position on the [advisory Board].

13-32 - Post-Employment—State Employee: State Employee was a supervisor working for the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families (DSCYF) within the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services (DPBH). If a family was denied care by DPBH, [the employee] guided them through the process. Her role was to serve as a liaison throughout the process and she set time frames for completion. [The Employee] also monitored providers for contract compliance and completed reports reflecting her findings. The job was an administrative position.

[The Employee] responded to a Request for Proposal (RFP) by DSCYF for the position of Behavioral Health County Coordinator or Behavioral Health Consultant. The Behavioral Health Consultant (BHC) would work with middle school students and their families in the school environment assessing needs, assisting with the development of interventions (within the school), and make referrals for additional services. [Employee] stated the position required her to assist families with contacting provider agencies, some of whom contracted with the State. The Behavioral Health County Coordinator, would train the BHCs and review their work, collect data, and create reports regarding the success of the program. [Employee] did not know if this position would have any interaction with providers who contracted with the state, but she did not think it would. In the event she was selected for either contractual position, she would resign her current State position. [Employee] appeared at the hearing to ask the Commission's advice as to whether acceptance of either position would violate the Code of Conduct's post-employment restrictions.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter while working for the State. There were some similarities between [Employee]'s State job and the consultant position. In the contract position, she would be making referrals to providers contracting with her current State agency. Some would likely be agencies she monitored for contract compliance while with the State. However, it would appear the consultant position was more clinically oriented than her State position. As a consultant she would work directly with clients to evaluate their needs and recommend appropriate treatment. If she were to make referrals to outside providers, the client would choose the provider. When referring clients to providers for outside services, she stated her direct point of contact would be the therapists, not the administrative staff she worked with while employed with the State. As to the Coordinator position, it required training and monitoring of the Behavioral Health Consultants. If the position shared any common duties with her State job, they were not readily apparent.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter while working for the State. The Commission decided it did not appear either position would require [Employee] to review matters in which she gave an opinion; conducted an investigation; or was otherwise directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State. [Employee] would not violate the post-employment restriction as long as she did not reveal confidential information she learned while working with the State and she did not recommend specific providers to the clients.

13-30 - Post Employment: [Employee] worked within a division of the Department of Labor. Among other things, she oversaw [a program for special needs citizens]. [The job] required her to collaborate with [another State agency] within the Department of Health and Social Service (DHSS), and other agencies to ensure [compliance with the programs she administered]. [The State employee] ensured the program adhered to Federal rules and regulations as well as assisted with program implementation. Locally, [her agency] had contracts with [private companies] to provide services to eligible clients. [The State employee] was primarily responsible for the oversight and administration of the program.

[Employee's agency and another State agency] jointly administered [a program] which, initially, was very successful. However, over the past 2 years [the other agency] had seen a decrease in the number of individuals [served]. [Employee] stated the program's success had declined because [the other agency] did not have an employee dedicated to the program. As a result, [the other agency] decided to create a position dedicated to the success of the program. [The other agency] advertised for contract submissions (a Request for Proposal (RFP)) to seek interested candidates for the position. The successful applicant would be a contract employee. [The State employee] applied for the job and if she was offered the position she would resign from her current job. When asked how the position at [the other agency] would interact with her current position, [employee] stated that they would work "hand in hand." She did not know how many applicants applied for the [RFP] position.

To ascertain if there was substantial overlap, the Commission compared the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Like the matter in *Beebe*, [Employee] had worked on the subject matter while working for the State. In [Employee]'s State position she worked jointly with [the other agency] to administer the [specific] program. She was a resource for other agencies and employees. Therefore, she had given opinions on the administration of the program. In her role as joint administrator, [Employee] was directly and materially responsible for the program while employed by the State. Essentially, [Employee] wanted to enter into a private contract with [the other agency] to administer the same program that she administered in her State job. The Commission decided it would be a violation of the Code's post-employment restrictions to allow [Employee] to accept the contractual position.

Having found a violation of the post-employment restriction, the Commission then turned to the issue of a waiver. Waivers may be granted if there is an undue hardship on a State employee or State agency. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(a). They also may be granted if a literal application of the law is not necessary to serve the public purpose. *Id.* When asked what the consequences would be if she was not allowed to accept the position, [Employee] indicated she would be "disappointed." Without minimizing [Employee]'s disappointment, it did not appear it would present a hardship to [Employee] if she was prohibited from accepting the position. Next, the Commission considered whether imposing the post-employment prohibition would be necessary to serve the public purpose. Appearance of impropriety is a theme that recurs

throughout the Code of Conduct. 29 Del. C. §5802(1); 29 Del. C. § 5806(a) and (b)(4). At the center of those concerns is how the public, without any additional facts, would view the situation. Allowing [Employee] to leave a State position to perform almost identical job duties as a contract employee would tend to create an impression of impropriety among the public.

The Commission decided acceptance of the contract position to perform the same job duties [Employee] performed in her State job would be contrary to the Code's post-employment restrictions. [The State employee] did not qualify for either waiver exception.

13-27A - Post-employment: [A retired State official's] responsibilities included supervising and reviewing the work of all of the State's contracts [related to his field], including that of [a private company]. [The private company's] contract of employment with the State was negotiated by [other State officials] in 2001. [The private company] was working on multiple [projects] that [the State official] supervised in his official capacity. [The official] retired from the State and accepted a position with [the private organization]. While at the hearing, he indicated his job with [the organization] would be centered on practice development. He planned to secure contracts for [the organization] with other States. That job description was significantly different from the information he provided to the Commission in his written disclosure. In the written disclosure [the State official] indicated he wanted to continue to work on the [projects] at [the organization] that he had supervised in his position with the State. At the hearing [the State official] additionally requested the Commission consider whether it would be permissible for him to consult with his State replacement on generic policy issues. [The State official] indicated he would like to serve as a resource for the staff at [his previous] office as he was primarily responsible for setting up and administering the current procedures. [The organization] would not increase his pay for his services [back to the State]. According to [the State official], if any issues arose about [a specific] side of the business, the State would contact [the organization's other employees] and would not contact him.

[The State official's] description of the position at [the organization] changed significantly between the time the written disclosure was filed and his appearance at the hearing. For purposes of the decision, the Commission stressed that their opinion was only applicable to employment in practice development. Any new employment involving [a specific area] [the State official] supervised [in his State position] were matters for which he was directly and materially responsible. If [the State official] was allowed to continue [to work in] the same [specific area], it would be contrary to the purpose of the post-employment law. He must not work [in the specified work area] while employed at [the organization] for the next two years

As to [the State official] working in practice development, the Commission did not find a conflict of interest based upon his oral presentation at the hearing. (Again, any work for [the organization] involving [the specific work area] would be prohibited by the Code). [The retired State official] was reminded of the prohibition against revealing confidential information gained during his employment with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d). Regarding the request to serve as a resource for the State, the Commission withheld their decision to obtain additional facts. The Commission needed to determine what consulting services the State would seek to determine if a conflict of interest existed. [The State official] could return to the Commission on Sept. 17, 2013, to more fully explore the issue. He was instructed to bring someone from [his previous place of employment] to provide additional facts.

13-27B - Post-Employment Reconsideration—Former State Official: [Former State official]’s responsibilities included supervising and reviewing the work of all of the State’s contract auditors, including that of [a private company]. Last month he appeared before the Commission to seek advice on post-employment restrictions related to his new employment with [a private company]. The Commission decided he could work for [the private company] in the practice development area without violating the Code of Conduct post-employment restrictions. However, [former State official] was advised he could not work on any [specific] matter. In addition, he requested an opinion on whether he could consult with State of Delaware officials while working for [a private company]. He indicated [the private company] did not base his salary on the consulting aspect of the job. Therefore, his salary would not go up or down depending on the amount of consulting work. [The former State official]’s reason for wanting to serve as a consultant to the State was so he could act as a resource for staff at [his previous office]. Since he was primarily responsible for creating and administering many of the procedures used by the office, he believed he would be the best resource to provide information. When asked if he would be providing [specific] advice, [the former State official] indicated the State would direct [those types of] questions to [the private company]’s department. The Commission did not decide the consulting issue after the last meeting. [The former State official] was asked to return this month with a representative of the State so the Commission could obtain further details about the type of information that would be exchanged during the consultations.

[The former State official] was accompanied by [a State Officer and a current State official]. When asked to explain the nature of the consultations with the State, [the former State official] indicated the information would not be related to [work] or investigations conducted by [the private company]. That explanation was supported by [the former State official]’s replacement and [the State Officer]. [The State Officer] confirmed the information [the former State official] would provide to the State would be related to “administrative and recordkeeping matters.” As an example, [the State Officer] stated a question from the State might concern the location of a file or confirmation of an oral conversation [the former State official] previously had with someone. Because of the length of time he was in office, both [the current State official] and [the State Officer] indicated [the former State official] possessed most of the institutional memory for the office. They also said the office would not be as efficient or well informed if the State was prevented from consulting with [the former State official].

While administrative and recordkeeping matters are matters over which [the former State official] was “directly and materially responsible”, the Commission found that in this context, he would not be “assisting a private enterprise.” “Assist” is not defined in the Code of Conduct. The legal definition is: [t]o contribute effort in the complete accomplishment of an ultimate purpose intended to be affected by those engaged; to help; aid; succor; lend countenance or encouragement to. *Black’s Law Dictionary* 712 (6th ed. 1990). [The former State official] would be acting as a former employee providing information to the office he recently left. The private enterprise would not be a party to, or benefit from, his help to the State during [the current State official]’s transition phase.

Based upon [the former State official]’s oral comments, and the representations of [the current State official and [the State Officer] the Commission decided it would not violate the post-employment restrictions in the Code of Conduct for [the former State official] to consult with the State regarding administrative and recordkeeping issues. He could not discuss with his employer the content of his conversations with the State

13-14 – Post Employment – [Applicant]/Indian River (footnotes have been removed for ease of publication)

Hearing and Decision by: *Wilma Mishoe, Chair; Andrew Gonser and William Tobin, Vice Chairs; Commissioners Lisa Lessner and Jeremy Anderson, Esq.*

Dear [Applicant]:

The Public Integrity Commission reviewed the request for a waiver so that the Indian River School District and [an Employee] could privately contract for services to the District if she left her State position. PIC concluded it would grant a waiver but advised the School District to restrict her contract to the amount she would make if she continued as a State employee (including value of her State benefits) for the reasons expressed below.

I. Applicable Law and Facts:

A. Post-Employment: For 2 years after terminating State employment, the post-employment law bars State employees from representing or otherwise assisting a private enterprise on matters involving the State for which they were directly and materially responsible for as a State employee. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d).

Here, if [Employee] quit her State job [in her current position] at Indian River she would be contracting to perform the very same work, with the very same clients, in the very same district. Thus, it would violate the post-employment law for her to privately contract with Indian River.

B. Waiver: Waivers may be granted if there is an undue hardship for any State employee or State agency, or if the literal application of the law is not necessary to serve the public purpose. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(a).

(1) Is there an Undue Hardship for [Employee]?

In the letter from [a director within in the school district], and in your statements at the Commission meeting, a waiver was requested. The letter stated it was written “on behalf of [Employee],” and “we are asking the commission to grant a waiver on her behalf due to the district hardship...” and “[Employee] is seeking to contract with the district on a year to year basis due to financial difficulties.”

At the Commission meeting, you also spoke in some detail of [Employee’s] financial difficulties. This Commission addressed that issue with her prior to your request. Commission Op. No. 13-05. It concluded that while she may have a financial hardship, it would not grant her a waiver to contract with Indian River because her financial hardship could be cured by contracting with other School Districts, or long-term care facilities, etc., without violating the post-employment law. *Id.* The fact that [Employee] had other means of curing her financial hardship without violating the law was significant because in granting a waiver to the post-employment law, we are permitting a State employee to violate a provision that carries criminal penalties of up to a year in prison and/or up to \$10,000 in fines. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(f). Therefore, to the extent the request is being made “on her behalf,” and that “[Employee] is seeking to

contract with the District...due to financial difficulties,” we did not, and will not, grant a waiver based on her financial situation.

(2) Is the literal application of the law to [Employee’s] situation necessary to serve the public purpose?

In discussing the federal post-employment law--similar to Delaware’s--the United States Congress noted: like other conflict of interest statutes, post-employment laws are meant to insure public confidence in the integrity of the government. *“Ethics in Government Act,” Senate Report No. 95-170*, p. 32. It said public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that government officials use their office for personal gain, particularly after leaving the government. *Id.* There is a sense that a “revolving door” exists ...[which] leads to suspicion that personal profit was the motivation. *Id.* There also is public concern that former employees may use information, influence, and access acquired during government service for improper and unfair advantage in later dealings with that department or agency. *Id.* at 33. Reflecting that concern, post-employment laws set a “cooling off period” in areas which the ex-employee dealt with while working at the agency. *Id.* Additionally, it is to avoid the risk that after they switch to the private side they may exercise undue influence on those they leave behind. *Commission Op. No. 96-75 (citing United States v. Medico, 7th Cir., 784 F.2d 840, 843 (1986))*.

At the meeting, you said you and [Employee] are colleagues, as you also [share a similar position]. That is one reason you were asked if you were there to speak on her behalf or on behalf of the School District. You said you were speaking for the School District and you are entitled to a strong legal presumption of honesty, integrity, and impartiality. *Beebe Medical Center v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, C.A. No. 94A-01-004, J. Terry (Del. Super. June 30, 1995), *aff’d.*, No. 304 (Del. January 29, 1996).

Thus, assuming you were speaking for the District with authority to commit funds to pay her, public confidence could be weakened because [Employee] could resolve her financial problems by contracting with another School District or a long-term care facility, etc., without violating the law. Moreover, she has been directly involved in trying to get Indian River to seek a waiver, by such things as expressing her financial problems. No facts suggest she told the District that in meeting with PIC, she said contracting with other School Districts, or long-term care facilities, etc., could solve her financial situation, or that PIC denied her waiver request to work for Indian River, for that reason. Now, she is contacting Indian River wanting to know the status of its request and telling the requestors she has a financial problem. Further, the letter from the [a director within the school district] states that “[Employee] is seeking to contract with the District ...due to financial difficulties”—not that the District is seeking to contract with her. The public could well suspect she is driving the request by trying to influence her former colleagues.

Aside from the concern about undue influence, the public could suspect a personal motivation. If she contracts with Indian River, she does not even have to look for work elsewhere. She would just return to her same desk, with the same clients, only getting paid more under the contract. Further, she said she wanted to continue work at Indian River because her children are in school and she wants the same hours, etc. Presumptively, Indian River is more convenient for her than perhaps Cape Henlopen or another District. Thus, the contract with Indian River would better serve her personal desires, even beyond the financial aspect.

Further, the public may suspect she is obtaining an unfair advantage because by deciding to leave State employment, she created the opening in the District, and now wants to negotiate for a higher salary, again, when she could contract elsewhere. This was all done in the face of knowing that the District has not, for many years, filled [similar positions], and knowing that some currently employed [in that position] are considering retiring. Further, no facts suggest the District is announcing a full-time contract position opportunity to others, as there is nothing on its website, or other websites with Indian River jobs, about the opportunity.

Clearly, a waiver cannot be granted to [the employee] on the basis that the literal application of the law is not necessary to serve the public purpose when the very essence of the public purpose is severely undermined by the above facts. Thus, we will not grant a waiver on that basis.

(3) The School District's Hardship

[A director's] letter says that for the past 10 years the District has sought ways to fill [similar] positions. It says the District has advertised in local and national papers, attended job fairs in and out of State, and tried using recruiting firms. It further says there is a national shortage, and schools lose candidates to more glamorous and higher paying jobs at hospitals and rehabilitation centers. You added at the meeting that other School Districts in Delaware pay their [specialized personnel] more than Indian River. However, no facts suggested Indian River has tried to get the salary raised for those specialized positions, even in the face of having only 3 of 6 [similar] positions filled before [the employee] came to the Commission. As noted above, despite the stated shortage, the web sites with job announcements in Indian River, do not include a single position for [similar positions] either as a State employee or private contractor. The public may suspect there is no sense of urgency by Indian River to fill the already existing open positions, if they have not even announced them. Yet, it immediately responded to [Employee's] request to seek a waiver which could pay her substantially more, without ever announcing any openings, and/or without any facts suggesting it had sought higher pay levels for the positions, or a different contractor who would not be violating the law. That tends to diminish the District's asserted hardship.

What we see as the real "undue hardship" is that innocent 3rd parties—those children who [are served by this position] may not receive the care and attention the District programs have been providing and may not have the resources to go elsewhere. Therefore, we are granting a waiver, with the restrictions discussed below. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a).

(4) Is the literal application of the law to the School District necessary to serve the public purpose?

We have noted above the purposes of the post-employment law, which includes the public concern of former State employees experiencing a financial windfall because of their past connection to the agency; possible influence of former colleagues; obtaining advantage over other competitors, etc. Here, [Employee] said she makes about \$42 an hour as a State employee, for a total of \$61,000, not including benefits, for the 188 school days she works. She said if she contracted at \$70 per hour for 188 days, it would be almost \$100,000. She said that "even if you take out \$12,000 a year for

health care insurance and put some away for retirement, you would still come out ahead” of the State salary. She said she believes with all the State benefits, the salary of \$61,000 a year as a State employee would probably be worth \$72,000.

In the past, PIC granted a waiver where the agency worked to reduce these public concerns when a former State employee sought to contract with their former agency for the very same work, by offering the former employee a contract salary that was not a financial windfall, but consistent with her State hourly rate. See, e.g., *Commission Op. No. 98-15* (agency said it would offer former employee her current hourly State salary rate, plus Other Employment Costs (OECs). OEC’s are the costs the State pays for a full-time employee to cover: health insurance, workers’ compensation, pension, Medicare, FICA and unemployment insurance.)

In a separate opinion, PIC addressed the reasons why the connection to the State salary was relevant to the public purpose. *Commission Op. No. 99-15*. In that opinion, the agency had never announced the job, but offered the former employee substantially more than what she received as a State employee, and told PIC comparing her State salary was not justified. PIC’s response was:

“(1) That is the job she is doing and that is the pay rate she would have received if she stayed full-time with the State.

(2) The General Assembly acknowledged a relationship between the State salary and the salary to be paid when a State retiree turns around after retirement and is re-hired to perform the same State job because it provided specific laws for such persons and connected the salary to existing State positions, and directed that they have a pension offset. *29 Del. C. § 5502(a)*. We have noted that the effect of those laws is to prevent State employees from experiencing a windfall as a result of their public position. *Ethics Bulletin 007*.

(3) Using the State salary as the pay base is, in our experience, a common method used by agencies in negotiations. In every situation where an agency has sought and been granted a waiver of the post-employment law, they have used the former employee's State salary to establish the pay rate. *Commission Op. Nos. 91-18; 95-11; 96-60; 97-41; 98-15*. Basing the salary on the State pay serves to diminish the perception that former employees are using their former State job to financially capitalize and obtain an unfair advantage.” *Commission Op. No. 99-15*.

While [the employee] is not retiring under the pension plan, she, like those retirees, is terminating State employment, and then wants to return to Indian River to perform the very same job.

In that advisory opinion, the AG said the State agency was subject to remediation because its actions defeated the public purpose of the statute, even though the statute did not specifically address the types of remediation imposed. Here, to avoid defeating the public purpose of the Code of Conduct, we identify a reduced salary to consider so that a financial windfall does not occur.

In the event Indian River finds that salary condition that PIC has imposed is untenable, it should so advise PIC, explaining why, and offer a proposed salary and submit documentation explaining why the proposed salary would serve the public purpose. If Indian River chooses to go that route, such explanation and proposal should

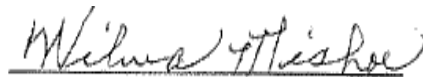
be submitted and presented to PIC by a School Administrator with authority to address funding, who is not a colleague or co-worker.

Conclusion

We grant a conditional waiver. The District can contract with [the employee] as long as the public purpose is served by avoiding a financial windfall to her by contracting

for the amount of her State salary and OECs.

FOR THE PUBLIC INTEGRITY COMMISSION



Wilma Mishoe, Chair

13-11 - Post Employment: In March 2013, the matter was submitted to PIC by [a citizen] as a complaint against [a] City council member. After discussion with [both parties], it was determined the matter would proceed as a request for an advisory opinion. [City council members] are subject to the State Code of Conduct because the City had not adopted its own Code. 29 *Del. C.* § 5802(4). [The council member] requested an advisory opinion related to the “personal and private interest” section of the Code. Later, it was learned [the council member] would not be running for re-election. [His/her] term expired [in the near future]. After [his/her] term had expired, [he/she] intended to continue involvement with two organizations [he/she] worked with while serving on the City Council. Counsel called [the council member] and asked if [he/she] would like to change the request for an advisory opinion to one focused on post-employment issues. After Counsel explained the two-year post-employment provision, [the council member] agreed to seek post-employment advice. Counsel then contacted [the original complainant] to explain the change of focus and to inform [him/her] that the contents of the advisory opinion would be confidential.

The Code of Conduct imposes a two year restriction on former City employees to prohibit them from representing or assisting any private enterprise on any matter involving the City if the employee “gave an opinion, conducted an investigation or otherwise was directly and materially responsible for such matter in the course of official duties” as a City employee. Additionally, the former employee may not reveal confidential information that the employee gained through their employment with the City. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d).

[The council member] is President of [a local] non-profit organization. In the past, [the council member] advocated for [the organization] directly to the City Council. Specifically, [he/she] was the point person that convinced the City to agree to [a project for the organization]. [The council member] presented ideas to the Council and proposed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City and [the organization]. The City contributed money towards the establishment of the [project]. At the hearing, [the council member] stated the project was largely complete. The only matters [he/she] anticipated developing during the two

years of her post-employment restriction were [two separate projects]. The City would not be involved in the two [projects].

[The council member] was also President of [another organization]. Their mission was [related to economic interests of the City]. As a member of the organization, [the council member] solicited the City to fund a [project to the benefit of both the City and the organization] [He/she] also advocated a contractual relationship between the City and [the organization] so [the organization] would be eligible to apply for grants. [The council member] was successful in getting the City to contribute monies towards the project. [The council member] stated the project continued to be a work-in-progress.

After considering the facts and circumstances related to [the council member's] involvement with [the first organization], the Commission determined [the council member] would not violate the post-employment restrictions of the Code as long as [he/she] did not involve [themselves] in any matter the organization brought before the City.

[The council member's] continued involvement with [the second organization] was more problematic. The project was still active. Of specific concern to the Commission was [the organization's] need to have the City sign off on funding grants. When [the council member] was asked about the possibility of recusal, [he/she] indicated that the board had 11 other members. [The council member] said another board member could handle matters for [the organization] involving communication with, or soliciting from, the City. It was explained to [the council member] that the recusal requirement was not limited to funding issues. Recusal is required for any issue involving the City, such as permits, licenses, etc. The Commission further explained recusal meant [he/she] may not even be present in the room when any topic involving the City was discussed. [The council member] was also cautioned [he/she] may not reveal confidential information to [the organization] [he/she] learned from [his/her] position as a City council member.

The Commission decided it would not be a violation of the post-employment restriction in the Code of Conduct for [the soon-to-be retired council member] to continue [his/her] work with [the organization] as long as [he/she] recused [themselves] from any matter that involved the City and [he/she] did not divulge confidential information [he/she] learned as a council member.

13-06 – Post Employment: A State employee planned to leave State employment and wanted to take a position with a national company that contracted with her Division. That company also did business in other States. The position she would fill would be to work on a contract that the company had with the State of Pennsylvania. She would have no occasion to deal with her own Division, or even the State of Delaware. For 2 years after leaving State employment, a former employee may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State if they are matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation; or (3) was otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d). They also may not improperly use or disclose confidential information gained from their public position. *Id.* The post-employment law barred her from working on matters “involving the State.” 29 Del. C. § 5805(d). “State” means “the State of Delaware and includes any state agency.” 29 Del. C. § 5804(10). The Commission found that her proposed work would not involve the State of Delaware. Therefore, it would not violate the post-employment law.

13-05 – Post-Employment - Waiver Requested; Denied: A State employee planned to leave State employment and wanted to privately contract with State agencies, including her own, to perform the same work she did for her State agency. She sought a waiver so that she could contract with her own agency. The post-employment law states that for 2 years after terminating State employment, a State employee may not represent or otherwise assist their private enterprise on matters where they: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation; or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d). She said she could contract with State agencies other than her own. If she did that, she would not be working on the same matters for which she was responsible because it would be a different agency, different clients, and different issues for those particular clients.

Waivers may be granted if there is an undue hardship on the State employee. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a). She stated that she and her family had financial difficulties and that if she privately contracted with the agency, it would help overcome those difficulties. However, she also stated that if she privately contracted with other State agencies and worked on their matters, it would help overcome that hardship. The Commission decided a waiver not be granted because she could contract with agencies other than her own, to resolve her financial problems without violating the Code.

13-03 - Post Employment: The applicant was a Department Manager of a state agency. He wanted to retire and work for a private enterprise that contracted with his Department. As the Department Manager, the applicant supervised the Contract Manager for the four private companies that provided the Department with services. He wanted to obtain employment with the private enterprise as a Social Worker, supervise the social work staff, conduct job-related training and assist in preparing and negotiating a contract with his Department. His role with the State in terms of such contracts was that “specific to the program I would offer information and objectives what I see as what should be in the contract.” He agreed that he provided input on the substance of the contract, and also on the amount of moneys to be spent on the programs under the contract. Aside from contract oversight, he provided training and had other administrative duties. There was a completely separate department that oversaw the services provided by the private enterprise. He had nothing to do with that. He also said he had considered working for another company that did not contract with his agency but did not give the details. He asked if the Commission’s decision could be appealed. He was informed it could not be appealed to the Court. *Post v. PIC*. However, it also was explained that he could ask the Commission for reconsideration, but he should wait until he gets the written opinion before acting. The Commission decided that it would be a violation for him to work on the contract because he was responsible for that matter, and the oversight of information presented to the Committee, but he could work on other things not involving those matters.

13-01 – Post Employment: A State employee wanted to accept a job with a company that contracted with his State agency, after he left State employment. In his State job, and in his post-employment job, [Employee] would deal with clients, however, the State job involved directly dealing with clients, and in the post-employment job, he would be dealing with organizations that provided services to clients. Aside from being involved more at the administrative end than interacting directly with clients, there was no overlap in the type of clients, or the types of services they needed. The Commission decided there was no violation of the post-employment restriction because the scope of his employment with the private enterprise was vastly different from his State job, with different clients and a different range of

ages and issues. [Employee] was reminded of the prohibition against using or disclosing confidential information gained during the performance of their State job duties.

12-33 Post Employment: Contracting with Different State Agency: A State Executive Branch employee asked if she left State employment could she privately contract with a completely different State Branch. The 2-year law precludes State employees from representing or assisting a private enterprise on matters involving the State if they: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation; or (3) were otherwise directly or materially responsible. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d). They are also barred from improperly using or disclosing confidential information gained from State employment. *Id.* She learned about the contracting opportunity from the newspaper. Thus, it was not privileged or confidential information. She did not know the details about the project that the contractor would work on except that it would manage the program. As she has managed such programs, she applied. In her State job, she was not involved with the separate State Branch's decision to seek a contractor, nor did she review or decide what that contract would be. The Commission decided that based upon the written information provided, she did not have a conflict.

12-27 – Post Employment – Contract Overseen by Own Agency: A State employee asked if it would violate the post-employment law if she sought a State contract that her agency would manage. She said if selected as the contractor, she would leave State employment. Former employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on State matters if they: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation; or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

The contract resulted from a different Department within her agency seeking a federal grant for a program not previously offered in Delaware. When the federal funding was approved to pay a contractor to provide the service, it required her Department to oversee the program. She was not involved in the grant request; did not work with clients that the program would cover; and never worked as a State employee in the same type of program, as it did not previously exist. The Commission decided there was no post-employment issue as she did not give an opinion; conduct an investigation; nor was she otherwise directly and materially responsible for that matter in her State job.

12-19 Post Employment: A State employee wanted to retire and accept employment with a company that contracted with her agency. For 2 years after leaving the State, former employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters before the State, if they are matters where they: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation; or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

In her State job she had oversight of performance of contractors. Her private job was coordinating/completing certain types of investigations that were never part of her State work; overseeing emergency operations, which again was not part of her State work; looking at innovative trends and activities across the United States, which would not involve the State of Delaware; keeping up on regulatory standards and interfacing with the internal operating units (not the State) on systems improvement. It was possible that people from her State office would come to the facility to inspect, but she would not be part of that activity, either during the inspection or during any follow-up discrepancies to be handled. That would be handled by the head of the company and other people in the company who were responsible for those

particular activities where discrepancies were noted. The Commission advised she could accept the employment as long as she did not become involved with any inspection conducted by her former agency. Further, until such time as she left State employment, she was to recuse from any matters pertaining to that company. 29 Del. C. § 5805(a)(1).

12-11 – Post Employment: A former State employee started his own lobbying and consulting firm. At the time he had one client, and that client was not connected to his State work, either in its lobbying interest or in regulatory matters. Thus, he was not responsible for those matters. He registered as a lobbyist as required. 29 Del. C., Subchapter IV. He asked if he could accept clients that were interested in hiring a lobbyist or consultant on matters related to his regulatory agency. In his State job, he had drafted legislation that was pending in the General Assembly. He said he would not work on that matter, as either a consultant or lobbyist. However, as far as lobbying/consulting on other matters handled by his former agency, he identified specific regulatory areas where he had no involvement since his primary duties did not relate to the regulatory aspect of the agency but pertained more to communications activities. The Commission advised that he could not work on the legislation which he drafted but could work in regulatory areas because he said he was never involved in that area as part of his duties, and he was entitled to a strong presumption of honesty in that statement. *Beebe Medical Center v Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, C.A. No. 94A-01-004, J. Terry (Del. Super. June 30, 1995), *aff'd.*, No. 304 (Del. January 29, 1996). As far as procedural areas, he could work on any procedural issues that arose after he left State employment as they would be new issues and he could not have been responsible for them, and he could work on issues that arose while he was employed by the State as long as he was not involved in the matters.

12-09 Post-Employment: A former employee identified a number of contracts with his former agency, and his involvement in those particular matters. Three of the contracts were not awarded to his private employer. Thus, he would not be representing or assisting them on those particular matters. The company did have three contracts that he initially said he was not involved in, but later said that he did have some involvement with one and described that involvement. Another specific contract might be awarded to his private employer, and, if so, he wanted to work on it as he was not, in any manner, involved. He said there would likely be other contracts awarded to his private employer, but those had not yet been identified. The Commission must base its opinions on the particular facts. 29 Del. C. § 5807(c). The Commission advised he could work on the identifiable contracts where he was not involved; must recuse from the one where he subsequently said he had some involvement; and as far as future contracts, he could return to the Commission once he had additional information.

12-08 Post Employment: A State employee who was involved in a program that determined if vendors were meeting State standards wanted to work for a company that was regulated by her agency after retiring. She would be running a program for the company, and such programs were not part of her State duties. She also would be creating some new programs. As those were not matters for which she was responsible, she could work on those matters. However, if her former agency sent in inspectors to see if the company was complying, she was to recuse from anything to do with that matter, e.g., escorting them through the facility, etc. As far as any discrepancies that the State inspectors found, she would not respond to those matters because the individuals responsible for those regulated areas would respond. The Commission advised she could accept the job, as long as she did not participate in, or interact with, the inspectors from her former agency.

11-59 - Post Employment: A State employee believed a private company that contracted with another division in his agency, may have an opening in the near future. If so, he wanted to apply, and if hired, leave State employment to work part-time. The work he would do was not like the work he performed at his State job. However, he said it was possible that he may encounter some clients from his former agency that he dealt with, but it would be a rare exception because his function was more administrative and not primarily directed toward his Division's clients. However, if he had contact with them, he could not recuse because no one else would be there since he would be working at night and/or on weekends. He asked for a waiver, if necessary, to deal with clients from his division that he had worked with. The Commission found there was no violation of the post-employment restriction unless one of his Division's clients whose case he handled contacted him on that particular matter, which had a very limited probability, he was allowed to accept those few calls.

11-58 - Post Employment: A former State employee had previously requested a post-employment opinion on certain matters. He returned with a request on whether he may work for his private employer on 3 of his former agency's contracts. Two contracts were not previously considered by PIC. On one contract, he was not involved in the contractor selection process; or any of the tasks under the agreement. On the 2nd contract, he was not involved in the selection process. The contract was still in the negotiation stage, so no tasks had been assigned. As a former employee, he did not write letters soliciting contractors who were interested; was not on the selection committees; was not involved in any negotiations to execute the contracts. He said that these contracts are for another section in his former agency, and his work was with a distinctly different division. The 3rd agreement was brought to the Commission's attention last time when it dealt with a specific portion on that contract. It did not rule on whether he could work on the rest of the contract because he did not have the particular details at that time. The Commission bases its decisions on the particular facts of each case. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(c). He subsequently learned 23 other tasks are in the contract. He wanted to know if he could work on some of those, as he was not in any way involved with those matters from the beginning when his agency sought interested contractors. He, and a representative from the private company, provided a table of the projects: the completed ones; ones he would not work on; and the 4 tasks he wanted to work on. The Commission found that the employee would not be prohibited from working on the first two contracts, as long as he did not work on any tasks under those contracts while employed by the State, and could work on those 4 tasks in the 3rd contract, as he had not been directly and materially responsible for those matters.

11-52 - Post Employment: A former State employee asked if he could work on 6 contracts that his former agency had with the private company where he now worked.

- (1) Contract A: He was not involved with the contractor or the substance of the contract, and did not draft, review the draft, or have any other connection to the contract.
- (2) Contract B: He was not involved in selecting the contractor. As far as the substance, it had not yet been determined what specific projects would be performed but he said the substance would not be on any matters he worked on for the State.
- (3) Contract C: He was involved in drafting the language, reviewing the substance of the contract and recommending approval.

(4) Contract D: He worked on the language and was involved in discussions about certain aspects of this contract. He said he would not work on those particular aspects but wanted to work on other aspects of the contract. Regarding those aspects, he was not involved in recommending or selecting the contractor but did prepare the contract language which laid out the conditions, and the duties to be performed under the contract.

5) Contract E: He did not select the contractor or consultant but reviewed the proposed contract limits, potential costs, etc., and wanted to continue performing that work, only in more detail. Additionally, he was involved in looking at certain substantive provisions of the contract and discussing them with a contractor. He said the work would not differ substantially from his State work, except a different level of detail.

6) Contract F: He was not involved in the selection process but provided comments on one portion of the contract. He would like to continue to work on that portion and would like to work on other tasks in the contract, but those tasks had not been identified by his former agency.

The Commission decided he could work on Contracts A and B as they were not matters on which he gave an opinion, etc., he properly concluded he should not work on Contract C; he should not work on Contract D and E, as he was directly and materially responsible for those matters; and should not work on the particular portion of Contract F for which he was directly and materially responsible. PIC couldn't render a decision on whether he could work on other tasks under that agreement as there were no particular facts on which to base a decision. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(c).

11-47 - Concurrent and Post-Employment: A State employee, and an out-of-State partner, started a corporation and wanted to be able to write books, prepare media releases, screen plays and speeches; work with clients to set up strategies for their projects; and develop strategies for the corporation's projects. Their firm may also be involved in political consulting and investor relations. He noted a statute that applied only to employees in his agency which contained specific restrictions. This Commission's jurisdiction is limited to interpreting only 29 *Del. C.*, chapter 58. 29 *Del. C.* § 5809(2) and (3). He also asked the Commission if some of the work would violate the concurrent employment law, and if some would violate the post-employment law.

The employee said if things worked out with the corporation, he planned to leave State employment. He would then like to introduce two companies to the regulators from other States. One offered direct e-mail to persons who opt in, and he thought it would benefit those persons to receive e-mails from the regulatory offices of the various States. The other company contracted with his State agency on certain matters. He thought other States might use their services. The Commission found the post-employment law would not be violated as long as the State employee was dealing with other States.

11-32 – Post Employment: A former employee asked if he could work on certain contracts that his private employer had with his former State agency. Some of his work would be for the State of Maryland. That would not be a "State [of Delaware] matter." His letter also identified 15 State of Delaware projects that he would not work on. His private employer did not have any of those contracts. That meant they would not be asking him to represent or assist them on those State matters. For the State of Delaware contracts, the company did have, he would not perform the same type of work that he did for the State, and none of those contracts went

through his State office while he was a State employee. As they had not reached his office, he could not have been directly and materially responsible. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). However, one contract was open-ended, and his former agency had not identified any work needed under that contract. PIC must base opinions on the particular facts of each case. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(c). The Commission decided it would not violate the post-employment restriction for the employee to work on the Maryland matters, as long as those projects were not connected to his State of Delaware work; and no conflict to work on the contracts that he did not work on while with the State. For the open-ended contract, there were no facts on which to base a decision, and he was told he could return when he had further details.

11-18 - Concurrent/Post Employment: A State employee worked full-time for one State agency, and part-time for a different State agency. She was leaving her full-time position and remaining in the part-time job. She asked if she could contract with her full-time agency after she left. She dealt with State clients in her full-time job, and in her part-time job. She also would deal with State clients if she privately contracted with her former agency. However, the types of clients in each State agency were different. The contract clients were a new subset of persons who would be receiving assistance as a result of a federal grant. The Commission considered her situation under both the post-employment law and the concurrent employment law. That was because someone in her full-time agency may think the post-employment law should apply because she was terminating that job, and normally it would. However, as she would still be a State employee because of her part-time job the concurrent employment law actually applied. Under the post-employment law, she could not represent or assist a private enterprise on State matters where she gave an opinion; conducted an investigation; or was otherwise directly and materially responsible. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). As noted, she would not be dealing with the same set of clients. She did not draft, write, review, etc., the contract. Under the concurrent employment law, she had to file a full disclosure of her financial interest in a private enterprise that did business with the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5806(d). She filed as required. In either State job, she could not review or dispose of matters pertaining to that private employment. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(a)(1). She did not. Her part-time State job had nothing to do with the contract work. She also could not represent or assist her private enterprise before her own agency. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(b)(1). That would not occur as the contract work did not involve her part-time State agency. The contract was publicly noticed and bid. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(c). The Commission decided there was not a violation under either law as long as she did not have an overlap in clients between the two jobs; she could not use State time or resources for her private work; she could not use confidential information from her full-time job to assist her in the part-time job.

10-19 - Post Employment: A former State employee asked if he could work on a contract that his private employer was seeking with his former agency. The former employee was not in any manner involved with the contract. As to the substance of the contract, design work, the former employee had completed some design work but not on the projects that would be in the new contract. However, the former employee said that if the company got the contract, and if for some unexpected reason any of the ones he designed came up, he would recuse. The Commission found that if the company got the contract, the former employee could work on the projects contained therein, unless any of them were designs he was responsible for as a State employee.

10-08 - Post Employment: A former teacher asked if she could privately contract with 2 school districts. She had never been employed by either District. She wanted to contract to work on a grant application for the Districts. She was not in any way responsible for such grants as a State employee. The post-employment law barred her from private work on matters for which she was directly and materially responsible as a State employee. As she did not work on the matter while she was a State employee, she was not barred from the contract by the post-employment law.

10-07 - Post Employment: A former State employee was contacted about accepting a job by a company that contracted with her former agency division, where she had been acting division director before leaving State employment. Although she dealt with some company officials while with the State, she did not contact them, nor did she seek employment with them. She left the State approximately 1 year ago. The company had 13 State contracts. Of the 13, she was involved in two. Her involvement was serving on the review committees for both contracts (one was 6 years ago; and the other was 8 years ago). As Acting Director in the last year and 1/2, she had program oversight. In her State job, she dealt directly with senior level company officials on the broad scope of insuring services were offered. She was not involved in how services were implemented, etc. These same company officials would continue to have responsibility for dealing with her former agency as far as oversight. Also, they were not involved in an upcoming bid on a State contract. Her job would not be contract oversight, but direct work with the staff and clients. It would be a clinician-driven responsibility, rather than administrative. Specific activities would be establishing and providing specialized counseling to staff and clients, which was never part of her State duties. Rather, her counseling skills were garnered from prior jobs. Her work also would include day-to-day operations, including supervising staff, and working directly with clients, which was not part of her State job. The Commission decided that as to the 11 contracts she never worked on, she had no responsibility and could work on them, and for the other 2, she would not be working on the same subject matter because she would not be involved in the administrative oversight of the contracts and her work would differ because it was much more hands-on with supervising people, giving care, etc.

09-31 – Post Employment- Agency Interpretation: A State employee withdrew his request for a post-employment advisory opinion since he decided not to contract with his former agency. However, because his agency had issued an interpretation of the post-employment law, the Commission decided to send his former agency a letter reminding them that PIC is the only agency authorized by law to decide conflict issues, and to offer its services for future issues. See, *Ethics Bulletin 009*, ¶¶ 6, 7, 8. The statute authorizes PIC to assist State agencies in administering the law. 29 Del. C. § 5809(10). Courts have held that if a State employee does not obtain advice from the statutory body which is authorized to issue advisory opinions, then the employee is not protected against disciplinary actions or complaint, as they would be with an opinion from the proper source. *Ethics Bulletin 009*, ¶¶ 6,7& 8.

09-23- Post Employment - Lobbying: A State employee left State employment to work for a company which wanted her to lobby on certain matters. Both she and her organization were aware that the post-employment law would bar her from working on certain matters. Their concern was that in the process of lobbying on other matters, which would not violate the Code, she might be asked by officials at Legislative Hall if the organization had taken a position on a matter for which she had been responsible as a State employee, and she did not want to violate

that 2 year restriction. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d). The organization asked if she could make very limited remarks: (1) she could not work on the matter; (2) the organization's "bottom line" of favorable or unfavorable; and (3) refer them to the organization's proper person. The Commission said those limits would be permitted.

09-16 – Post Employment - Local Official: A local official asked if a former Council member acted contrary to the post-employment law by representing a private enterprise on certain local matters when he had participated in decisions for that same private enterprise, and two years had not passed. The former Council member did meet with local government officials regarding matters pertaining to the private enterprise, and he also spoke at a public meeting in which he said he was speaking not only for himself but for the private enterprise. However, none of the matters being discussed were anything that arose while he was on the Council but arose afterwards. The Commission decided there was no violation as he did not represent or assist them on matters on which he had worked while with the Council.

08-62 – Post Employment - Contract for New Population of State Clients: An employee was offered a contract with her agency to work on its grant if she left State employment. The grant established a new population of clients for the agency. She was not involved with the grant request at all. Her State job was very dissimilar to the contract position. The contract was publicly noticed and bid. The Commission found no violation as she was not in any manner directly and materially responsible for the matter. 29 Del. C. § 5805 (d).

08-61 – Post Employment - “Directly and Materially Responsible”: An employee asked if she could privately contract with her own agency if she left State employment. The position was publicly noticed and bid. Her only involvement was to proofread and correct typos in the grant submission. If she was selected after public notice and bidding, her duties would not be the same as in her State job. The Commission found she did not: give an opinion, conduct an investigation and was not “otherwise directly and responsible” for the grant. Generally, such work would constitute ministerial matters. A “matter” is considered “ministerial” when the duty is prescribed with such precision and certainty that nothing is left to discretion or judgment. *Darby v. New Castle Gunning Bedford Education Assoc.*, Del. Supr., 336 A.2d 209, 211(1975). In other words, no opinion would need to be formed, or given.

08-59 – Post Employment - Contract to Perform Same Job; Fewer Hours; Better Pay: A State official sought a waiver for another official in his section to allow the official, who was leaving State employment, to privately contract with the same office and perform the same work as in his State job. In other words, he would be working on matters for which he was directly and materially responsible for as a State employee. That would violate the post-employment law. 29 Del. C. § 5805 (d). A waiver was the only way such conduct could be approved. Waivers may be granted if there is an undue hardship on the State agency or State employee, or a literal application of the law is not necessary to serve the public purpose. 29 Del. C. § 5807 (a). Aside from doing the same work, he would work fewer hours and receive more than a 14% raise. The agency had not tried to find someone else who would not have a post-employment problem to perform the work. While the supervising official had offered the other official the contract, the Division Director sent an e-mail saying the Division had no plans to issue a contract. The Commission did not grant a waiver as no facts substantiated an

“undue hardship”. Similarly, it found that the literal application of the law must apply.

08-56 - Post Employment - Meaning of “Opinion”: A State employee asked if he could accept a private contract with his agency for a grant position if he terminated State employment. His involvement with the grant was meeting with a group that discussed the feasibility of obtaining a grant. Although initially opposed, he subsequently told the group he changed his mind. Thereafter, his division obtained the grant. He then wanted to seek employment under the grant. As the Code does not define "opinion," it must have its plain and ordinary meaning, and reflect legislative intent. 1 *Del. C.* § 301 & § 303. "Opinion" means: "a view, judgment or appraisal formed in the mind about a particular matter." *Webster's 10th New Collegiate Dictionary*, p. 81 5 (10 ed., 1994). "It implies a conclusion thought out, yet open to dispute." *Id.*

Here, he gave the group his "view, judgment or appraisal." Logically, the group considered members' opinions on how the agency operated. He was "directly" responsible for his opinion on the grant. The opinion was "material." It was based on the impact to his shop. Such input, whether a recommendation to a superior, or a final opinion, is "material." See, *Beebe Medical Center v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, Del. Super., C.A. No. 94A-01-004, Terry, J. (June 30, 1995) (*Code applied to officials who only made recommendations to a Division Director*). The Commission found that he had given an opinion and/or was otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter as a State employee, so the employment would be contrary to the post-employment law.

08-20 – Post Employment - Contracting with Prior Employee for Same Job; Waiver Granted. Opinion is a public record. 29 Del. C. § 5807(b)(4).

Hearing and Decision by: Chair Terry Massie; Vice Chairs Barbara Green and Bernadette Winston; Commissioners William Dailey and Wayne Stultz

Dear Mr. [Patrick] Carter:

As you know, the Public Integrity Commission granted your office a waiver of the post-employment law until the end of this calendar year.

The post-employment law prohibits former State employees from representing or assisting a private enterprise (which includes a private contractor) on matters for which they were directly and materially responsible. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). Your office wants to contract with a former employee, Phyllis Baker, to perform her prior duties, absent a waiver, that is contrary to the law. Waivers are based on an “undue hardship,” or if a literal application of the law is not necessary to serve the public purpose. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(a). We consider both your expression of an agency hardship, and facts related to serving the public purpose.

The “undue hardship” articulated by your agency is:

(1) on February 11, 2008, Ms. Baker advised you she was retiring in March; two days later, the State implemented a hiring review process to reduce costs, and

your agency could not get approval for a full-time employee to replace Ms. Baker;
(2) the agency also was barred from re-hiring her as a part-time employee
(3) she worked in a two-person office, leaving that office 50% short of staff
(4) it is the peak of the tax season (personal and corporate) and her help is needed because of accounting responsibilities for over \$1.5 billion of State revenue;
(5) the special knowledge required of the State's accounting system and lack of ability to train another contractor, impacts on timely and accurate deposits and accounting, especially considering the State's current financial forecast;
(6) Ms. Baker's assistance also will serve the public because revenue transfers to them must be timely, and accurate, so their taxpayer accounts can be timely credited;
(7) you identified other duties to be performed in your letter requesting a waiver.

The public purpose of the law is to insure, among other things, that a former employee does not obtain a financial windfall by exiting as a State employee one day, and immediately contracting for the same work. Here, a "windfall" is avoided by reducing her State pay (\$20 per hour plus benefits) to \$18 per hour as a contractor. She will receive no benefits, e.g., health insurance.

By law, waivers become public records. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(b)(4). It allows the public to know why there is a deviation from the law. Like other public records, the release helps instill the public's confidence by giving them a window to the government's actions. Also, we limit the waiver to the rest of this calendar year, to help reduce the public's concern that a waiver will be used long after the reason no longer exists.

Based on your letter, Mr. Ed Salinski's comments, and factoring in all of the above, a waiver is granted through December 31, 2007.

Original Signed by Chair Terry Massie

08-17 – Post Employment - Private Firm Request: A former State employee accepted a job with a private firm. The employer required all former State employees to get advisory opinions so that neither the former employee, nor the firm, would engage in acts that would not be permitted under the post-employment law. The former employee worked for the State for less than a year. He was not involved in any projects that his private employer had contracted with his agency. He did not work in the same section of the agency which awarded contracts to the firm. A contract was awarded to the firm several years ago, before the employee worked for the State. The firm had completed that work and did not expect any further activity on the matter. The former employee said the firm would support him if he had to recuse, and he would seek further guidance if needed. The Commission found no post-employment violation.

07-53 - Post Employment: A former State employee asked if he could give a one-day seminar for certain State employees on their annual training day on certain matters. For 2 years after leaving State employment, former employees may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on State matters where they gave an opinion; conducted an investigation; or were otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter as a State employee. 29 *Del. C.* §

5805(d) . The law allows former employees to work on *new* matters arising after they terminate State employment. This was new for him. The Commission found no violation.

07-38 – Post Employment - “Matters” That Do Not Involve the State; “Matters” of Other Agencies; New Project with Former Agency: After leaving his State job, a former employee contacted Commission Counsel about the post-employment law. He was given a general overview of the law, but he intended to leave the private firm shortly, so did not seek a formal opinion. He later returned to work for the firm. A question was raised at his agency about compliance with the post-employment law because the former employee was dealing with his former agency. The agency and the employee wanted to resolve the issue so it was clear what he could work on. In his private job, he was involved in a number of things: (1) working with private clients for potential sales, which did not “involve the State”; (2) providing customer services to clients, which did not “involve the State”; (3) working on matters involving a different agency, on matters that he did not work on for the State; (4) dealing with his former agency on a new project for the firm, in which he was not involved in his State job; (5) working on new sites acquired by the firm which may be regulated by his former agency, but as they were new, he could not have worked on them as a State employee. The Commission found no violation as he was not working on matters for which he was responsible as a State employee.

07-23 – Post Employment - Foster Care: A State employee filed a disclosure stating they had left State employment and were providing foster care. The statute does not mandate disclosures from former employees who are dealing with a State agency. It only mandates disclosures from current employees in that situation. 29 *Del. C.* § 5806(d). However, the Commission treated the disclosure form as a request for an advisory opinion, as advisory opinions can be based on written statements. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(c). According to the disclosure she was not involved in reviewing or disposing of any matters related to the State contract establishing her as a foster care provider, in her official capacity while with the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(a)(1). There is a strong presumption of honesty and integrity in public officials. *Beebe Medical Center, Inc. v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, Del. Super., C.A. No. 94A-01-004, J. Terry (June 30, 1995) *aff'd*, Del. Supr., No. 304 (January 29, 1996). In fact, her contract was not effective until January 1, 2006, which was after she left State employment. Thus, no facts suggested she was directly and materially responsible for that contract as a State employee. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d).

06-67 – Post Employment - Knowledge Does Not Make Employee Directly and Materially Responsible: A local government employee, through his attorney, asked if it would violate the post-employment law if, after retiring, he accepted a job with a private enterprise that did business with his local government. He provided a list of government duties, and a list of the duties he would perform for the private enterprise. He had served as a liaison with consultants and contractors in his government job but did not deal with the contracts for this particular private company. When asked if his private duties would involve any contact with his former agency, he said the work would include pre-bid and progress meetings, but it would not be on contracts he worked on while employed by the government. As his attorney noted, the law does not say that knowing a contract process, by itself, would preclude work on matters related to the former agency’s contracts. *Commission Op. No. 96-75 (discussing “process” knowledge)*. If that were true, the former employee, most likely, could not have *any* dealings with the former agency. The restriction did not bar dealing with the former agency except in the three areas in the statute. The Commission found no violation because his post-employment work would not

be on matters for which he was directly and materially responsible. [NOTE: See, *Beebe v. Certificate of Needs Appeals Board*, C.A. No. 94A-01-004, J. Terry (Del. Super. June 30, 1995), *aff'd* No. 304 (Del. January 29, 1996) (*State official who served on State Board, appeared before the Board after leaving. He represented applicant on matters that the Board decided. Court held that as to the particular application, he was not involved with it as a Board member so he was not directly and materially responsible for that matter.*).

06-62 – Post Employment - Contract with Non-employing Agency: A State employee asked if it would violate the post-employment law if she contracted with an agency other than her former agency to work on plans that were not part of her duties while employed by the State. While her former agency and the contracting agency jointly coordinated some of the plans, she was not involved in developing any of the contracting agency's plan. The Commission found no violations as she was not in any way directly and materially responsible for the matter as a State employee.

06-53 - Post Employment - Local Official: The requestor worked for a local government. He planned to retire and accept a job with a private company. The requestor, and his future employer, appeared before the Commission. The requestor explained that some matters related to his private job involved matters related to some parts of his government job. The official said that in addition to working for the private employer, his former government agency had indicated it may seek to contract with him. The potential contracts appeared to be matters in which he was involved as an employee. Thus, the contract with his former government agency would be a matter for which he had been directly and materially responsible, absent a waiver. He said there was a problem finding replacements. However, he then said there were almost 20 applicants.

He also would like to contract with other local governments for services he did not perform in his government job. Aside from involvement with Delaware government, he could be involved with governments in nearby States and Associations related to local governments. The law only bars him from working on matters that involved his local Delaware government job. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). Persons from his former government agency were involved in the Associations. There would be direct contracts between him and the local government entities, but he would also work on contracts of the private firm related to governments. He said if matters arose before any of these entities related to his government employer, he would recuse.

The prospective employer said the firm's principal place of business was in Maryland. The requestor would work in External Affairs, e.g., marketing, presentations, Project Manager, representing clients and consulting with government entities such as towns, etc. The firm had contracted with the local government where he worked but had no active contracts. The company may seek contracts with other local governments on large projects. The prospective employer gave an example. The requestor said he was not in any way involved in that matter. The Commission found that he could not contract as a consultant with his government employer on matters for which he was responsible. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). Regarding contracts with other local governments in Delaware, he could look at the contracts to determine what, if any connection, he had with those contracts while in his government job. He was advised to review each contract and, if necessary, seek further advice from the Commission, as there were no particulars regarding those contracts. The Commission must base its opinions on the particular facts. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(c).

06-50 Post Employment - No Details; No Ruling: A former State employee wrote to the Commission saying he had taken a job with a private enterprise. He described his former State job and said he would not work on matters related to that former job, and if a specific question arose he would come to the Commission for advice. He did not provide details of any specific dealings between the private enterprise and the State. The Commission responded to his correspondence, stating that it would need the “particular facts” in order to provide an advisory opinion. 29 Del. C. § 5807(c).

06-35 – Post Employment - Private Contract with Former State Agency: A former State employee asked the Commission if it would violate the Code if he privately contracted with a State agency where he worked many years ago. The contract would not be in an area that he was in any manner involved with while employed by the agency years ago. Further, his subsequent position with a different agency did not entail any such work, or any decision by him on the particulars of this contract. No violation was found.

06-32 – Post Employment - “Matter”. Limited Waiver Granted. *When waivers are granted, the proceedings become a matter of public record. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a). The opinion is printed in its entirety.*

*Hearing and Decision by: Chairman P. David Brumbaugh and Commissioners:
Barbara A. Remus, Bernadette Winston and William W. Dailey*

Dear Mr. [Charles] Jones:

The State Public Integrity Commission reviewed your request for an opinion on whether your proposed conduct would violate the post-employment law. Based on the following law and facts, we find that some of the proposed conduct as it relates to the SR 26 projects, may appear to violate the Code. However, we also find that a literal interpretation of the Code is not necessary to serve the public purpose. On the Corridor project, any final decision is premature as Century Engineering is not presently involved in acquisitions for contract.

I. Applicable Law

State employees, for 2 years after terminating, may not represent or otherwise assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State if they are matters where they: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation; or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d). They also may not improperly use or disclose confidential information. *Id.*

II. Application of Law to Facts

You work in DeIDOT’s real estate section. It acquires properties for such things as right of ways. You: (1) conduct preliminary property ownership research; (2) negotiate with owners to buy the property; (3) prepare administrative offers of

compensation; (4) explain appraisals, highway construction, and right of way plans to owners. More detailed activities are to investigate by going to the property, taking pictures, pulling deeds, etc. If DeIDOT's offer is rejected, you find out why. You look at parcels as part of on-going projects and ones needed in the future. After investigating, you send the findings to Mr. Russo to decide if DeIDOT will buy the property or if its offer will be reconsidered. You go back to owners who reject offers with any changes to compensation to continue negotiations.

You want to do similar work for Century Engineering on the following DeIDOT projects. In no instance did you draft or write the contracts or participate in selecting Century as the contractor.

A. Corridor Capacity Preservation: At present, Century's contract to provide final engineering design services has expired. Occasionally, it may be asked to complete a study or conceptual design. It has no contract for acquisitions for the Mainline part of the program but has a contract for the local roads. At present, no work on acquisitions is occurring, thus, we cannot rule on the matter as we have no particular facts. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(c). However, if it should become involved with acquisitions and wants to use you on that matter, it is recommended that you return to the Commission for additional guidance.

B. SR26 Atlantic Avenue from Clarksville to Assawoman Canal: Century is preparing construction and right of ways plans. Two parcels in this corridor were leased by DeIDOT. You obtained the leases last month. You would do no further work on those properties but wish to work on new properties to acquire the right of way.

C. SR26 Local Roadway Improvements: Century began preparing construction and right of way plans in 2002. The work was shelved until February 2005, when Century was told to proceed. In June 2005, Century was given a stop work order. In February 2006, funds were identified, and Century was told to continue. Your only involvement was in early 2003, when you and others were assigned to the project as points of contact for property owners in the area. Your involvement was to attend a public workshop in March 2003, where you, and others, met with property owners at an initial briefing on the corridor work. At that time, all persons in the zip code of the area were invited. You answered calls from some prospective sellers of a right of way. Your involvement with the project ended late in 2003. You did not negotiate with any owners to acquire property; did not inspect properties, etc. Subsequently, DeIDOT decided it would start using private companies for the right of way acquisitions. Contracts were issued and Century was selected.

We considered the two SR 26 projects together. Former employees may not be involved State matters if they: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation; or were (3) otherwise directly and materially responsible. We recognize that in each situation, you did not provide the "full services" of your State job on these projects. In other words, your participation was limited. On the mainline project, you obtained two leases for DeIDOT and had no other involvement. Regarding the local roads, you participated in one workshop as part of a team of DeIDOT employees who presented the conceptual plans of a design by a different company, which later handed over the package to Century. After the workshop, you fielded some phone calls from possible sellers and had no other involvement. Later, the project was cancelled. When it was taken off the shelf, Century was selected for the contract, including acquisition rights and

has now finalized the plans.

We have held that for the post-employment work to be the same “matter” there must be a substantial overlap between the work for the State and for the private enterprise. *Commission Op. No. 96-75*. In this instance, it is clear that the SR26 projects were State matters in which you were involved. While that involvement may be limited, it could well be seen by the public as a situation where it “raises suspicion” that a violation may have occurred. *29 Del. C. § 5806(a)*.

To avoid such suspicion, we look at whether the literal application of the law is necessary to serve the public purpose. *29 Del. C. § 5807(a)*. A literal application of the law would mean you could not work on the SR 26 projects. However, the public purpose of the Code is to not only ensure that the public trust is not being violated, but also to not unduly circumscribe the activities of officers and employees of the State. *29 Del. C. § 5802(1) and (3)*. Here, no facts suggest that the public trust would be violated. Century has worked with DeIDOT, which had decided that it will pursue right of way acquisitions through private contractors and has no objection to you working for Century on acquisitions. Further, as noted above, your work on the projects was limited, and no facts suggest that your particular work on the projects would give Century any unfair advantage over other competitors. Independent of any action by you, it was awarded the contracts, and no facts indicate you used your public office to assist them in acquiring those contracts. Moreover, as waivers become a matter of public record, the public will know the reasons you are allowed to work on those projects.

Original Signed by Chair Paul Brumbaugh

01-21 – Post Employment—Limiting Exposure to ‘Matters Involving the State’: A State employee asked if employment as the Director of Nursing at a long-term care facility would violate the post-employment provision. Based on the following law and facts, the Commission concluded that the conduct would not violate that provision as long as the former employee was removed from activities related to the former Division’s survey of the facility, as indicated below.

The Director of Nursing of a long-term care facility was responsible for oversight of the delivery of care and nursing services to the clients. The former employee’s State job did not involve oversight of the delivery of care and nursing services to clients. Thus, the former employee was not “directly and materially responsible” for that matter while employed by the State. Also, most of the day-to-day work with the private facility would not involve any State contact. Thus, for the most part, the Director would not deal with “matters involving the State.”

As a State compliance nurse, the former employee was on the team which surveyed long-term care facilities, on a periodic basis. Normally, a facility’s Director of Nursing would be involved with the team during the survey. However, as the former employee gave an opinion and was directly and materially responsible for such matters as a State compliance nurse, to avoid a conflict, the Nursing Director would need to avoid any contact with the State’s survey team. Rather, the facility’s quality assurance nurses and the head of the facility would assume those responsibilities. Thus, the former employee would not “represent or otherwise assist” the private facility during the survey.

We understood that the survey team used the agency's rules and regulations to determine if there was a problem. It only identified the problem related to the rules and regulations. It did not identify the cause or the means of corrections. For example, the team could observe that clients had bedsores and note that as a problem. However, it did not offer reasons, such as the bedsores were caused by not turning the client often enough, or the bedsores were caused by lack of cleanliness. Nor did it identify the measures for correcting the problem, e.g., telling the facility to turn the patient every two hours. Finally, no facts showed that the survey identified problems outside the scope of the rules and regulations, and certainly, she may have to deal with such matters.

The former employee expected that nursing skills, acquired independently of the State job, rather than knowledge of the agency rules, would be the skill used as a Director of Nursing. Obviously, nursing skills were needed for the State job and the new job. In the State job, those skills were used to identify problems under the survey rules and regulations. However, those rules and regulations would not be a factor in all of the day-to-day activities a Director of Nursing would encounter, e.g., staff meetings, participating in decisions on whether a client should be moved to a hospital for immediate care, etc. Also, as it related to the State survey, the skills to be used would be on the other side of the coin. Rather than identifying a problem under the rules, the Director and staff would determine the cause and the necessary care to correct the problem--which was not a duty of those on the survey team.

The Code does not ban former State employees from working in the same occupation. Rather, it limits their occupational work in areas where they gave an opinion, conducted an investigation or was otherwise directly and materially responsible for matters involving the State. In a prior opinion dealing with a similar situation where a former employee served on a team that evaluated group homes, we held that as long as she did not deal with the team; was not present when the team inspected; her name was not used by the facility to influence inspectors; and she did not advocate for the facility before the inspectors, that her conduct would not violate the post-employment law. *Commission Op. No. 97-20*. The Commission is to be consistent in its opinions. 29 *Del. C.* § 5809(5). Accordingly, with the above restrictions, there was no violation of the post-employment law.

01-19 – Post Employment—Working on Same ‘Matter’ – Waiver Denied: Based on the following law and facts, the Commission concluded that it would violate the post-employment law if a State employee went to work for a private company to work on the same project she was working on for her Department. It also concluded that a waiver would not be appropriate.

The State employee wanted to work for a private enterprise on the same project and do the very same work she did on that project for the State. Such conduct would clearly mean that she would be working on the same matter for which she was “directly and materially responsible” in her State position. Such conduct would violate the post-employment law and would not be permissible unless a waiver were granted.

A. Consideration of Waiver

The Commission may grant a waiver if: (1) the literal application of the law is not necessary to serve the public purpose; or (2) there is an undue hardship on the State employee or State agency. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(a).

1. Is a literal application of the law needed to serve the public purpose?

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to instill confidence and respect in the public in the integrity of its government. 29 Del. C. § 5802. This is achieved by setting “specific standards” of conduct. *Id.* One of those specific standards is the post-employment law.

In discussing the federal post-employment law, which is similar to Delaware’s, the United States Congress noted that public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that government officials use their public office for personal gain, particularly after leaving the government. “*Ethics in Government Act*,” *Senate Report No. 95-1770*, p. 32. In extending its post-employment law from one year to two years on matters within the official’s former responsibility, Congress said the two-year requirement was justified because:

Today public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that officials use public office for personal gain, particularly after they leave government services. There is a sense that a “revolving door” exists between industry and government; that officials ‘go easy’ while in office in order to reap personal gain afterward.... There is a deep public uneasiness with officials who switch sides—.... Private clients know well that they are hiring persons with special skill and knowledge of particular departments and agencies. That is also the major reason for public concern. *Id.*

Here, the very purpose of the law would be contravened if she were permitted to accept private employment to perform the exact same job. That is because the public could well see this as a “revolving door”. First, she walked into this State job untrained to do the particular work involved. She learned that skill at the agency’s expense as part of its contractual agreement with the private company to help train her. She said if she worked for the private contractor, she would walk back through the same door of the same office where she worked for the State; sit at the same desk; do the same work but get paid more than she would as a State employee. In addition to higher pay, she would receive company stock options, health benefits, etc. That would be in addition to the 15 years she had vested in a State pension. Besides the increased pay she would receive, the company would receive a financial benefit because it would get a “mark-up” if the agency used her as its hired consultant on this particular job. She said she wanted to go with the private company because she thought there would be better job opportunities and because the private company, like other consulting companies, could be more flexible in its hours than her State agency. Again, this could be viewed as using the “revolving door” to her personal advantage.

That is not to say that she could not leave the State and get a higher salary, better promotion opportunities, and more flexible hours. All of that could be available through the private company or any other firm *as long as* she did not work on the same project for which she was previously responsible. That gave her mobility to move to the private sector but stay within the legal restriction that is driven by the public concern. For example, the company’s representative said that the company was the largest firm of its type in the United States. He also said that it had projects other than this particular project. As she could still seek employment with the private company or another company without violating the Code, the Commission concluded that the literal application of the law was necessary to serve the public purpose.

2. Is there an “undue hardship” such that a waiver should be granted?

The Commission has previously held that an “undue hardship” is one which “is excessive” or is “more than required.” *Commission Op. No. 97-18 (citing Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, p. 1290 (10th ed. 1992))*. As already noted, she could accept employment with the company or any other private enterprise as long as she did not work, for two years, on matters for which she was responsible while employed by the State. Therefore, the Commission found that there was no undue hardship for her.

She said that if the agency had to select someone else the project “would just fall apart” because “you get to know people and you know their personalities” and it helps build “a working relationship with the contractor, which is sometimes not the easiest thing to do. And once they’re comfortable that you can do your job, well, they rely on you.” She added: “I think if I walked out now and they took somebody else and put them in there, it would cause workplace disharmony.” She had a financial interest in obtaining employment with the private company, and it had a financial interest in seeing her continue in the same job because they would receive a mark-up. That is not an “undue hardship” for her or the company. Further, the agency’s representative expressed no concern about the project “falling apart” or “workplace disharmony.” In fact, the private company’s representative, pointed out that when a State employee is doing the same work as a contract employee who makes more, that it “creates some havoc” and “there is animosity.” Thus, it appeared that if she walked out as a State employee and walked back into that same office the next day doing the same work as a consultant, that would cause the “workplace disharmony” which she said she wished to avoid.

The agency’s representative said she had the experience and did a good job, and that “it makes the most sense to have [her] continue to do the work since she’s already halfway through both of those construction projects and she already is up to speed on everything.” Certainly, it would make the most sense to have the person with the most knowledge and continuity perform the work. But, as previously noted, the very hardship imposed by the post-employment law--a former employee may not work on the same job for which they were responsible--is that the agency loses that knowledge, continuity, working relationship, etc. *Commission Op. No. 97-18*. While the Commission sympathized with the desire to have her continue doing the exact same DelDOT work, only as a private contractor, that was the very hardship imposed by the statute; it was not excessive. *Id.* As every former State employee could bring continuity and familiarity to performing the same duties for which they were responsible, if a waiver were granted solely on that basis, the former employee would always have an advantage over competitors for the contractual job. *Id.* That would defeat the purpose of the restriction.

The agency’s representative said he had a shortage of people within the State who could perform the particular type of work, which consisted of book entries and computer data entries. His options would be to hire a consultant other than her. He said that would be difficult because even the consultants did not have people with that particular type of experience on the agency’s jobs. However, she was not trained to do that particular type of work when she began the job. While workers in the private sector, who consult on such work, may not have experience with this particular agency, there was no indication that such people were not available to perform the job. The other option would be to do what he said he had been forced to do lately-- “to get people that might have some office experience but didn’t really have office experience in the [agency’s] environment. They’re not familiar with all the terminology and what we do out on [agency] projects.” Again, lack of familiarity of terminology did not mean they could not perform the computer and book work required. As there were other persons who could perform the job, the Commission could not find an “undue hardship.”

B. Conclusion

It would violate the clear language of the post-employment law if she accepted employment with the private company, within two years of leaving State employment, to work on the same project and perform the same work for which she was responsible as a State employee. A waiver was not appropriate as: (1) the literal application of the law was necessary to serve the public purpose; and (2) no facts substantiated an “undue hardship,” as other consultants were available.

01-16 – Post Employment—Consultant for a Marketing Group: A former State employee wanted to work as a consultant for a national organization which subcontracted with a research and marketing group. The Commission held that the conduct would not violate the post-employment law as someone other than the former employee would represent or otherwise assist those entities before her former agency.

The research and marketing company selected a national organization as a subcontractor to work on five pilot programs to help increase consumer awareness of information about long-term care (planning, financing, lifestyle choices, and information sources). One of the pilot programs was in Wilmington. The former State employee was asked to contract with the national organization to work on that program. For example, the former employee expected to contact private businesses to assist them in helping their employees understand the need for advanced planning for long-term care through such things as insurance policies, educational programs, etc. While employed by the State, she was not involved in assisting companies or their employees in understanding planning for long-term care. Also, her job did not entail trying to make consumers aware of the need to plan for long-term care, how to finance long-term care, etc., so that they would not have to rely on State services for their long-term care. Most of her consulting work would be through the State Chamber of Commerce to establish contacts in the business community to assist them with those issues for their employees. However, she expected that all employers would be targeted as part of the national campaign to increase awareness of planning for long-term care. Thus, there could be some State involvement. However, there were two other persons assigned to the Wilmington pilot program and if there was a need, they would handle any dealings with her former agency.

Based on those facts, she would not be representing or otherwise assisting the national organization or the research and marketing group on matters involving the State on which she gave an opinion, conducted an investigation, or for which she was otherwise directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State.

01-12 – Post Employment—What is ‘Directly and Materially Responsible’? A former Senior Level Executive Branch officer asked for guidance on representing or assisting various citizens’ groups sometime in the future. At the time of the request, no particular group or their needs had been identified. By law, the Commission must base its advisory opinions on a particular fact situation (29 *Del. C.* § 5807(c)) and be consistent in their opinions. 29 *Del. C.* § 5809(5). Thus, while no particular facts were available to render a final decision, the following information was provided as some guidance.

Generally, there is no trouble identifying matters on which one gave an opinion or conducted an investigation. Thus, the issue dealt more with the need for clarification of “otherwise directly and materially responsible” while employed by the State. The officer had

recognized that high-level State officers have a larger responsibility for the entire Department. The Commission considered the duties and powers given this individual in the statute creating the official's position. Under that law, the officer had extremely broad powers and duties. Thus, the statute would be a good starting point for determining if a matter was one for which the officer was "directly and materially responsible."

In a prior opinion, a high-level Senior Executive Officer was advised that because his statutory duties were broadly described, he should presume that he was directly and materially responsible for all the activities described in the statutory definition of his duties. However, he was not precluded from rebutting that presumption on specific projects. *Commission Op. No. 91-10*. Similarly, once this officer had a particular situation in mind, the facts could be placed within the framework of the statutory duties, and then, if necessary, the officer could return to the Commission for an opinion.

01-07 – Post Employment—Waiver Denied: The Commission was asked to grant a blanket waiver of the post-employment law on the basis that a former State officer said that he would not be able to obtain employment in the State without a waiver. Based on the following law and facts, the Commission held that a blanket waiver was not appropriate. Rather, it concluded that the officer's employment required curtailment of certain activities to ensure compliance with the post-employment law. However, that decision did not preclude him from returning to the Commission for further guidance or requesting reconsideration of the waiver, based on specific facts which could arise in the future.

The Commission may grant a waiver if the facts substantiate an "undue hardship." 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(a). Here, the facts did not substantiate the alleged hardship--that because of the limits of the post-employment law, he could not obtain a job in Delaware. In fact, he had been offered a job in Delaware. No facts substantiated, at the time of the request, that the private enterprise would not employ him with the limits imposed by the law. He had not talked to the company about the post-employment limits and asked if they would still hire him; rather, he simply told them he would seek a waiver. Without facts to substantiate that he would not be hired with those limits, the Commission could not find an "undue hardship."

The Commission understood [Employee's] concern about being able to move from the public sector to the private sector. That concern was incorporated into the Code because the stated purpose is to set specific standards to ensure confidence in government and also encourage citizens to assume public office and employment by not "unduly circumscribing their conduct." 29 *Del. C.* § 5802(3). Thus, in setting the post-employment standard, the General Assembly did not place a total ban on former employees representing or otherwise assisting a private enterprise on matters involving the State. It merely limited their activity in three discrete areas--where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation; or (3) was otherwise directly and materially responsible while employed by the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d).

This gives former employees the latitude to accept private employment and work for private enterprises in many ways without violating the Code. In his case, the facts indicated there was still much he could do for the private company without violating the law. First, the job required him to provide managerial oversight for the private enterprise's operations and activities, including identifying service needs, service development and implementation, and evaluations of service provided. Based on the description, those activities dealt with the private enterprise's internal and day-to-day operations and would not involve representing or assisting

the private enterprise on matters involving the State. As those activities did not include working on “matters involving the State,” then working on those activities would not violate the post-employment law. Second, he expected to get involved in educating communities about certain aspects of the private enterprise’s services. Again, no facts showed that such activities would entail “matters involving the State.” Thus, he was free to engage in that conduct. Third, he expected to work to raise funds for the private enterprise. That would be achieved by approaching private foundations, the federal government and the State. Dealing with private foundations, associations, and the federal government would not entail representing or otherwise assisting on “State matters.” Thus, he was free to seek funds from private foundations and the federal government.

Obtaining funding for the private enterprise **from the State** meant he would “represent or otherwise assist” the private enterprise “on matters involving the State.” The Commission then narrowed that representation/assistance down to whether it would be on “matters” where he gave an opinion; conducted an investigation; or was otherwise directly and materially responsible.

As an example, he said that the private enterprise received millions of dollars from the State under a contract with his agency. He said he would not negotiate or re-negotiate that contract with the State as that would be a “tremendous conflict of interest.” As a Senior level executive officer, the State contract was a responsibility of his agency. Because of his position, a contract of that magnitude was certainly his responsibility. Accordingly, he was correct in deciding to recuse himself on that matter. Similarly, the private enterprise wanted to seek money from a State source other than through the above-mentioned contract. While employed by the State, he chaired an Advisory Committee which recommended to the General Assembly and the Governor how to spend particular funds. If he represented or otherwise assisted the private enterprise in obtaining funding from that source, he would be dealing in matters where he: (1) **gave an opinion** on how to spend the money; and (2) **was directly responsible** for recommendations concerning that money. Such activity would violate the post-employment law. These two instances illustrated where he should draw the line in terms of soliciting funding or contracts from the State for his private enterprise.

That did not mean the private enterprise could not solicit funding or contracts with the State. Based on the above facts, it was successful in obtaining contracts in the past without his aid. It could continue to seek such contracts; it merely could not have him, for a period of two years, represent or otherwise assist it in endeavors for which he was directly and materially responsible as a State employee.

He also said that the private enterprise might want him to advocate for legislation and policies at the State and Federal level. The Commission noted again that any action on Federal matters was not within the purview of the State post-employment law. He was free to engage in those activities. At the State level, he said that the private enterprise had a government relations group and a lobbyist who did 96% of the lobbying. Consequently, he did not expect to have a lot of contact with State employees and the General Assembly along that line. However, an example he gave was that there could be a bill to change laws pertaining to an issue over which he had responsibility while employed by the State, and the private enterprise could ask him to go to the General Assembly and testify. The particular issue was one where he was responsible for targeting certain funding for that issue when he chaired the Advisory Committee. Moreover, in his State position, outside of chairing the committee, he and other senior level officials were asked to identify 10 areas of concerns for the State and the possible legislation he was speaking of, fit within those areas he had helped identify. Based on the information he

provided, it was logical that the type of legislation he thought they would want him to lobby on would result in implementing policies and spending State funds in areas for which he had been directly and materially responsible.

Conversely, if the “matter” pertained to issues in which he was not involved while employed by the State, he would not be precluded from working on that matter. An example he gave was an issue which would likely fall within in his agency’s area of responsibility, but it was not an issue while he was employed by the State; it was not a matter that was ever funded by the State; and it also apparently was not an issue that he instituted policies concerning, etc. Based on those facts, it did not appear that it would be a matter on which he gave an opinion, etc.

Obviously, neither he nor the Commission could foresee every possible situation that could arise in the next two years. Thus, as guidance to him on whether his activities would pose problems under the post-employment law, the Commission used these particular facts to assist him in complying with the post-employment provision. As issues arose, he was advised to review the post-employment law, this opinion, and if necessary, seek further advice from the Commission.

01-01 – Post Employment—Working on Open-Ended Contract: A State employee was involved two years ago in awarding a 3-year, open-ended contract. Under the contract, the selected contractor was to provide professional services for certain contract aspects after the agency identified a project. Since the award of that contract, the agency had identified 39 projects needing such studies or analyses. The State employee was involved in 21 of the projects as a manager. Regarding the remaining projects, he was in no manner involved. He asked what restrictions would apply if he went to work for the contractor.

As to the 21 projects in which he was involved, he could not represent or otherwise assist the private enterprise, as they were matters on which he gave an opinion and was otherwise directly and materially responsible. Regarding the 18 other projects, as he was not previously involved, he could represent or otherwise assist the company on those matters.

He also asked if he could represent or otherwise assist the company if it was awarded future contracts. Specifically, he asked if he could work on: (1) an open-ended contract that he expected to be awarded in the Spring; and (2) other future contracts, as yet unidentified, in which he would be involved in the marketing aspect of the company.

As to both matters, he said they would be new contracts on which he had no previous involvement while employed by the State. To the extent those contracts would be on matters in which he was not involved, he would not be prohibited from representing or otherwise assisting the private company. However, as the exact terms of the contracts were unknown, if those contracts should, by their terms, encompass matters on which he was involved during his State employment, then he would be restricted from working on those matters. For example, if a project identified in the current open-ended contract, were incorporated in the new open-ended contract to be issued in the Spring, then, consistent with this opinion, he would not be permitted to work on that matter. As new contracts are issued, he was advised to review the post-employment law, refer to this opinion for guidance, and if necessary, return to the Commission for additional advice.

00-49 – Post Employment—No Work with Former Agency: Based on the following law and facts, the Commission concluded that employment with a private firm which contracted with a former State employee's former Division, would not violate the post-employment provision as the private employer was not going to assign him to work on projects with his former Division.

[Employee's] former agency contracted with a private enterprise as the provider of certain network matters. While employed by the Division, he participated in that contract by: (1) putting together the contract requirements; (2) selecting the contractor; and (3) monitoring the contract. Based on those facts, he gave an opinion and was otherwise directly and materially responsible for the contract while employed by the State. However, at his job with the private enterprise, he would not be assigned to work on any projects with his former Division, and the proposed scope of his private employment responsibilities would not include those network related tasks in Delaware. The Commission has previously held that where an individual gave an opinion on a State contract but did not work on that "matter" after leaving State employment to work for the contractor, then there was no violation of the post-employment law. *Commission Op. No. 94-15.*

00-46 – Post Employment—Contracting with Former School District – Waiver Granted:
NOTE: When a waiver is granted, as in the case below, the proceedings before the Commission become a matter of public record. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a).

Dear Dr. Brandenberger:

The Cape Henlopen School District asked if it would violate the post-employment provision if Dr. Hubert Mock privately contracted to be the Assistant Principal at Lewes Middle School, when less than two years before he served as the Principal at Milton Middle School before retiring. If a violation is found, the School District asks for a waiver. Based on the following law and facts, the Commission concluded that the contract would violate the post-employment provision. However, it agreed to grant a limited waiver based on the School District's statement regarding the hardships it has had in obtaining an Assistant Principal. The waiver is limited to the remaining time in the present semester. However, the School District is not precluded from seeking an extension if it can show due diligence in trying to find someone else to hire as the Assistant Principal.

I. Applicable Law

Post-Employment Restriction: No person who has served as a state employee, state officer or honorary state official shall represent or otherwise assist any private enterprise on any matter involving the State, for a period of 2 years after termination of his employment or appointed status with the State, if he gave an opinion, conducted an investigation or otherwise was directly and materially responsible for such matter in the course of his official duties as a state employee, officer or official. Nor shall any former state employee, state officer or honorary state official disclose confidential information gained by reason of his public position nor shall he otherwise use such information for personal gain or benefit. *29 Del. C. § 5805(d).*

Waiver Provision: The Commission may grant a waiver to the specific prohibitions if it determines that the literal application of such prohibition in a particular

case is not necessary to achieve the public purposes of this chapter or would result in an undue hardship on any employee, officer, official or state agency. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a).

II. Facts

In the last week of August, a week before the 2000-2001 school year started, three assistant principals in the Cape Henlopen School District resigned and took employment elsewhere in the State. After advertising and interviewing, the District was only able to replace one assistant principal at an elementary school, leaving the assistant principal-ships at the high school and Lewes Middle School open. The four candidates interviewed for the middle school did not possess the required qualifications, and the candidates for the high school position withdrew their applications. A district office administrator was transferred into the high school principal-ship to do "double duty" as an instructional supervisor and as principal. Other teachers holding the required certificates to be an assistant principal were teaching in "critical skills." The School District said it did not intend to pull those teachers from its teaching staff because of the need for teachers in those areas and because of the impact on the students and parents if a teacher were pulled during the school year. Additionally, none of those teachers had applied for the position when it was announced. The School District said it did not want to bring in such person for a limited time while it sought a qualified candidate who would take the position for the long-term. The School District said it planned to re-announce the position in the spring, as it believed the candidate market would be more plentiful at that time. It also said it was unlikely that qualified applicants would want to leave their positions at other schools at this stage of the school year. It said that it had not considered the likelihood of going out and looking for contractors for the position. According to the correspondence, Leading & Learning, Inc. contracted with the School District and Dr. Mock to provide the services of Assistant Principal at Lewes. Leading & Learning, Inc., is the name placed on reserve by Hubert D. Mock, according to the Secretary of State's Division of Corporation's office, but it is not registered as a corporation. Dr. Mock was approached by the School District to serve as the Lewes Middle School assistant principal. Dr. Mock has come out of retirement at least twice in the past to accept such substitute jobs and has been serving in this present position in a reported-time basis. He apparently does not want to come out of retirement again; nor does he want to continue in a reported-time basis because once he earns \$10,300, by law, he will experience a \$3 to \$1 pension offset.

III. Application of Law to Facts

A "private enterprise" means "any activity conducted by any person, whether conducted for profit or not for profit...." 29 Del. C. § 5804(8). Accordingly, this Commission has held that a private contract of employment with the State constitutes a private enterprise. *Commission Op. No. 94-10*. Consistent with that ruling, the Commission finds that Dr. Mock, who seeks to contract with the School District, through his own activity or through the auspices of the corporate name reserved by him, is acting on behalf of that private enterprise in seeking a contract and fulfilling that contract which deals with matters involving the State. As he is acting as a private enterprise, the next issue is whether his representation is on matters for which he was directly and materially responsible while employed by the State. "Matters" are defined as "any application, petition, request, business dealing or transaction of any sort." 29 Del. C. § 5804(6). This Commission has held that where there is a substantial overlap between the matters worked on while employed by the State and the post-employment matters involving the

State, then there is a violation of the post-employment provision. *Commission Op. No. 96-46*.

To ascertain if there is a substantial overlap, the Commission compares the duties and responsibilities during employment to the post-employment activities. Here, Dr. Mock, while employed by the State, was the principal of a middle school. He now seeks to contract to be an assistant principal in the same School District over students in the same school grades. The job description for an assistant principal state that the job goal is: "To assist the principal in providing school-wide leadership and to learn the role of the principal." Additionally, the performance responsibilities are to: (1) "Assist the principal in the overall administration of the school;" and (2) "Serve as the principal in the absence of the regular principal." These facts indicate a clear overlap of responsibilities between a principal and an assistant principal. Further, in comparing the job description of the principal and assistant principal, the performance responsibilities for both jobs include overlapping responsibilities in such areas as scheduling, budget requests, inventories, safety inspections and drills, student attendance, maintaining discipline, supervising teachers and departments, and maintaining relationships with students, parents, and faculties, etc. It is logical that there is an overlap since the goal of an assistant principal's job is to "learn the role of the principal."

Based on those facts, a majority of the Commission concluded that there was a sufficient overlap to conclude that Dr. Mock would be working on matters under the private contract for which he was responsible while working for the School District.

IV. Should a Waiver Be Granted?

(1) Is the literal application of the law necessary to serve the public purpose?

The purpose of the post-employment statute is to instill the public's confidence in the integrity of its government. *Commission Op. No. 99-15*. In the context of the post-employment law, public confidence has been weakened by a widespread perception that government officials use their office for personal gain, particularly after leaving the government. *Id.* The main reason for public concern is that former employees may use information, influence, and access acquired during government service for improper and unfair advantage in later dealings with the government. *Id.*

Here, the School District, faced with the need for an assistant principal just as the school semester started, sought out Dr. Mock to fill the position. He was hired on a reported-time basis. If he continued in a reported-time basis there would be no violation of the post-employment law, because he would not be considered a "former employee," but a current employee. *Ethics Bulletin 007*. He does not want to remain in a reported-time basis because as a retiree, he must have a pension offset of \$1 for every \$3 he earns above \$10,300. 29 *Del. C. § 5502(a)(3)*. Every State retiree is subject to that pension offset if they return to work for the State. A waiver, which would permit him to avoid the pension offset, would mean he receives the full salary of an assistant principal, plus his full pension. The public may see his request to avoid the pension offset as turning his knowledge of the job into a situation of personal gain that, by law, other State retirees do not have. Thus, the literal application of the law is necessary to serve the public purpose.

(2) Is there an undue hardship on the former employee?

"Undue hardship" means "more than is required" or is "excessive." *Commission Op. No. 97-18*. The alleged hardship on the former employee is that he would suffer a pension offset if he cannot privately contract. We have held that the very hardship imposed on any State retiree who is re-hired by the State is that they must suffer the pension offset. *Commission Op. No. 00-26*. The statutorily imposed offset is no greater for Dr. Mock than any other State retiree. Moreover, such offsets are not unique to persons other than State retirees, as the State offset is based on the Social Security earnings limits for retirees under that system. 29 *Del. C.* § 5502(a)(3). Accordingly, we cannot conclude that the pension offset for Dr. Mock is "excessive."

(3) Is there an undue hardship on the agency?

Based on the details referred to in the statement of facts, e.g., three assistant principals resigning right at the beginning of the semester, lack of qualified applicants, etc., we conclude that the School District established an "undue hardship," and therefore grant a waiver on that basis. We note that Dr. Mock could be hired without violating the Code, e.g., coming out of retirement as he has in the past, or being paid on a reported-time basis. Apparently, he is not agreeable to those options. Thus, if the School District is to use his services until it can find someone qualified, it would be by private contract. With those facts in mind, we place a time limit on the waiver of the remaining time in this semester to allow the School District to seek certified candidates in-house, or through other hiring options available to the agency. In the event the District cannot find a qualified applicant in that time, it is not precluded from seeking an extension if it can show due diligence in trying to resolve the matter.

V. Conclusion

Based on the above facts and law, we conclude that contracting with Dr. Mock as the assistant principal in the same school district and at the same grade level where he was previously principal, and where there is a substantial overlap in the responsibilities of a principal and an assistant principal, would violate the post-employment provision. However, a limited waiver for the time frame of this semester is granted without prejudice to seek an extension.

Original signed by the Chair

00-41 – Post Employment—Project Manager: A State employee asked if accepting employment with an engineering firm would violate the post-employment law, as the firm was a consultant to the Department where he worked. Based on the following facts and law, the Commission concluded that the proposed conduct would not violate the Code.

The firm wanted to hire [Employee] as its project manager. Among other things, it wanted him to manage two agreements it had with his former agency. He did not participate in the interview or the selection of the firm for either agreement or manage the agreements after the firm was selected. Those matters were handled by a project manager in a separate section of his agency. However, he had some involvement in the agreements as follows:

(A) Agreement 1: Under this agreement, the firm was the sole source provider of certain surveys. When surveys were needed, the section he worked for made the request through the agency's project manager. Because he worked in the section, he had occasion to request surveys. He could not select the provider as that was predetermined by the agreement, in which he did not participate. He also did not decide how costs would be controlled or paid, etc. Rather, when his section requested the survey through the project manager, the manager contacted the firm for the work, reviewed the proposed fee, gave notice to proceed, and authorized payment. As part of the former employee's function, he reviewed the survey after its completion. However, he had no expertise in conducting such surveys, so he could not look for accuracy or in any way evaluate the firm's work. Rather, he checked for certain standard information, e.g., tax or project numbers, etc. Technical or quality reviews of the survey were the project manager's function.

(B) Agreement 2: Under this program, another State agency worked with him in buying an easement. He had no contact with the firm and the purchase had no material impact on the firm's agreement with his agency. Again, oversight of the agreement as it related to the firm (fiscal, administrative or managerial) was the project manager's responsibility.

Based on those facts, as to Agreements 1 and 2, he did not give an opinion, conduct an investigation, nor was he otherwise directly and materially responsible for those matters. He also asked about two other responsibilities he expected to have in his job with the firm. In the first instance, he would not be representing the firm before the State. Rather, he would represent it before local governments. The Commission has held that where the representation/assistance of the private employer was before local governments, not the State, that there was no violation of the post-employment law. *Commission Op. No. 98-12*. In the second instance, he was not sure which contracts, if any, the company would want him to respond to. Without the relevant facts, the Commission could not render a decision. *Commission Op. No. 96-74*. He was advised to seek additional guidance, if necessary, if such contracts arose.

00-36 – Post Employment—Contract to Perform Former State Job – Waiver Denied: A State employee sought to privately contract with her former Division to perform the same job she had while employed by the State. Such conduct would violate the post-employment law, so she sought a waiver. Based on the following law and facts, a waiver was denied.

The post-employment law tries to strike a balance so as not to discourage public service. Thus, post-employment contracts are prohibited for two years only if the post-employment work with the State agency deals with matters on which the former State employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation; or (3) was otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State. *29 Del. C. § 5805(d)*.

In a 1996 opinion to the same individual, the Commission held that her proposed post-employment contract with her Division came within the prohibitions § 5805(d), but she was granted a waiver. That waiver was no longer in effect and the Commission did not grant a new one. Waivers may only be granted if the literal application of the law is not necessary to serve the public purpose of the statute or there is an undue hardship on the agency or the employee. The Commission is required to be consistent in their interpretation of the law. *29 Del. C. § 5809(5)*. Applying the waiver provision, we have denied a waiver where an agency had a program in operation for a number of years and wanted to contract with a former employee to work on the same matter, but the agency had not fully addressed options that could result in no

violation of the Code. *Commission Op. No. 99-15*. In that case, the agency project began a number of years before the employee left State service. When she was ready to retire, it had not fully explored rehiring her under such options as part-time, temporary, or casual/seasonal as permitted under the personnel laws. *Id.* Moreover, it had had years to train a replacement, but had not worked to ensure that the replacement was trained. *Id.* The agency sought a waiver on the basis that it needed to have her work on the program because of her knowledge and expertise and it needed her to train her replacement. *Id.*

Here, the former State employee and her former Division said that her expertise was needed because of her knowledge of a particular program, and the agency needed her to train others. However, as in the above referenced opinion, the program had existed for years, at least since 1996, when the original opinion was issued. The waiver was granted in 1996 on the representation that: she planned to leave because of medical reasons in January 1997; the agency might not be able to reduce the number of hours she worked; and if it could not reduce the hours, it wanted the option to contract with her. The waiver was granted it on that limited basis. *Commission Op. No. 96-60*.

In the most recent request, she said she received the 1996 waiver "with the understanding that the waiver would only be exercised if [the Division] was not able to change [her] status to part-time." She did not leave in January 1997 but continued to work for the Division until June 1999. During that time the Division did, in fact, reduce her hours to 30 per week. In June 1999, she then exercised her waiver, and entered a one-year contract with the agency to work for 20 hours a week. During that time, an employee was hired to replace her. The former employee said she worked with her replacement for a year. Also, a person was assigned to another facility to handle the program at that location.

The former employee said: "it was just not possible to pass all of the information on to key staff within [the agency] within one year." However, it had not been just one year. The former employee and the agency had known since at least 1996 that she was considering leaving because of her alleged medical condition. The agency got her work hours reduced to accommodate her medical condition even as the program continued to grow. In February 1999, she submitted notice that she planned to leave in June 1999. In June, she accepted a private contract to perform the program work on a 20-hour per week basis. Thus, she and the agency had years for her to pass on information. Yet, she specifically stated that there was some information that she still had not passed on to the agency, even after all those years.

Post-employment laws were passed because the public's confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that government officials use their office for personal gain, particularly after leaving the government. "*Ethics in Government Act*," *United States Senate Report No. 95-170*, p.32. The main reason for public concern is that former employees may use information, influence, and access acquired during government service for improper and unfair advantage in later dealings with that department or agency. *Id.* Here, the public could well suspect that if in all those years she did not "pass on" all the information that the agency needed, that she was using information acquired during government service to place her in a position to control the knowledge and the agency then had to rely on her through a contract to provide it with the information needed by its employees.

Further, the agency had made little, if any, effort to obtain the services it needed in a manner that would not violate the Code. First, it could hire her in a part-time position. The agency stated that it had not found an "appropriate" part-time position that related to her career field. However, when the agency needed to convert her State position to a part-time permanent

30-hour position, it was able to do so. When she accepted the private contract and the agency then needed to convert her position back to a full-time position, it also did so. Now, [the agency] stated that it would take a number of weeks to get a casual/seasonal position. However, it had been on notice since her contract expired at the end of June that it could hire her as a casual/seasonal, but no facts indicated that those weeks were used to obtain the temporary or casual/seasonal position. The agency's representative said at the Commission's meeting that not only had the program existed for many years, but that the federal government had required States to implement the program. Logically, if the States had to implement the program, and it had existed for many years, it seemed there would be other persons qualified to do the work with whom the agency could contract. Yet no facts indicated that the agency ever made an effort to contract with anyone but her. This could raise suspicion that as a former employee she was in a position to obtain a "leg up" on others who were equally qualified but were not given the chance to compete. This goes to the very heart of the reason for the post-employment law.

She stated that there will be an "undue hardship" if she could not contract with her former Division because her private business would lose \$30,000 a year for the 20 hours she worked per week. The Commission has held that "undue hardship" means "more than required" or "excessive." *Commission Op. Nos. 97-18 and 99-15*. The very hardship imposed by the statute is that as the law precludes former employees from working on matters for which they were responsible, then they could not expect that the State would still be a source of substantial income to them to perform their former job. It is the hardship any former employee must experience. Moreover, she said she had already contracted with another State agency and planned to contract with another Division of her former agency. Thus, it did not appear that she was without income as a result of not being able to contract with her former Division. While she pointed to the fact that she was in an automobile accident in 1994, and that was why she left State service, she did not claim that she could not work as a result of those injuries. In fact, she anticipated seeking even more contracts. Rather, it was the financial loss she claimed as a hardship. Nothing in the Code of Conduct prohibited her from contracting with private sources or local or federal agencies. In fact, under appropriate circumstances, contracting with the State was permissible, as long as the contract did not involve matters where she gave an opinion, conducted an investigation or was otherwise directly and materially responsible.

The Commission did not grant a waiver for her to contract with her former Division because: (1) the literal application of the law was necessary to serve the public purpose; (2) no facts indicated an "undue" hardship on her; and (3) the facts did not substantiate an undue hardship on the agency because there were still legal means of achieving its needs without violating the law, either by: (a) finding a casual/seasonal position for her; or (b) finding another contractor.

00-34 – Post Employment—Employment as a Lobbyist: A former General Assembly employee asked if he could lobby on behalf of his private employer on matters before the General Assembly in certain areas. Based on the following law and facts, a majority of the Commission's quorum concluded that his post-employment activities would not violate the post-employment law.

The Commission is required to be consistent in its opinions. 29 *Del. C.* § 5809(5). The post-employment law does not prohibit representation before an individual's former agency, unless the representation is in one of the three areas that trigger the provision--matters where the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation; or (3) was otherwise directly and materially responsible for matter while employed by the State. *Commission Op. No.*

96-75. Thus, the issue was whether his representation as a lobbyist on matters affecting his private employer would constitute representing it on "matters" in those three areas. In deciding if the representation was on the same "matter," Courts look to whether there is a substantial overlap in the facts regarding the matters worked on for the government and the matters on which the individual will represent the private enterprise. *Id.* (citing *United States v. Medico*, 7th Cir., 784 F.2d 840 (1986); *CACI, Inc. v. United States*, Fed. Circ. 719 F.2d 1567 (1983)).

Like the federal Courts, Delaware's Courts look to the particular matter on which the State official worked to see if there is an overlap with his private representation. *Beebe v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, Del. Super., C.A. No. 94A-01-004, Terry, J. (June 30, 1995), *aff'd*, Del. Supr., No. 304, Veasey, C. J. (January 29, 1996). Here, as in *Beebe*, the former employee wished to represent a private enterprise before his former State entity. The "matters" on which he would represent the private employer related to agriculture, manufacturing, and taxes. As a State employee, he was an Administrative Assistant. He supported the General Assembly members on such things as constituent relations, liaison with other government offices, issue research, and other administrative needs, as directed by the legislators. He had "little, if anything" to do with agricultural issues and did not recall working on manufacturing issues while employed by the State. Under Delaware law, he was entitled to a "strong, legal presumption of honesty and integrity." *Beebe, supra*. Thus, based on his statements, he did not give an opinion, conduct an investigation, nor was he directly and materially responsible for matters relating to agriculture and manufacturing. Regarding tax issues, while working in the General Assembly, he might, for example, be asked by a member for the effect on a family of four if certain tax changes were passed. He would contact the Controller General's office and ask it to develop a formula for determining the impact. If research were needed, he contacted the Legislative Council's Research Division. He gave the information from those entities to General Assembly members to use in speeches and/or he might write a press release about the proposed bill and its impact. In his private job, he would reach out to businesses or people in the community on tax issues. His private employer might develop a policy on the impact on those persons and have him contact the General Assembly to advocate the company's policy. No facts indicated that as a State employee he was responsible for reaching out to businesses or people in the community on tax issues, nor did he research tax issues or develop formulas for determining tax impacts on businesses or citizens. Thus, based on the facts provided, it did not appear that he was directly and materially responsible for those matters.

The Commission also advised him that he must register with this Commission within five days of qualifying as a lobbyist. 29 *Del. C.* § 5832. His employer was required to complete an employer's authorization form at the time of his registration or not later than 15 business days after his registration. 29 *Del. C.* § 5833.

00-29 – Post Employment—Former Board Member to Represent Clients Before Board:

An appointee to a State Board, which the Code of Conduct defines as an "honorary State official," wanted to represent persons who opposed a private company's application for a certain license from the Board on which he previously served. Based on the following law and facts, the Commission concluded that his representation would not violate the post-employment law.

The honorary State official had resigned his appointment to a Board which, by statute, was responsible for such matters as granting, refusing, and canceling certain licenses. (Citation omitted). A private company was applying for a license and the clients he sought to represent opposed the company's application. While serving on the Board, he was not involved in reviewing or otherwise considering the particular application.

Delaware Courts have held that where an appointee left a State Board and later represented an applicant before his former Board, he was not representing or assisting his client on a "matter" for which he was "directly and materially responsible" while on the Board as he had no part in reviewing the particular applications pending before his former Board. *Beebe Medical Center v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, Del. Super., C.A. No. 94A-01-004, Terry, J. (June 30, 1995), *aff'd*, Del. Supr., No. 304, Veasey, C. J. (January 29, 1996). Consistent with *Beebe*, the Commission held that because he was not involved in the private company's application while on the Board, his representation would not violate the post-employment law based on those facts. He did say that a principal of the company had applied for a number of licenses from the Board, but not as an employee of that particular company. He was on the Board when the principal of the company applied for at least one license. He also said the Board took disciplinary action against the principal regarding one of his licenses. The former appointee did not recall participating in either action. Also, he asked the principal's attorney if his client recalled his participation in any disciplinary proceeding. The principal had no recollection of his participation. The former official said that if he were involved in such matter, it might raise a different issue. Delaware cases have held that past violations of certain license holders are obviously relevant when they seek another license. (Citation omitted). Thus, if he were involved in a violation decision on the license holder, it could raise a different issue. The former appointee had asked the Board's staff to search its data bank to see if he was involved in matters related to the applicant company or its principals but had not obtained the results by the time of the Commission meeting. For purposes of the advisory opinion, the Commission presumed that his recollection and that of the principal was correct--that he was not involved in matters related to the applicant company or its principals. The Commission did not speculate on what the result could be if the search revealed other information. Rather, once he obtained the information, he was advised to reassess his situation. He was referred to *Beebe* and Commission decisions on other post-employment issues. Specifically, he was referred to *Commission Op. No. 96-75*, which discussed the meaning of "matter" in the post-employment law and cited several federal cases interpreting "matter" as used in a similar federal post-employment law. At the Commission's meeting, he also said he would like to represent other clients before the Board. The Commission must base its opinions on a "particular fact situation." 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(c). Without the facts, there could be no ruling. For guidance, he was referred to the *Beebe* case and PIC's synopses on post-employment issues. If he needed specific guidance regarding a particular fact situation he could return to the Commission for a decision.

00-27 – Post Employment—Former Case Manager Working for State Contractor: A State employee asked if she could accept employment with a company which contracted with the State. She was not involved with the contract program while employed by with the State. The Commission concluded that such employment would not violate the post-employment law.

As a State employee, she was not involved in preparing the contract or selecting the contractor. Thus, she did not give an opinion and was not directly and materially responsible for the preparation or award of the contract. Regarding the substance of her responsibilities as a State employee, she performed client evaluations; determined their eligibility; and was a case manager for clients in the program. As case manager, she obtained therapy services for the clients by working with their insurance companies and their primary care physicians. Under the State contract, the company she sought to work for was one of a number of contractors which provided therapy, but the decision on which contractor would be used was based on insurance

coverage programs. Some clients could be eligible for Medicaid, and she would refer families to the Medicaid program for a decision on eligibility.

In her job with the private company, she would not: perform development evaluations; manage cases of clients; or provide therapy services because she was not a therapist. Rather, she would be an in-house nurse educator, giving training to nurses and developing educational and orientation programs for nursing staff. Those activities were not part of the State contract with the company, nor was she responsible for such matters in her State job. The only connection between [Employee] and the clients in the program was that she could provide training to nurses providing care to State clients. Based on the above facts and law, her employment would not violate the post-employment law.

00-26 – Post Employment—Pension Offset is Not a Hardship: The Commission, based on the following law and facts, did not grant a waiver allowing a former State officer to violate the post-employment law when there was a legal means for the State to access his expertise without violating that law. The Commission found no "undue hardship" which would permit a waiver and concluded that the literal application of the law was necessary to serve the public purpose.

A State officer retired after many years with the State. During the last six years, he held a high-level position. It was stated that his expertise was needed for a smoother transition for the State officer who would assume his position. The officer selected to replace him had more than a decade of experience with the agency. According to the written request, there was "full faith and confidence in him." However, it stated that the former employee's experience "[wa]s unprecedented"; his advice was much valued; and his advice was needed on a fairly limited basis over the next couple of months. There were certain critical months when more of his assistance and advice would be needed. He would work on matters for which he was directly and materially responsible, so a waiver was sought to let him privately contract with the State to work on those matters because of his expertise.

(A) Is there an undue hardship on the State?

"Undue hardship" means "excessive or more than is required." *Commission Op. No. 97-18*. We have noted that the very hardship imposed by the post-employment law is the State loses the expertise of those who leave State employment. *Commission Op. Nos. 97-18, 99-15*. The individual had retired for health reasons and had been re-hired in a temporary position. Thus, the State could access his expertise during those "critical times" without violating the post-employment law by keeping him in the temporary position as provided by State law. See, *Ethics Bulletin 007*. In a prior opinion, an agency said it would be "dangerous" to not have [an employee's] years of experience in overseeing a critical contract. Because the agency could have his expertise without violating the post-employment law, no waiver was granted. *Commission Op. No. 00-17*. Here, too, the State's need for [Employee's] expertise could be met without violating the law. Thus, there was no "undue hardship" for the agency.

(B) Is there an undue hardship on the former employee?

The former employee had agreed to work with the State on those matters "as a favor and due to his loyalty." It was stated that this was not a case where the former employee necessarily needed a job. Also, while his doctors concluded that he could not work full-time,

they had not said that his health precluded him from working the number of hours that were anticipated by him--40 hours a month. Moreover, this was not a situation where, as a result of being hired as a temporary, he would not receive health benefits because, as a retiree, he could still participate in the State's health benefits program. Rather, he did not want a pension offset. He said: "I don't feel I want to suffer and that means I can only work 4 hours a week or less to stay out from under the penalty." He said that if the earnings limit in the first retirement year were based on a yearly rather than a monthly limit, he would not seek a waiver. Thus, the main "hardship" which limited his hours if he were re-hired as a temporary employee was the pension offset law, not his health.

First, while the General Assembly prohibited former employees from privately contracting to work on certain matters under the post-employment law, it gave such employees a means to work for the State on such matters in a temporary status. However, the General Assembly concluded that if a retiree returned, they must have a pension offset. 29 Del. C. § 5502(a)(3). The only exception was if they returned as a registration or election official or as a juror. 29 Del. C. § 5502(b). There was no exemption based on the reason for retirement, such as health reasons. If the General Assembly felt there should be other exceptions it would have added them to § 5502(b).

Second, the Commission did not administer that law. *Commission Op. No. 00-17*. The Commission could not waive laws over which it had no jurisdiction, including the pension offset law. *Id.* The very hardship imposed by that law on any retiree, other than those exempted, is that they must "suffer" the pension offset. *Id.* Even if the law could be waived, that action would be inconsistent with many prior opinions which have held that the very hardship which is imposed by law is not an "undue hardship." *Commission Op. Nos. 97-18; 97-41; 99-15; 99-21; 00-02 and 00-17*. Thus, the pension offset could not be waived as an "undue hardship" even if the Commission had jurisdiction over that law. It was stated that [Employee] was not seeking a waiver of the pension offset law. However, granting a waiver of the post-employment law would have exactly that effect.

(C) Is the literal application of the law necessary to achieve the public purpose?

Post-employment laws, like other conflict of interest laws, are meant to insure public confidence in the integrity of the government. "*Ethics in Government Act, United States Senate Report No. 95-170*, p. 32. Public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that government officials use their office for personal gain, particularly after leaving the government. *Id.* The main reason for public concern is that former employees may use information, influence, and access acquired during government service for improper and unfair advantage in later dealings with the government. *Id.* at 33. Those concerns are addressed by a "cooling off period" in post-employment laws. *Id.*

Similarly, the Delaware Legislature said the Code of Conduct is to insure public confidence in the integrity of State government. 29 Del. C. § 5802. To instill that confidence, it set a two-year "cooling off period." 29 Del. C. § 5805(d). That prohibition limits the actual or perceived unfair advantage in subsequent dealings with the State. *Commission Op. No. 97-18*. We noted those public concerns in *Ethics Bulletin 007*, when we informed agencies that there was a legal means (temporary employment) established by the General Assembly to access those who left full-time State employment. In providing that access, the General Assembly set certain legal limits on: (1) the individual's ability to financially capitalize; or (2) exercising undue influence for an improper and unfair advantage in later dealings with their government. *Ethics Bulletin 007*, p. 2 & 3. One legal limit cited, which helped ensure those purposes, was the

pension offset law. *Id.* The effect of that limit was that temporary employment did not hold the same financial enticements as a private contract. *Id.*

Assuming the former employee worked 40 hours a month for \$50 per hour, he would earn \$845 in hourly wages for the first 16.8 hours. Beyond those wages, he would receive his full pension (unknown amount). For the remaining 23.2 hours, he would earn \$1160, subject to recoupment of \$580 at the end of the calendar year as the offset. This resulted in \$1,425 in hourly wages, plus whatever he received as his State pension. If a waiver were granted, he would earn \$2,005 per month plus his entire pension. It was because of that financial difference that he did not want to "suffer" the pension offset. Avoiding that pension offset would certainly be seen as financially capitalizing. Moreover, he wanted a waiver from the Code of Conduct so that he could circumvent another law. The Commission has previously held that where the proposed conduct would appear to contravene other laws, such conduct does not instill the public's confidence in its government. *Commission Op. No. 98-31.* As that is the very purpose of the Code, the literal application of the law was necessary to achieve the public purpose.

The written request for a waiver stated that for the Commission to "dictate an arrangement that would penalize him financially would not serve the public purpose." The Commission did not dictate that arrangement. The pension offset was dictated by the General Assembly, and as the Commission could not use its waiver authority to undo the arrangement that the General Assembly believed was appropriate for State retirees who returned to work for the State, it would be up to the General Assembly to amend § 5502 if it decided it was necessary.

00-25A – Post Employment—Insufficient Facts: A State employee asked if it would violate the post-employment law if he privately contracted to give training to a number of State agencies after he retired. A number of agencies discussed possibly contracting with him, but at the time there were no known details about those possible contracts. The Commission must base its opinion on the particular facts. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(c). As to those "possible contracts," there were no facts on which to base an opinion.

00-25B – Post Employment—Applies to Matters “Involving the State”: A State employee had worked for two different agencies during his State career. While employed by those agencies, he developed and gave training programs to a number of other State agencies. He did not intend to contract with the two agencies which had employed him. Thus, he would not represent or assist his private enterprise before his own State agencies. However, he asked if he could privately contract to give training to another State agency. Based on the following law and facts, the Commission decided that such a contract would violate the post-employment law.

The post-employment law does not restrict the representation of former employees only to matters "involving the State agency by which they were employed." Rather, it restricts the conduct on matters "involving the State." Had the General Assembly intended to limit the post-employment conduct only to dealing with the State agency which employed the individual, it could have done so because it clearly restricted the representation of current employees "before the State agency by which they are employed." See, 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(b). To give meaning to the phrase "involving the State" the Commission recognized that State employees could be responsible for matters which involved more than their employing agency. That was true in this situation. He developed training programs as an employee of the two agencies where he worked. But his responsibilities, at least while employed by one agency, extended beyond his

employing agency because he was tasked with developing training programs that applied to persons in any State agency. Thus, on the broad scale, the training programs were matters "involving the State." That broad application is placed within the other terms of the statute. *Commission Op. No. 96-75.*

Whether a "matter" he was responsible for while employed by the State was the same "matter" on which he would represent or assist his private enterprise, depended on whether the "matter" fit within the three discrete areas of the post-employment law--"matters" on which he gave an opinion; conducted an investigation; or was otherwise directly and materially responsible. *Id.* For them to be the same "matter," there must be a "substantial overlap" of the facts. *Id.* Here, while employed by the State, he developed the concept of a particular program; he turned it into an 8-hour course; he presented the course; and it was offered to State employees from all agencies.

To decide if that program was the same "matter" on which he wished to contract, we looked at what he would present to the contracting agency to see if there was a "substantial overlap." For the contract program, he was taking a 2-hour segment of the 8-hour program which he conceived and developed for his former State agency. He would focus on the "core principles" in that 2-hour segment. Courts have held that even where there have been a few adjustments to the "matter" of the contract, it can be the same matter if the facts substantially overlap. *Commission Op. No. 96-75 (citing United States v. Medico, 7th Cir., 784 F.2d 840 (1986)).* While he intended to tailor the 2-hours to the particular agency, the program concept was the same concept he developed while employed by the State; the 2-hour course was a direct abstract of the 8-hour course; and he would use the exact same "core principles." Moreover, the description of the purpose of the course was the same in the course he developed while employed by the State as it was for the contract course he wanted to present. Accordingly, there was a "substantial overlap" between the courses, making the contract course the same "matter" for which he had been directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State.

00-20 – Post Employment—Working for Private Company on State Contracts: A Division Director who planned to leave State employment asked if she could accept a position with a private company and work on either of two State contracts the company had with a separate Division. As to one contract, the private employer was bidding on it, but it had not been awarded. The other contract was awarded while she was employed by the State. However, based on the following law and facts, the Commission concluded that: (1) as to the contract on which the company was bidding, she had absolutely no involvement in the matter; and (2) as to the existing contract, her only involvement was to coordinate events to insure that representatives of the private company were at State events to discuss the contractual services they offered with potential State clients. Thus, she was not directly and materially responsible for those contracts while employed by the State.

In her State position, she had no decision-making authority nor was she involved in putting together either the contract or selecting contractors. Thus, she did not give an opinion, etc., as to the substance or awarding of the contracts. With the private company, she could be involved with the contracts as follows:

(A) The contract on which the company was bidding on: If awarded the contract, the company wanted her to be the contract manager. While employed by the State, besides not being involved with the contract, she had no dealings with the company on the contract in any

way. Thus, it was not a matter on which she gave an opinion, conducted an investigation, or was otherwise directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State.

(B) The existing contract: If the company was not awarded the above contract, it wanted her to manage the existing contract which was issued by a different Division. That Division managed the contract, and the private company managed a federally funded program. She was not responsible for the contract or the program while employed by the State. However, her office had a grant for a different program which was responsible for outreach and enrollment of children in certain programs, including the one managed by the private enterprise. Because of overlapping program goals in her Division's program and the contract program, her office coordinated with the private company to be at events, such as certain fairs, where people could learn of the programs. The private company then assisted in enrolling those who were eligible. If she managed the private company's State contract with another Division, her former Division would coordinate with her to ensure that the company's representatives would be available for such events. As her only involvement with the contract while employed by the State was to coordinate to insure that the company's representatives were available at such things as fairs, and another Division was responsible putting together the contract; awarding the contract; and managing the substance of the contract with the private company, she was not directly and materially responsible for the matter.

00-17 – Post Employment—Pension Offset Law Cannot be Waived by Commission: A State agency wanted to privately contract with a former State employee to perform the same job he had while employed by the State. Such conduct would violate the post-employment law. See, 29 Del. C. § 5805(d). The agency asked for a waiver so that the former employee would not suffer the "hardship" of the pension offset which is imposed when a retiree is re-hired by a State agency. See, 29 Del. C. § 5502. The Commission may waive the Code of Conduct provisions if there is an "undue hardship" on the agency or the employee. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a).

The Commission held that it would not grant a waiver so that the former employee could violate the post-employment law. It reached that conclusion because there was an existing law which permitted retirees to be re-hired by their former agency and work on matters for which they were responsible without violating the post-employment provision. See, 29 Del. C. § 5502. However, that law stipulated that if they were rehired, they would be subject to a pension offset. *Id.* The Commission can only waive laws in Title 29, Chapter 58. See, 29 Del. C. § 5807(a). Moreover, the Commission can grant a waiver only if an "undue hardship" is established. *Id.* "Undue hardship" means "excessive or more than is required." *Commission Op. No. 97-18.* The mere fact that the former employee would suffer a pension offset if re-hired under the existing law and personnel rules for retirees was the very hardship that any former employee would experience. As the agency could hire him without violating the post-employment law, and as no "undue hardship" was established, there was no basis on which to grant a waiver.

00-12 – Post Employment—State Nurse to Private Nurse Practitioner: A State nurse left State employment to be a Nurse Practitioner at a Day Care Center. During her State employment, one of the Divisions she worked for contracted with the Center. She left that Division and worked for another Division before leaving the State. While at the first Division, she did not prepare the contract or select the Center as the contractor. However, she performed health assessments of the Division's clients who might qualify for care at the Center. Her State job entailed: functional assessments (e.g., could clients bathe themselves); portions of medical evaluations (e.g., blood pressure); and obtaining the clients' recollection of their

medical history. That was part of the data used to decide if clients qualified for the State program. The medical assessment of the level of nursing home care needed by clients must be decided by a physician. The physician's level of care decision did not always agree with the level assessed by a State nurse. If there were differences, the State could discuss the issue with the physician. She was not responsible for such discussions or any decisions arising from them. She asked if her private employment would violate the post-employment law.

In applying the facts to the law, the Commission found that she did not give an opinion and was not otherwise directly and materially responsible for the State's contract with the Center. However, her post-employment activities may have required her to represent or otherwise assist that private enterprise on matters related to the contract in the following ways: (1) providing day-to-day nursing duties for the Center's clients, some of whom could be State clients. She would give clients medical care and develop a medical care plan. For a State client, the involved agencies would periodically visit or contact the Center and she could be asked about a client's care; how they were responding, etc.; and (2) providing primary care in collaboration with a physician for the Center's clients and clients from surrounding communities. Again, some clients could be State clients. Her former Division often accessed physician's medical assessment for certain programs. For example, the physician might instruct her to perform physicals, etc., to aid in assessing the level of care. If there was a difference in the physician's assessment and the State's, the State could ask how the level of care was reached, which could include requesting information she obtained from the physical exam.

Obviously, in her State and private positions, she was a nurse. However, while the broad subject "matter" may be the same, the facts must overlap substantially in order for it to be the same "matter" on which a former employee gave an opinion, etc. *Commission Op. No. 96-75*. At her former Division, she did not provide day-to-day care to State clients. Regarding her State job to perform functional assessments, she would not perform functional assessments in her private capacity. Rather, she might be asked by the physician to perform physicals and the information she obtained may be used, with other information, by the physician to make an assessment. Thus, while the subject "matter" was nursing, the type of nursing responsibility at the State and the responsibility in her new job did not overlap sufficiently for her conduct to violate the Code.

00-02 – Post Employment—Timing of Two-Year Restriction – Waiver Denied: A former State officer who headed a division wanted to represent private companies before that division. Based on the following facts and law, the Commission concluded that: (1) the conduct would violate the post-employment law; (2) it could not grant a waiver; and (3) the 2-year restriction took effect when the individual terminated employment with the State.

In a prior opinion to this State officer, the Commission held that he could operate a consulting business and engage in certain activities identified in that opinion but was restricted from representing or assisting private clients in obtaining State contracts through his former division. The basis of that opinion was that as Director of the Division, he was directly and materially responsible for the laws and policies regarding contracting. *Commission Op. No. 99-43*. As the post-employment law restricts former State employees from representing or assisting private enterprises, for 2 years, on matters involving the State for which they: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation; or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible, to the extent his post-employment activities entailed representing or assisting private clients in obtaining State contracts, such action was prohibited. He was not precluded

from consulting with clients on such matters as: obtaining private sector contracts; advising them on customer service, etc.

This request sought a waiver of the post-employment law on the basis that the Commission's prior ruling prohibited him from assisting small businesses in their attempts to obtain an equitable opportunity for doing business with the State. Further, he argued that because he projected obtaining the majority of his consulting clients from persons who sought assistance in obtaining State contracts, the ruling would have "shut down" his consulting business. Second, he detailed a change in his circumstances which had resulted in a full-time job. Now, in addition to the consulting work, he was contemplating representing his full-time employer on a State-wide network contract. Third, in meeting with him on the request, he said he had certain other interests he would like to pursue relating to State contracts. Fourth, he wanted to know if the two-year restriction applied from the date he left his Division or from the time he left State employment.

A waiver may be granted if the literal application of the statute is not necessary to serve the public purpose or there is an undue hardship on the State employee or State agency. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(a). Although he initially asked for a waiver, he said during the Commission meeting that he was no longer seeking a waiver. However, because he said that he wanted more "broad based strokes" to help him understand the law; because he said his position was likely to change in the future; and he gave the Commission particular facts to deal with, the Commission addressed the waiver request based on those facts.

(A) Is the literal application necessary to serve the public purpose?

The public purpose of the post-employment restriction, as stated in our prior opinion is to ensure the public's confidence that former State employees do not use information, influence and access acquired during their State service for improper and unfair advantage in dealings with the State after they leave public office. *Commission Op. No. 99-43*. The 2-year "cooling off" period in Delaware's post-employment law instills the public's confidence by preventing former employees from exercising undue influence on their former colleagues; obtaining a "leg up" for their clients over other competitors; or financially capitalizing on their former employment. *Id.*

To the extent that he was saying that small businesses would not get equitable treatment in State contracts if he did not represent them, the statute does not authorize a waiver based on the needs of a private enterprise. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(a). Moreover, while he was the Division Director, he worked with another State office to publish a Procurement Guide "designed to assist the small businessperson in his/her effort to contract with State agencies." Also, any business could ask to be placed on the Division's list of vendors that wanted to receive notice of all contracts the State put out for bids. Thus, free assistance was available specifically for the small businessperson. He now sought to provide clients with the same assistance in obtaining State contracts that he provided in a free publication while he was a Division Director, which could be interpreted as financially capitalizing on his former employment.

Delaware Courts have specifically noted that where government officials seek contracts with their governmental entity, that the award of such contracts "has been suspect, often because of alleged favoritism, undue influence, conflict and the like." *W. Paynter Sharp & Son v. Heller*, Del. Ch., 280 A.2d 748, 752 (1971). The Code of Conduct was subsequently enacted with restrictions, such as the post-employment law, which aids in avoiding those very types of allegations and suspicions. Similarly, the new procurement law enacted while he was a Division

Director and in which he was involved, stated that its purpose was to create trust, fairness and equitable treatment for persons who deal with the State procurement process. 29 Del. C. §6901. Thus, the procurement law and the Code of Conduct had a common interest in achieving trust, fairness and equitable treatment in the conduct of government officials.

If a waiver were granted so he could represent and otherwise assist those small businesses on contracting with the State, it was not likely the public purpose of either the procurement law or the Code of Conduct would be served because it would raise the very concerns which the post-employment law, and the procurement law, seek to prevent--undue influence, favoritism, etc. Accordingly, no waiver was granted on that basis.

(B) Undue Hardship

The law does not permit the Commission to grant a waiver on the basis of an undue hardship on a private enterprise, only if there is an undue hardship on a State employee or State agency. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a). Thus, no hardship waiver could be granted on the basis that any small business would suffer a hardship if he could not represent them. Further, no facts suggested any hardship on a State agency. Accordingly, the issue was if there was an undue hardship on him. The Code of Conduct requires that the hardship be "undue," which means "more than required" or is "excessive." *Commission Op. No. 97-18*.

He said that since he initially projected obtaining the majority of his private consulting business clients by offering them advice and assistance in obtaining State contracts when he initially started, that the Commission's prior ruling would have shut down his consulting business. However, in his previous request, he said he also intended to offer consulting services for such things as customer service improvement, business opportunities in the private sector, etc. The Commission held that as such services would not entail representing or assisting a private enterprise before the State and he could engage in those consulting activities. His present request stated that he was now employed full-time by a company as its marketing director. Finally, while he stated that the prior opinion would shut down his consulting business, it appeared that he was still operating it as a side-line because in this request he asked for another ruling regarding a client who was seeking his consulting services. Thus, our prior ruling did not preclude him from having a consulting business. It limited that consulting business so that he did not work on matters which the post-employment law prohibits. The mere fact that a former employee cannot work on the same matters for which they were responsible, is not, by itself, an "undue hardship." *Commission Op. No. 97-18*. Rather, it is the very hardship imposed by the statute. *Id.*

In considering if an undue hardship waiver should be granted, the Commission, in the past, has considered the Code of Conduct provision which says "that all citizens should be encouraged to assume public office and employment, and that therefore, the activities of officers and employees of the State should not be unduly circumscribed." 29 Del. C. § 5802(3). *Commission Op. No. 97-34*. Weighing this concern aids in ensuring that citizens will accept public employment and also have the latitude to move to the private sector. Here, he had authority to operate a consulting business, with certain restrictions. He also had full-time employment with a private company. Clearly, he did have the latitude to move to the private sector. Accordingly, we found no facts to substantiate an "undue hardship."

III. Activities on Behalf of his Full-Time Employer for State Contracts

Regarding his full-time job, he said he would develop new business for the company, which provided information technology services. Such services would entail "network services." While employed by the State, his Division issued a State-wide contract for network services. In his prior request he asked if his consulting business could represent private clients on that contract. We held that he could not represent or assist a private enterprise on that contract as it was created while he was the Division Director, and, by law, he was responsible for all central contracting.

In this request, he said that he will not be involved with the State's contract for network services for the next two years. However, he then went on to say that "if [...] is selected as a subcontractor" on the State's contract, "I will have no involvement in the contracting process since the primary vendor will be the lead contact" with his former Division. He said that his full-time employer plans to participate in the State's contract as a subcontractor. Apparently, the subcontractors had not yet been selected. The mere fact that the primary vendor would "be the lead" with his former division, did not mean issues could not arise under the post-employment provision.

The plain language of the Code not only restricts former employees from "representing," but also restricts them from "otherwise assisting" a private enterprise on matters "involving the State" if those matters are ones for which they were otherwise directly and materially responsible. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). The Statewide network contract was a matter "involving the State." In our prior opinion we held that he was responsible for the matter. The mere fact that the primary vendor would be the "lead contact" with his former Division, did not necessarily mean that he would not be "otherwise assisting" the private enterprise on that matter. For example, if he acted as the company's representative to assist it in getting a subcontract with the contractors, he would be assisting it in obtaining a subcontract on a matter "involving the State" that was put together while he was the Division Director. Moreover, the contract specified that his former agency must agree to and approve the subcontractors. Because we held that it would be improper for him to represent or otherwise assist his private consulting clients on that network contract in our prior opinion, if he represented or assisted his full-time employer in getting the subcontract, which his former colleagues approved, the only difference was that he changed who he would represent or otherwise assist. It raised the same issues of undue influence, obtaining a "leg up" for the private enterprise, and financially capitalizing on his prior position. In effect, the public perception would be that he was trying to do through the backdoor what we would not permit him to do through the front door. The public's concern of undue influence or favoritism could be heightened by the fact that his full-time employer bid to be the primary vendor but was not selected. A few months later, he was hired, and he sought to assist them in getting a portion of the very contract which they were denied. Clearly, that did not instill the public's confidence in the integrity of its government, as it could have raised the appearance that he would use the influence which resulted from his State employment to obtain a subcontract on a matter for which he was responsible. This did not mean that the company could not seek to subcontract; only that he could not represent or assist them in obtaining the subcontract.

He also asked if he could represent and assist his full-time employer in obtaining network contracts with State agencies for services which were independent of the State network contract. The example he gave was that if an agency had a need for "maybe a website," and the contract was for less than \$50,000 then it would not have to be publicly noticed and bid. Rather, he said the agency could contract directly with a company. The problem was that the

laws and policies on when, and how, a State agency could directly contract come into play when agencies are deciding if it was appropriate to deal directly with the contractor. In our prior opinion we held that, by statute, he was responsible for those laws and policies. Specifically, by law, he chaired the committee that set the standards for such "small purchases" for all State agencies. Moreover, he was involved in writing the State-wide law that established the committee and the issues it addressed. Additionally, while he was the Division Director a contract was issued for various computer services, which identified a particular contractor who provided services for websites. Perhaps more significant was that all State agencies that participated in central contracts were required to have the appropriate agency staff participate in user groups, which were established, convened and chaired by him as the Division Director. The significance of this was that those same agency persons were the persons he would work with to get a direct contract with their agency. This would place him in the position of dealing directly with the key people he dealt with as chair of the user group. The effect was that he would "represent and assist" his full-time employer in matters "involving the State," and it would require his expertise on matters on which he gave an opinion and was directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State. The effect on the public's confidence in the integrity of its government would be that he would be able to obtain a "leg up" over his employer's competitors because he basically wrote the rules for the "small purchase" procedures, and would be representing and assisting it before the various agencies key staffers who were part of his user group.

IV. Other Clients He Would Like to Represent/Assist in Getting State Contracts

He had other interests he would like to pursue and said it was not clear to him if, under our prior ruling, he would be able to engage in the activity. The example he gave was that a private client approached him in his consulting capacity to see if he could help it obtain State contracts for designing and printing brochures, etc. He asked if the Commission's prior ruling would permit him to go before agencies other than his former division.

The Commission noted that merely changing clients did not affect the application of the law. Since it had just been ruled that he could not represent or assist his full-time employer to obtain contracts with other agencies, the Commission had to be consistent in its ruling. However, to aid him in understanding why the results were the same in this opinion and the prior opinion, the Commission again noted: (1) The post-employment law does not limit the restriction to working on matters involving the former employee's prior agency. Rather, it limits working on matters "involving the State," if they are matters in which the former employee gave an opinion; conducted an investigation; or was otherwise directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State. (2) In his case, the statute was clear that as the Division Director, his responsibilities were beyond just his agency. Specifically, by law, his "powers, duties and functions included central contracting for material and services throughout the State." (Citation omitted). He made the appointments to, and chaired, the committee which had the responsibility to "advise as to the effectiveness of and make recommendations for changes to the State's procurement laws, policies and practices." (Citation omitted). He also was responsible for the user group which consisted of the key staffers from all State user agencies. (Citation omitted). (3) It raised the specter that he could use his former position to get a "leg up" for his client or exert undue influence on those making the contract decision because: (A) he wrote the rules of the small purchase procedures; (B) those rules apply to all State agencies; and (C) he worked directly with the key persons who would make the agency decision.

V. Does the 2-year Restriction Apply from the Time He Left His Division or from the Time He Left State Employment?

He worked for the Division for six years and approximately one year prior, took a job with another State agency. He asked if the 2-year "cooling off" period started when he left the Division or whether it started when he left the other State agency. The statute is clear that the time restriction begins after the person leaves State employment. It says: "for a period of 2 years after termination of his employment or appointed status with the State..." 29 Del. C. § 5805(d). If the language is clear and unambiguous, the words must be given their plain meaning. *Coastal Barge Corp. V. Coastal Zone Indus. Control Board*, Del. Supr., 492 A.2d 1242, 1246 (1985). However, as courts have given "some weight" to the argument that the lapse of time is one factor to consider in deciding if the activity is the same "matter," the Commission has also considered whether the lapse of time changes the "matters" for which a State employee was responsible. *Commission Op. No. 99-16 (citing CACI, Inc.-Federal v. The United States*, Fed. Cir., 719 F.2d 1567 (1983) (*post-employment contract was not the same "matter" because of elapsed time and difference in scope and approach*)).

In *Opinion No. 99-16*, a former State employee asked to contract with the State on a computer payroll program. She worked on a computer payroll program approximately ten years prior. In that time period, the computer system, the data for the system, etc., had radically changed because of new technology and new criteria for the payroll program, etc. Under those facts, the Commission held that the lapse of time resulted in the program not being the same "matter" for which she had been responsible. In the prior opinion and in this opinion, the Commission noted that the "matters" for which he was responsible were matters such as the laws, rules and regulations governing procurement. He was directly involved in the procurement laws that passed in 1996; the rules and regulations implementing those laws; chaired the contracting and purchasing committee; co-authored the Procurement Guide for Small Businesses, etc. When asked what negative effect it would have on him if we concluded that the two-year period started when he terminated State employment, he said that the network services contract would be up for renewal in 2001 and he wanted to represent his full-time employer when the contract was renewed. The Commission noted again that the network services contract was a matter that was decided when he was the Division Director. No facts indicated that the lapse of time between when he left the Division and moved to a different State agency resulted in any significant change to the procurement laws, rules and regulations, or the substance of the network contract. Thus, the 2-year period started when he terminated State employment.

99-48 – Post Employment—No Contact; No Representation; No Assistance—No Violation: Legal Counsel for a private company asked if it would violate the post-employment law if a former State employee went to work for the company if she agreed not to: (1) contact her former office for any business purpose and (2) represent or assist the private enterprise in any matter involving her former office. Based on the following facts and law, the Commission found no violation.

While employed by the State, the employee gave input on tasks incorporated into a program which was contracted out. She left State employment to work for a private company before the State issued the solicitation for bids. The former employee contacted her former State office, asking when the solicitation for bids would be issued. The State agency, apparently concerned about her involvement, initially said the private company could not bid on the contract because the former State employee worked there, and it would violate the post-employment law. The company's attorney contacted the Commission's legal counsel for information on its interpretation of the post-employment law. Having reviewed the statute and

the Commission's interpretations, the company's attorney wrote to the State agency, and advised it that the private company would isolate her not only from working on the contract, but on anything concerning her former office. The company's attorney believed those restrictions would avoid a violation of the post-employment law. Although the State agency apparently was no longer saying the private company could not seek the contract, the former employee decided to seek an opinion from the Commission.

As the company's attorney observed in her letter to the State agency, the statute does not ban a private enterprise from seeking State contracts merely because they hired a former State employee. Rather, it restricted the former employee's conduct on behalf of the private enterprise on matters in which they gave an opinion; conducted an investigation; or were otherwise directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). The restriction is meant to balance two concerns: (1) that State employees do not use their former position as a means to obtain a "leg up" for the private enterprise over its competitors by using their prior connection to exert undue influence on former colleagues, while (2) encouraging citizens to seek public employment by giving them the latitude to find employment in the private sector without "unduly circumscribing their conduct." See, 29 *Del. C.* § 5802. Thus, the Commission has held that the statute is not violated if the former employee is employed by a company which contracted with the State as long as the former employee did not work on matters which fall within the three discreet areas identified in the statute. See, e.g., *Commission Op. Nos. 94-05; 96-71(B)*.

Here, the former employee did not make the final decision on the terms of the contract, but she gave input on tasks that became part of the contract. Thus, she gave an opinion on those matters. However, she had agreed not to represent or assist the private company on that contract. Moreover, while the statute restricted her activities in only those three discreet areas, she had agreed not to contact her former office regarding any business matter for the two-year period. As the former employee would not represent or assist the private company on any matter involving her former State office, then she clearly would not be representing or assisting them on matters where she gave an opinion, conducted an investigation or was otherwise directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State. Accordingly, her conduct did not violate the post-employment law.

99-47 – Post Employment—Time Changes “Matter” Again: The contract a former employee sought was within the 2-year time frame after he left State employment. However, the contract was with a State agency where he worked more than 20 years ago. Thus, the question was if the "matters" on which he sought to contract are ones on which he: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation; or (3) was otherwise directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d).

The substance of the contract was conceived years after he left one agency and went to work for another before retiring, he was not involved in any funding decisions; the drafting of the agreement; or the substance thereof. Moreover, he said that the decisions in implementing the program, obtaining funding, and writing the contract, etc., were not made by any of the agency's employees with whom he worked more than 20 years ago, as the only person still in the agency with whom he worked held a secretarial position. The contract would require him to deal with some non-government entities which he dealt with 20 years ago, but the substance of the project was different from the substance of his work 20 years ago. The project also required work on strategic planning, which he had not done. As the contract called for him to work with non-government agencies, he would not work on any issue dealing with the agency which most

recently employed him. Thus, he would not be representing or assisting his private entity before his more recent employer.

99-45 Post Employment—Working for Firm that May Contract w/ State in Future: A State employee accepted employment with a company which previously contracted with her former agency. It no longer had the contract. Based on the following law and facts, such employment would not violate the post-employment provision.

The employee's employment with the private company would be in business development. She would prepare the company's documents; develop and present business proposals; and research new business opportunities. Because the company dealt with many government agencies, not only from Delaware, but other States, she could be developing business proposals that would be presented to Delaware State agencies. However, the company would not assign her to work on any projects related to her former agency during the 2-year restricted period. Thus, while she put together parts of the agency's contract as enhancements were made, the private company no longer had that contract. Accordingly, she would not be representing or assisting them on that matter. Even if the company were re-selected under a blanket bid, since she would not be working on any projects related to her former agency, she would not, during the 2-year restricted period, be working on matters on which she gave an opinion, conducted an investigation or was otherwise directly and materially responsible, which is prohibited by the post-employment law. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d).

99-44 Post Employment—River and Bay Authority Not a Private Enterprise: A State employee was leaving a position with a State agency to work for the Delaware River and Bay Authority. Based on the following law, the Commission concluded that the post-employment law did not apply in the particular situation.

The post-employment law restricts former State employees from "representing or assisting a private enterprise on matters involving the State..." in certain matters. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). "Private enterprise" means "any activity conducted by any person, whether conducted for profit or not for profit and includes the ownership of real or personal property. Private enterprise does not include any activity of the State or of any political subdivision or of any agency, authority or instrumentality thereof." 29 *Del. C.* § 5804(8).

The Delaware River and Bay Authority (the "Authority") is a bi-state agency created by a compact between the States of Delaware and New Jersey, 17 *Del. C.* § 1701, *et seq.* (the "Delaware-New Jersey Compact"). Delaware Courts have held: "The Authority is a creature of an interstate compact entered into between the State of Delaware and the State of New Jersey and it is a governmental agency of both states." *The Delaware River and Bay Authority v. Gauntt Construction Company*, Del. Ch., C. A. No. 9952, Hartnett, V.C. (January 19, 1989). As the authority was a governmental agency of Delaware and New Jersey, it was not a "private enterprise" as defined in the Code of Conduct. Thus, the two-year post-employment restriction would not apply to employment with the Authority. Even if the post-employment law applied, the employee would not be working on projects for the Authority which were worked on at the other State agency. The River and Bay Authority wrote its own construction contracts and the individual would work on its contracts. That would not constitute representing or assisting it on the other agency's matters or where the individual gave an opinion, conducted an investigation

or was otherwise directly and materially responsible, which are the circumstances set forth in 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

99-43 Post Employment—Consulting on Matters for Which Employee was Responsible:

A former State employee asked if it would violate the Code of Conduct if he started a consulting business to assist clients in improving certain areas of their businesses including obtaining State contracts. Based on the following law and facts, we concluded that representing and assisting clients to obtain State contracts raised ethical issues because of his former State position.

The employee initially worked for one agency a number of years then moved to another agency not long before he decided to retire. He was developing a private consulting business and planned to ultimately make it his full-time career. Accordingly, the applicable Code section is the 2-year restriction on former employees representing or assisting private enterprises on matters involving the State if they are matters where the individual gave an opinion, conducted an investigation; or was otherwise directly and materially responsible during State employment. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d).

As a consultant, he wanted to consult with Delaware businesses to assist them in, among other things, obtaining State contracts. He did not plan to represent clients before the agency by which he was most recently employed but wanted to represent clients before the Division he worked in for many years before moving to the other agency. As noted above, for two years after leaving State employment, he could not represent or assist a private enterprise on matters involving the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d). From his description, apart from helping clients obtain contracts, he wanted to help clients improve their management practices and strengthen their customer service. Those activities would not involve the State. He also would help his clients get business within the private sector. Again, that activity would not involve the State. Accordingly, he could engage in such activities.

However, because representing and assisting his clients in obtaining State contracts, would clearly be matters involving the State, the issue became whether such activity involved matters on which he gave an opinion; conducted an investigation; or was otherwise directly and materially responsible. If so, then the two-year restriction applied. The Commission had issued a previous opinion to him recognizing that, by law, he was responsible for duties and functions relating to contracting. *Commission Op. No. 98-30*. Also, he said he was a "policy maker." He also was a non-voting member of an advisory council which was created to advise on certain aspects of procurement laws, policies and practices. He appointed people to the council, and also chaired a committee which monitored the effectiveness the procurement process, recommended changes, and established other policies and procedures. He also was intimately involved in legislation impacting procurement.

To permit him to engage in the proposed activities would distort the purpose of the post-employment provision. The post-employment restriction was designed to prevent former employees from getting a "leg up" on other private enterprises that deal with the State. *Commission Op. No. 95-11*. We have noted that the post-employment law, like other conflict of interest statutes, attempts to insure public confidence in the integrity of the government. *Id.* (citing "*Ethics in Government Act*," *Senate Report No. 95-170*, p. 32). Public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that government officials use their office for personal gain, particularly after leaving the government. *Id.* The main reason for public concern is that former employees may use information, influence, and access acquired during government service for improper and unfair advantage in later dealings with that

department or agency. *Id.* at 33. Thus, the restriction is to diminish the actual or perceived potential for using State office for personal gain, or improperly influencing former colleagues. The Delaware General Assembly set a 2-year "cooling off" period in recognition that with time, a former employee's actual or perceived potential for improperly influencing former colleagues/employees, or the use of public office for private gain is reduced.

Here, he set the very policies which his former employees/colleagues would apply. Having made the policies himself, and having his former employees make the decision certainly could appear to result in the very thing the statute is meant to prevent—undue influence on former colleagues and obtaining a "leg up" on competitors. The issue of how the laws and policies he established should be interpreted could be critical to making decisions. For example, he said he wanted to be involved in professional services contract. His own explanation was that professional services contracts are unlike material contracts. In the latter, there are objective criteria that can be used in deciding if a contract should be awarded, e.g., the number of beans that should be in each can. However, he said professional services contracts were "a bit more nebulous." This meant that the opportunity to influence could be greater in those types of contracts.

Because representing and assisting private clients in obtaining State contracts would constitute matters for which he was directly and materially responsible, such activity would violate the post-employment law.

99-40 Post Employment—Restriction Not a Total Ban on Working on “Matters” Involving the State: A former State employee accepted a job with a company which did business with his former agency. In his request, he said that the post-employment law "prohibits former employees to work on any state job, for two years."

First, in his correspondence, the employee said the post-employment restriction "prohibits former employees to work on any state job, for two years." He was informed at the Commission's meeting that the law does not impose a complete ban on working on matters involving the State. Rather, the General Assembly recognized that to encourage citizens to assume public office and employment, the standards of conduct must not "unduly circumscribe" the activities of State employees. 29 *Del. C.* § 5802(3). The Commission has noted that to achieve that purpose, the General Assembly, rather than placing a total ban on working for a private enterprise on matters before the State, chose to limit the restriction to the three discreet triggering provisions identified in the statute. *Commission Op. Nos. 98-12; 97-21; 96-75.* Thus, the Commission considered the particular facts in the context of whether there had been an infringement in any of those three discreet areas.

During his State employment, he worked for a number of years in a section that dealt with private consulting firms. During that time, he was not involved in the consultant selection process. Thus, he did not give an opinion and was not directly and materially involved in awarding any contract to the private firm which sought to hire him. As to the matters for which he was responsible, his work was such that he worked on very specific projects. He identified 11 projects he worked on for the State. Nine of those projects had been completed, at least in his area of expertise. The private company was not involved in the other two projects. Thus, he would not be representing or assisting the private company before the State on those matters. He expected the private company would be involved in new projects and would want him to work on those matters. New projects would not be matters on which he worked while employed

by the State. Moreover, the work the company would want him to perform on the projects was not in the same area of his expertise on the State projects. Thus, as to those new matters, he would not be representing or assisting the company on matters on which he gave an opinion, conducted an investigation or was otherwise directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State.

As he would not be representing or assisting the company on those matters on which he worked for the State and any new projects would not be matters on which he gave an opinion, conducted an investigation, or was otherwise directly and materially responsible for at his State agency, the Commission found no violation of the post-employment restrictions.

99-33 – Post Employment—Time Can Change the Definition of “Matter”: A State employee asked if it would violate the post-employment law if she privately contracted with an agency after she left State employment to work on a computerized accounting program. While employed by the State, she had worked on such a program, but a number of years had elapsed and during that time the program had changed. Based on the following law and facts, the Commission found that because of the substantial changes in the program since she last worked on it, that it was not the same "matter" for which she had been responsible for while employed by the State.

Twelve years ago, a State employee dealt with an agency's accounting system. She left that agency and worked in a number of different agencies in subsequent years. In her most recent State job, the agency was not on the State's financial management and payroll system. The passage of time can be given "some weight" in deciding if the activity is the same "matter." *Commission Op. No. 99-16 (citing CACI, Inc.-Federal v. United States, Fed. Cir., F.2d 1567 (1983))*. In applying the passage of time, the question was if, during that time, the "matter" underwent a change sufficient in scope such that it was not the same "matter." *Commission Op. No. 99-16*.

Here, while she had worked on an accounting system for the State, and wanted to work on an accounting system under the private contract, the agency which sought to contract with her said there were very specific differences between the program she had worked on and the program on which it wanted her to contract. Additionally, she had no responsibilities for developing the new program; was not contracting with any of her former State agencies; and would not develop the system as she did at her agency 12 years ago. Rather, she would identify the contracting agency's processes and decide how that information fit into the new system so the data could be converted and cleaned-up and explain how the new system worked to program users. Thus, consistent with *Commission Op. No. 99-16*, it did not appear that she was contracting on the same "matter."

99-29 – Post Employment—Private Employer Contracts w/ Former Agency: A State employee asked if it would violate the post-employment provision if, after retiring from the State, she accepted employment with a private company which contracted with her agency. Based on the following law and facts, we concluded that it would not violate the post-employment provision.

The private company [the Employee] wanted to work for contracted with her State agency. She was not responsible for selecting any contractor, including that company, or for

overseeing if the company complied with the contract. Thus, as to those matters, she did not give an opinion, nor was she directly and materially responsible. Some duties with the private company did not include representing or assisting the private company before the State, as the duties were internal with the private company.

The employee served on a committee that dealt with placement of State clients in the program run by her private company but would not be representing or assisting the private company before that committee because no contractors were invited to those meetings. Additionally, she did not anticipate that the private company would ask her to represent or assist them in responding to any new contracts or contract renewals during the two-year time frame imposed by the post-employment provision. If they should ask, she said she would seek advice from the Commission on whether she should participate.

One interaction she expected to have with her former agency was to provide information on the private company's programs in unit meetings of certain State employees with whom she had worked while employed by the State. Thus, she would be representing the company before her former employees. She said that all contractors met with the agency's staff at least once a year to update them on changes that occurred in the contract services. For example, contractors may introduce new staff members; discuss services they had added; or discuss services they would no longer provide. The post-employment restriction on representing or assisting private enterprises is designed to prevent former employees from getting a "leg up," through undue influence on their former colleagues, on other private enterprises that deal with the State. *Commission Op. Nos. 95-11 and 97-18*. Here, she clearly would be representing the private company on matters before her former staff. However, the Commission noted that the agency staff before whom she would appear did not decide which contractors would be used; the company already had the contract with the State; every contractor gave those presentations; the meetings were limited in number; and the substance (introducing new staff, etc.) of her representation, were facts that diminished the possibility that she would be using her former State position to obtain a "leg up" for her private company. She also said that in the 30 years she worked for the State, every private agency in Kent and Sussex County for which she could go to work had contracted with her Department, which would make it next to impossible for her to secure employment in her career field.

The Commission concluded that there was no technical violation of the post-employment restriction, and even if there were an improper public perception, it would grant a waiver because her interaction with her former staff would be on a limited basis; all contractors had the same opportunity; the staff did not make the contracting decisions; and her employment opportunities would be severely limited.

99-28 – Post Employment—Responding to Agency’s RFP Regarding Federal Regulation:

A former State employee went to work for a private consulting firm which wanted to respond to a Request for Proposal (RFP) issued by an agency other than her former Department. For the following reasons, we concluded that participation, on behalf of the firm, would not violate the post-employment law.

An agency issued an RFP seeking technical assistance in implementing a particular program. The contractor would be required to:

- (1) Analyze the final Federal Regulations relevant to the substance of the contract;

- (2) Prepare documents for: (a) waivers if there were inconsistencies; (b) the FY 2000 State Plan for the project; and (c) a Caseload Reduction Report; and
- (3) Recommend budget and program modifications to an existing relevant program.

The legal issue was whether, as a State employee, she gave an opinion; conducted an investigation; or was otherwise directly and materially responsible for the same matter while employed by the State. The "matter" was the RFP and the substance thereof. First, as to the RFP in general, it was issued by an agency other than hers. It dealt with issues in which her former agency was not involved. She was not involved in putting together the RFP. Thus, she did not give an opinion, conduct an investigation and was not otherwise directly and materially responsible for the RFP while employed by the State. As to the RFP content matter:

Item 1--The Federal Regulations to be analyzed were issued four months after she left her State position. She was not involved in those Federal Regulations during her State employment. Rather, her understanding of the federal laws on this particular program resulted from employment with the federal government before coming to work for the State. The regulations were to be analyzed within the framework of a waiver on the subject matter obtained by the State when she worked for the federal government. She was not involved in putting together the waiver request or implementing the request while employed by the State, as her Department was not responsible for such matters. Thus, she did not give an opinion, conduct an investigation and was not otherwise directly and materially responsible for that matter while employed by the State.

Item 2—(a) Waiver regarding inconsistencies - She was not responsible for preparing any such document while employed by the State, so she did not give an opinion, conduct an investigation, and was not otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State.

(b) FY2000 State Plan - While employed by the State, she had no direct responsibilities for developing or implementing this program; nor did she participate in or have input into the State Plan. However, there were two circumstances which resulted in a connection between her State Division and program clients or funds.

(1) Her division investigated certain allegations and it may have investigated clients who were eligible for the program under the contract. However, her division investigated matters other than whether the clients were eligible for the contracting agency's program. Thus, in her State capacity, she did not give an opinion on whether the clients were eligible for the program, as that decision was made by the contracting agency; nor did her division's authority or decisions to investigate entail consideration of program eligibility. The legislation relating to the program also set time limits on receiving benefits and imposed certain sanctions that may result in families losing program benefits. The contracting agency decided if families would lose eligibility. It continued to track families after they lost program benefits and hired a private contractor to periodically contact and assess the families. Among other things, the contractor assessed the families on matters related to the area investigated by her agency. Her agency did not develop the contract or select the contractor, as that was done by another agency. However, in developing the contract, the agency worked with her staff to develop an interagency agreement to identify procedures and protocols to be used by the contractor in areas that her agency investigated. If the contractor, in assessing the families, also found problems related to the area investigated by her agency, a referral was made to her division for investigation. Again, the client's loss of program benefits or eligibility had no bearing on her agency's investigatory decisions. If no problems were found, the contractor issued a report to her and to

the agency which hired the contractor. The RFP to develop the FY 2000 plan did not encompass procedures and protocols to identify areas investigated by her former agency. Thus, while she worked on that matter while employed by the State, it was not a matter that would be addressed by the RFP.

(2) The RFP would institute a plan for the use of program funds. As a State employee, she did not make decisions about the use of the program funds. However, her division, as part of its FY 99 budget request sought an increase in the number of State employees in her division through the General Fund. Although her agency sought the positions, the Budget Office, in negotiations with another agency, decided to fund the positions from the program funds, not the General Fund. As she did not participate in that decision, she did not give an opinion, etc., on the use of any program block funds for the positions. Although the program funding for the positions began six months after she left employment, a supervisor was hired for one of the program-funded positions before she left. Tracking the use of the program funds for the position was the responsibility of another division within her Department, without input from her Division. Thus, she did not give an opinion, etc., on any financial accountability for the funds.

(c) Caseload Reduction Report - While employed by the State, she was not involved in caseload reduction reports regarding the program recipients. Thus, she did not give an opinion, etc., on this matter.

Item 3--Budget Program and Recommendation on Existing Relevant Program. The agency issuing the RFP ran this particular program in conjunction with another Department. She was not involved in this program. Thus, she did not give an opinion, etc., on this matter.

Item 4--Duties after responding to the RFP. If her company was selected as the contractor, the follow-up duties would include working with a team which would work with the State to prepare the FY2000 State plan; attend public hearings on the program; help the State maximize the percentage of clients who were participating in appropriate work; and keep the State from suffering any penalties under program guidelines. She was not responsible for those matters while employed by the State.

The Commission found no violation if she participated on behalf of her private employer to respond to another agency's RFP regarding the particular program.

99-27 – Post Employment—Engineering Work for a Private Firm: A former State employee asked if he could work for an engineering company without violating the post-employment law, since he would not work on the same projects he worked on for the State. Based on the following law and facts, the Commission found no violation.

A former State employee held a position in the State in the area of engineering. He did not immediately go to work in that field, but later decided to pursue a career in engineering and was offered a position with a firm which contracted with his former agency. While employed by the State, he was not involved in selecting contractors. Thus, while employed by the State, he did not give an opinion and was not directly and materially responsible for selecting the firm for any contract. The substance of his work for the State dealt with engineering aspects on a number of State projects. Those projects had been completed, so it was not expected that he would be representing or assisting the firm on those matters. The projects the company wanted him to work on were not projects he worked on while with the State. Thus, he was not

responsible for those matters. If the company were selected for other agency projects, it was not expected that they would be projects on which he worked while with the State. However, he and the representatives of the private company indicated that in the unforeseen event that such a project should arise, he would remain aware of the post-employment restrictions and return to the Commission if additional advice was needed.

99-25 – Post Employment—Agency Contractor: A State employee accepted employment with a private enterprise which contracted with his agency. He asked for a waiver if the employment violated the Code. Based on the following law and facts, the Commission concluded that his employment would not violate the Code, if he did not represent or assist the private enterprise on certain matters, as detailed below.

The State Employee said he managed contracts from award to completion. In managing the contracts, he had daily contact with contractors, material producers, subcontractors, and consultants on manpower requirements. Also, as part of his duties, a number of years ago he was on a three-member Shortlist Panel. The panel reviewed responses to Request for Proposals (RFPs) to his agency and discussed the abilities of the various companies to perform the contracts, e.g., which was best suited for the job based on facts such as competence, availability, manpower, etc. The firm he wanted to work for was one of more than a dozen which submitted responses to the RFP for a services agreement. It was primarily for another section in his agency, but his section piggybacked so it could staff projects for peak demands. After the discussions, the Panel recommended five (5) applicants to the final selection committee. The firm which sought to hire him was one of the five (5). He was not on the final selection committee. The agreement was awarded to the company in 1997.

Approximately two years ago, he removed himself from the Shortlist Panel to avoid making decisions regarding contractors because he was aware of the post-employment law. He had not served on a Shortlist Panel since then and had made no decisions on responses to RFPs from the firm or any other contractors which submitted responses. After the agreement was awarded, his involvement with the company consisted of working with his supervisor and subordinates on staffing requirements and notifying the company of those requirements to meet the contract demands. In essence, he was a "people mover": identifying the people skills needed at a particular site; contacting the firm regarding the need; and ensuring that it provided the right people, at the right place, at the right time. Neither he, nor his district, evaluated the company's contract performance; that was done by another section. He had no dealings with the firm on matters other than this particular agreement. If employed by the company, he would be their "people manager." That is, if his former agency contacted the company, needing people at certain locations, he would identify the skilled people; send them to the location; etc. However, the company said he would have absolutely no involvement with the agreement on which he had served on the Shortlist Panel and had subsequently dealt with the company. The firm said its intent, though not finalized, would be to have him assume a role on a future project which it had with the agency. He said that while employed by the agency, he was in no manner involved with that project. He said that the company had "not finalized" whether he would work on that future project because it was still working on the details of assignments, but he definitely would not work on the agreement on which he had made decisions.

The post-employment law is meant to strike a balance between two concerns. First, is the public's concern that government employees who hope to move to the private sector will favor firms they think may offer employment later and after government employees move to

non-government employment, they may exercise undue influence on their previous government co-workers. *Commission Op. No. 96-75 (citing United States v. Medico, 7th Cir., 784 F.2d 840, 843 (1986))*. Second, is the government's concern that its employees be able to move from private to public employment and back again so that the government can secure skilled employees who otherwise are unwilling to work in public service at current pay rates. *Id.* The Delaware General Assembly recognized those interests in its findings that the conduct of officers and employees of the State must hold the respect and confidence of the people, but also found that it is necessary and desirable that all citizens be encouraged to assume public office and employment, and that their activities should not be unduly circumscribed. 29 *Del. C.* § 5802. To balance those interests, the General Assembly set a two-year "cooling off" period during which former State employees are restricted in their dealings with the State but limited the restriction to three "discreet and isolated transactions" which trigger the prohibition. *Id.* Thus, the Code does not completely ban former State employees from working for a private enterprise which had dealings with the State. Rather, the former State employees may not work on those matters where they: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation; or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible. Former State employees are also restricted from improperly disclosing or using confidential information gained from their State employment. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d).

As he was on the shortlist panel and recommended that the hiring firm, and four other companies, be considered for an agreement with his agency, and had dealt with the company on a routine basis regarding providing personnel, it appeared that he gave an opinion on the agreement and had been directly and materially responsible for the particular matter while employed by the State. However, as noted, he would not work on that agreement for the company. The Commission has held that where a former employee gave an opinion on a State contract, he could accept employment with a private enterprise as long as he did not work on that specific matter. *Commission Op. No. 94-10*. Accordingly, here, it would not violate the Code if he worked for the company, as long as he did not work on this particular agreement, since he was not involved with other matters pertaining to the firm. Regarding his expected involvement in the other agreement, while that may constitute representing or assisting the private enterprise on matters involving the State, he did not give an opinion, conduct an investigation, and was not otherwise directly and materially responsible for that matter while employed by the State. Delaware Courts have held that such representation does not violate the post-employment statute. *Beebe Medical Center v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, Del. Super., C.A. No. 94A-01-004, Terry, J. (June 30, 1995), *aff'd*, Del. Supr., No. 304, Veasey, C. J. (January 29, 1996).

The Commission found that he would not be representing or assisting the firm on matters in which he gave an opinion, conducted an investigation, or for which he was otherwise directly and materially responsible, it found no violation based on the proposed activities. It noted that the firm had not "finalized" his assignments. Accordingly, he was advised to remain alert to the post-employment restrictions, and if necessary, return to the Commission if he needed further guidance.

99-22 – Post Employment—YMCA: WAIVER GRANTED: Dr. Timothy Brandeau asked if it would violate the post-employment law if he accepted employment as the Executive Director, Resource Center of the YMCA of Delaware, which had a contract with his State office. Based on the following law and facts, the Commission concluded that if he worked on that contract it would violate the post-employment provision; however, it would grant a waiver.

As the Chief of Community Services for the Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services (DYRS) in the Department of Services to Children, Youth and Their Families, Dr. Brandeau wrote the request for proposal (RFP) for a contract that was awarded to the Resource Center. He also was on the contract selection panel which selected the YMCA. That action occurred in 1996. The contract would be re-bid in FY 2002 (calendar year 2001). Because he wrote the RFP and served on the contract selection panel, he clearly gave an opinion and was directly and materially responsible for the contract. He said that if he were prohibited from accepting employment with private enterprises which contracted with the State on such matters, he would not be able to work in this field in Delaware, because he has been responsible for approximately 40 contracts dealing with services for delinquent youth.

To the extent that his statement reflected a belief that the post-employment law prevented him from working for any private enterprise which contracted with his agency, the Commission clarified that the post-employment statute is not that broad. Rather, the provision is only triggered if former State employees represent or assist a private enterprise on matters in which they: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation; or (3) were otherwise directly and materially responsible. Thus, he could accept employment with the YMCA without violating the post-employment provision if he did not represent or assist them on the singular contract for which he was directly and materially responsible. *Commission Op. No. 94-05* (former State employee may work for private enterprise which contracted with his agency, but not on contract where he gave an opinion); *Beebe Medical Center v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, Del. Super., C.A. No. 94A-01-004, Terry, J. (June 30, 1995), *aff'd*, Del. Supr., No. 304, Veasey, C.J. (January 29, 1996). However, he said the YMCA could not isolate him from that single contract and sought a waiver. The Commission may grant a waiver if the literal application is not necessary to serve the public purpose, or there is an undue hardship on the State employee or State agency. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(a).

Ms. Babette Racca, YMCA's Vice President of Operations, stated that it would be a hardship on the YMCA because the YMCA had numerous contracts with State agencies, and it would be a hardship if State employees were not available. Again, to the extent this reflected a belief that private enterprises were banned from hiring former State employees just because the company had State contracts, that was a broader interpretation than what is provided by the statute. Moreover, the authority to grant a waiver based on an undue hardship is limited to undue hardships on the State employee or the State agency. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(a). Thus, the Commission had no statutory authority to grant a waiver based on any hardship on a private enterprise. The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to instill the public confidence in the integrity of its government. 29 *Del. C.* § 5811.

The specific concern of the post-employment provision is to address the concern that public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that government officials use their office for personal gain. *Commission Op. No. 97-18*. The main reason for public concern is that while employed by the government, an official may make decisions favorable to a private enterprise to secure subsequent employment or may use information, influence, and access acquired during government service for improper and unfair advantage in later dealings with that department or agency. *Id.* at 33. Reflecting that concern, post-employment laws set a "cooling off period" in areas where the ex-employee dealt with the agency on certain matters. *Id.* Here, the contract decision was made in 1996. Thus, his decision on that contract did not appear to have been predicated on a job opportunity with the YMCA which did not occur until some three years later. This minimized the appearance that the decision was made for personal gain. Additionally, while the contract was with his agency, the

contract was actually a State-wide program and the bid panel consisted of multiple agencies, such as the Attorney General's office, the Public Defender's office, and others, again minimizing the possibility that he could use this opportunity for personal gain. Also, the possibility of giving the YMCA a "leg up" over competitors in the award of the contract was limited because the YMCA was the only bidder to submit a State-wide proposal, which more effectively achieved the contract purposes because otherwise the State would have had to have two or three contractors. Moreover, the contract would not be re-bid until FY 2002, which meant he would not have the opportunity to influence former State colleagues on the re-bid decision during the two-year "cooling off" period.

Since the contract was awarded, he had limited interaction with the YMCA, as its Vice President of Operations said that the YMCA had dealt with him perhaps five times in three years, as there were two levels of organization between him and the state employee who managed the contract. Similarly, at the YMCA, the person who would actually manage the contract would be two levels of organization removed from him. The Commission also noted that when a waiver is granted, the rationale for permitting the State employee to engage in conduct which contravenes the statute, becomes available to the public so that they have the opportunity to realize that their concerns have been addressed. *29 Del. C. § 5807(b)*. Based on the multitude of facts which limited the possibility of any personal gain for him because of his State position, and limited the possibility of the YMCA obtaining a "leg up" over its competitors if he were permitted to work on that singular contract, when he would not be responsible for managing the contract, the Commission granted a waiver on the basis that the literal application was not necessary to serve the public purpose.

99-21A – Post Employment—Non-Profit with State Contracts: A former State employee wanted to accept a job with a non-profit private enterprise which had contracts/grants with her agency. Some of the contracts/grants were with her former office. She was involved with each of those contracts/grants, as part of her State position. The private enterprise also had other contracts with other sections of her Department, but she was not involved in those matters. Based on the following facts and law, the Commission concluded that she could accept employment without violating the post-employment law if: (1) she did not represent or assist the private enterprise on certain contracts; and (2) she worked on contracts issued by other sections of her Department because she was not involved in those matters.

In her State position, some of the services provided by her office were achieved by contracting with private enterprises. While employed by the State, she wrote Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for contracts; served on contract selection panels; and exercised oversight of the contracts after they were awarded. She left State employment to work for a non-profit organization which had a number of contracts/grants with her former State office. She was involved with each of those contracts/grants, as part of her State job. In her private employment, she expected to oversee and supervise the non-profits administrator who oversaw three contracts with her former office to ensure that the non-profit met its contract obligations. She also said that she had worked on a program to obtain a federal grant for her agency. The grant was awarded to the State and it was expected that the non-profit would compete for the grant money. She, and her former agency, sought guidance on whether it would violate the Code if she represented or assisted the non-profit in seeking that grant money. The non-profit had contracts with other sections of her department, but she was not involved in those contracts.

Contracts 1, 2 and 3: In each case, she was involved in writing the RFPs and was on the review panels which selected the non-profit as the contractor. Thus, she gave an opinion and was otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matters while employed by the State. If she represented or otherwise assisted the non-profit on those matters, it would violate the post-employment law. First, regarding any contract renewal, she said two of the contracts would not come up for renewal before the State within two years, at which point her 2-year post-employment restriction would have ended. The other contract was re-bid annually, but she would recuse herself from the competitive process on that contract. Thus, she would not be representing or assisting the non-profit in any contract renewal process during the 2-year restriction period. Apart from not participating in the contract renewals, she said that all proposals and contract budgets were prepared by the non-profit's contract administrator who was: well-experienced; had worked on the particular contract for a number of years; and could seek consultation on contract aspects from other parties in the company. The administrator would normally handle all issues requiring interaction with her former State agency, but she was concerned that her level of involvement would increase if there were unforeseen circumstances, such as a catastrophic illness. No facts indicated a reason to expect such an event. The Commission must base its opinions on a particular fact situation. 29 Del. C. § 5807(c). Thus, the Commission declined to speculate on what may be proper if a catastrophe occurred. Should that occur she could seek further guidance if needed. Thus, limiting the opinion to the particular facts, it did not appear that she would be representing or assisting the private enterprise on those matters because those duties were delegated to another employee who had handled those contracts for a number of years, and she was recusing herself from any contracting renewal activities.

Responding to RFP on State Grant: The State was expected to issue an RFP within the next month and would later select the winning contractor. She expected the non-profit to compete and asked if she should participate on behalf of the company in seeking the funding. In her State position, she participated in writing and developing the grant proposal to the federal agency which gave the State the grant. The federal grant application she wrote provided an overall framework of what was to be accomplished with the use of those resources. The RFP would be more specific about the requirements. While she did not write the RFP, she participated in the grant implementation committee which had general discussions of the RFP. The committee met twice monthly to discuss start-up and other issues related to implementing the grant. She also attended advisory committee meetings about the grant as a staff member to the project and participated in several national and regional training conferences related to the grant. The latter activity included representation to a regional center which provided technical assistance to States which had such grants.

Her former agency asked if her participation would be a conflict, because "we genuinely don't know and so we need guidance on that." An agency representative said it would not want to go through a rather extensive RFP process, if some vendor who was not selected came back and challenged her participation. She also noted that the non-profit would not want to be disqualified because of her participation. The agency representative said that all stakeholders at the community and state levels were given the opportunity to participate at a training meeting earlier in the year to expose them to grant information to which the former employee was privy.

The post-employment provision is meant to insure that former employees do not use their former position to "get a leg up" on other competitors or use the influence they derive from their former employment to influence their former co-workers in making decisions. *Commission Op. No. 95-11*. Here, the non-profit had bid on and been awarded a number of State contracts. Thus, it seemed to have some expertise in responding to RFPs. It was unclear why it would

need her expertise in responding to the RFP. Certainly, since she wrote the grant request for federal dollars for the program, in doing so she explained what could be done with the money and how it would be achieved. Since she convinced the federal government to fund the program, then she would have an intimate understanding of what program proposals the government would respond to--which would be the essence of the RFP. Moreover, she participated in twice-monthly meetings about implementing the grant and general discussions regarding the RFP and attended national and regional training conferences regarding such grants. While all stakeholders had the opportunity to participate in a training meeting, it was unlikely that they could have acquired the intimate knowledge and familiarity she had with the program.

It could appear to competitors and the public that if she wrote the non-profit's response to the RFP it would have a "leg up" because she developed the grant proposal--the essence of the RFP. Additionally, competitors and the public could perceive that the non-profit could receive preferential treatment during the selection process because the RFP resulted from her project and her former colleagues would be involved in deciding who got the contract. Thus, it appeared that her activity would violate both the letter of the law and the spirit of the post-employment provision.

Other Contracts with her Agency: The non-profit had other contracts with another section of her former agency, but she was not involved in those activities. As the post-employment provision is only triggered by working on matters where the individual gave an opinion, conducted an investigation, or was otherwise directly and materially responsible, we have held that where a former State employee had no input to or control over contracts with his former agency, it would not violate the post-employment provision if he worked on those matters for the private enterprise. *Commission Op. No. 94-11*. Accordingly, it would not violate the post-employment provision for her to represent or assist the non-profit on those matters.

99-21B – Post Employment—Home Visiting Program: WAIVER GRANTED W/

RESTRICTIONS: A State agency asked if the Commission would grant a waiver for one of its former employees to work for her private employer, a non-profit organization, on some matters for which she had been directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State. The non-profit had a number of contracts/grants with her former agency, but she did not intend to work on most of them. Rather, the agency sought a waiver so she could work on two matters for which she had been responsible.

"Private enterprise" includes both for profit and non-profit organizations. 29 Del. C. § 5804(8). However, the Commission may grant a waiver to particular prohibitions if the literal application of the law is not necessary to achieve the public purpose, or there is an undue hardship on the State agency or the employee. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a). When a waiver is granted, the proceedings become a matter of public record. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a).

Lori Tudor, a former State employee asked if it would violate the post-employment provision for her to serve as Director, Programs and Services for Children and Families First (CFF). CFF had contracts/grants with her former office. She was involved with each of those contracts/grants, as part of her State position with the Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families, Division of Family Services, Office of Prevention (OP). She and the agency sought a waiver for her to work on two matters, but she would not represent or assist CFF on other contracts for which she had been directly and materially responsible.

Home Visiting Program Contract - As a State employee she worked on developing the contract and was involved in reviewing the RFP language which was written by another unit of her State agency. However, she did not: write the RFP; participate in the review process of the bid applications; or select the contractor. CFF was one of three non-profits selected to fulfill the contract. As she worked on the contract development and reviewed the RFP language, such actions required an opinion by her and directly and materially involved her in the matter. Thus, if she represented or otherwise assisted CFF on the matter, it would violate the post-employment law. However, both she and her former agency asked for a waiver so she could represent CFF at meetings with the State and more actively participate in assisting CFF in complying with the contract obligations. Part of the reason for the request was that the CFF employee who was responsible for the contract was recently hired and did not have the experience in budgeting, planning, proposal development, and participating in complex partnership and interactions with high level officials that the project involved. To the extent that evidenced a hardship on the private enterprise, the statute only gives the Commission authority to grant a waiver based on a hardship for the State employee or State agency. See, 29 Del. C. § 5807(a). However, the State agency pointed out that the contract was a new initiative for the State, involving a number of State agencies and three non-profit organizations. When the contract was awarded, the agency anticipated that Ms. Tudor would be inhouse and it would have the benefit of her 30 years of State experience in overseeing the program. The Commission has held that the very hardship imposed by the post-employment provision is that a State agency loses the benefit of the experience of its former employees. *Commission Op. No. 97-41*. Thus, to have an "undue hardship" requires more. *Id.* What was significant about losing her expertise was that it came at a critical stage--when the program was in its "start-up" phase. Moreover, the agency had little lead time to make the transition because of her retirement shortly after the contract was awarded.

The Commission also placed the facts in the context of the purpose of the post-employment provision which is to ensure that State employees do not use their public office for personal gain by making decisions that could result in employment opportunities for them or would result in giving the private enterprise a "leg-up" on competitors, or give them an unfair or improper advantage in later dealings with their former agency. *Id.* Here, although she was involved in developing the contract, she did not participate in the review process of the various bidders and did not select the contractor. Also, the selection of CFF and the other non-profits involved was made by others before she was aware of any employment opportunity with CFF. Thus, no facts indicated that her decisions in developing the contract resulted from any prospective employment opportunities or so that CFF would have an advantage over its competitors. On a broader scope, she had made every effort to identify other matters with CFF where she could recuse herself, which indicated that where possible she did not seek to even create the appearance that she was trying to use her former position to give CFF a "leg up." Thus, the public concerns were diminished by the multitude of facts. Further, when a waiver is granted, the proceedings become a matter of public record so that the public can be assured that its concerns have been considered. 29 Del. C. § 5807(b). For all those reasons, the Commission granted a waiver for her to represent and assist CFF on the matter.

Community Resource Committee-A waiver was also sought so that Ms. Tudor could represent CFF on a Community Resources Committee which would do such things as develop: a common language between prevention providers, citizens, and government; training for prevention professionals; and a means to assess prevention programs. The Community Resources Committee was comprised of more than 60 entities, both State and private, and anyone who wanted to participate could do so. From that group, working groups were

established and would report back to the Committee. Her former agency would have a representative working with each working group as staff. She, nor her agency, expected that the Committee or the working groups would generate any funding opportunities. In her State job, she worked on the planning and led the initial Committee meetings. Thus, it appeared that she was directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State.

Waivers may be granted if the literal application of the law is not necessary to serve the public purpose or if there is an undue hardship on the former employee or the State agency. 29 *Del. C. § 5807(a)*. As noted above, the public purpose is to insure that former employees do not "get a leg up" on other competitors or capitalize on their former employment and unduly influence former colleagues in their decision making. Here, CFF, through her representation and assistance, would not achieve a "leg up" on other competitors because the Committee was open to anyone, thus all had the same opportunity. Moreover, it did not appear that CFF, through her representation and assistance, would financially capitalize from her former employment, because the Committee would not be generating funding opportunities for any participants. It also does not appear that CFF would capitalize in any other manner because the nature of the Committee was to develop a cohesive program on common language, training and assessment based on input from a multitude of State and private organizations. Also, there would be few people from her former agency participating on the Committee by comparison to persons from approximately 60 other organizations, both private and State. Thus, the Commission concluded that the literal application of the provision was not necessary to serve the public purpose and granted a waiver for her to participate on the Committee, which: (1) was open to anyone; (2) would not generate funding opportunities for CFF or any other organization that was involved; (3) would not permit the people from her former agency, who would serve as staff to the Committee, to generate or decide funding opportunities; and (4) because of its structure and nature, did not appear likely to result in people from her former agency showing any preferential treatment to CFF.

99-16 – Post Employment—Working on a Matter Years Before Retirement: A State agency asked to privately contract with a former State employee who had recently retired. The contract was to work on a system which she had worked on more than a dozen years before in her State capacity. It asked if the 2-year post-employment restriction applied, as it had been more than two years since she worked on the system.

In the early 70's through the early 80's, the former employee led the development and design of a State system which the agency said might have a material relationship to the contract work which it wanted her to do. However, she performed the work for an agency other than the one that sought to contract with her. Also, in the early 80's she moved to another state position where she had only some limited managerial exposure to the system, she had worked on but did not deal with systems development or design. Then, she moved to another state position at a higher managerial level. It did not involve working on the system. In the interim years, legislation was passed which resulted in implementing a new system. The system changes had been going on for years. The agency wanted to contract with her to work with several State agencies to insure an accurate conversion to the new system. During her State employment, she had not worked with the new system. Initially, the agency approached her after retirement, but she was not interested in getting involved in an intensive project. It then sought out other persons with applicable knowledge without success, so it went back to her and she agreed to accept the work.

The agency said it was unclear if the two-year restriction applied because although she developed and designed a system to accomplish the work during her State employment, she had not worked on such matters for the past several years. The statute is clear that the time restriction begins after the person leaves State employment. It says: "for a period of 2 years after termination of his employment or appointed status with the State if he gave an opinion, conducted an investigation or otherwise was directly and materially responsible for such matter in the course of his official duties as a state employee...." 29 Del. C. § 5805(d). If the language is clear and unambiguous, the words must be given their plain meaning. *Coastal Barge Corp. V. Coastal Zone Indus. Control Board*, Del. Supr., 492 A.2d 1242, 1246 (1985). However, Courts have given "some weight" to the argument that the lapse of time is one factor to consider in deciding if the activity is the same "matter." *CACI, Inc.-Federal v. The United States*, Fed. Cir., 719 F.2d 1567(1983) (post-employment contract was not the same "matter" because of elapsed time and difference in scope and approach).

Thus, the issue was if the post-employment contract with her covered a "matter" on which she gave an opinion; conducted an investigation; or was otherwise directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State. First, as to the contract in general, no facts indicated that she developed the concept or formulated the contract which she sought or was in any manner involved in making State decisions regarding the contract. Second, as to the subject matter of the contract as compared to her activities while employed by the State, the Commission has held that where the general subject "matter" was the same, there must be a factual overlap between the activities as a State employee and the post-employment activities. See, Commission Op. No. 96-75 (citing *Beebe Medical Center v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, Del. Super., C.A. No. 94A-01-004, Terry J. (June 30, 1995) *aff'd*, Del. Supr., No. 304, Veasey, C. J. (January 29, 1996)). Here, the general subject matter was the same--the contract was to work on a system which she worked on in a State position. In fact, she developed the system, and later, had some managerial related responsibilities pertaining to the system. However, in more recent years, her work was unrelated. The significance of the time lapse was that during that time, the system she developed was being eliminated and a new system was being implemented. The new system had different software; new calculation methods, etc. In converting to the new system, some data did not convert. She would lead a team to clean up the conversion errors. There were fundamental differences in the new system for which she had no responsibility while employed by the State, and the old one which she developed. Also, the scope of the work was different in that she was responsible for overall development of the old system but would now be responsible for cleaning up conversion errors. Thus, the Commission concluded that the post-employment activity was not a "matter" for which she was directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State.

99-15 – Post Employment—Contracting with Former Employee: WAIVER DENIED. A State agency wanted to contract with a former State employee to perform portions of the job she had with the State. As such activity would violate the post-employment law, the agency asked for a waiver. The Commission did not grant a waiver.

The Commission may grant a waiver to the specific prohibitions if it determines that the literal application of such prohibition in a particular case is not necessary to achieve the public purposes of the law or would result in an undue hardship on any employee, officer, official or state agency. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a).

Early the prior year, a State employee told her agency that she planned to retire around mid-summer/early fall of 1999. She had been assigned for about six years to a project which the agency had convinced the General Assembly to implement. Implementation required changes in computer programs and the State employee was to take existing requirements and ensure that the programmers had the modifications. The agency thought it had convinced her to wait to retire until after the project was implemented. Anticipating her retirement, the agency developed "a transition plan" to ensure "knowledge transfer" before she left. "Knowledge transfer" meant having her replacement "become knowledgeable in the new system" because the exiting State employee knew how the system worked and how it effectively implemented the program.

The agency assigned her replacement to start working with her so it would have the "knowledge transfer." However, the agency said the problem was that her replacement was responsible for other matters that had to be completed on a continuing basis. It also said there had been a tremendous challenge because so many of its people were working on the new program. The agency said that she was "going back and forth between commitments to the project that she'd worked on for 5 or 6 years, and her desire to start to phase out and enjoy retirement." To convince her to stay, it emphasized that it would work on phasing in someone else and phasing her out so she did not "have the burden of the management responsibilities on her shoulders, and then she could also run down the amount of time that she was spending on the project and ease her way out." It said that someone, it did not know who, would have to "backfill" for the person who would be working with her.

In the fall of 1998, the employee announced that she was leaving in January, instead of late summer-early fall 1999. The agency "talked about using those two months to have a crash course" with her replacement. It started the process but did not continue. Rather, it convinced her to stay by asking her to "think about the things, if you would, that we could do that might get you to stay." In early winter, she said she would retire in January but agreed to work up to 30 hours per week through the middle of the year to provide the knowledge transfer and help implement the new system. She would be paid \$75 per hour. Her salary was never negotiated, and "she did not have a specific number," but the agency said it believed that she wanted to be paid comparable to what private sector contractors who contract with the agency were paid. Its software vendor had employees that received \$140 to \$250 an hour and its programmers, who were with another company, were paid about \$125 an hour, but some were paid \$90 an hour. The agency told her to keep the total contract below \$50,000, because if it went over that amount, it would have to publicly notice and bid the job under the procurement rules. The employee agreed, with the conditions that she not: (1) work full time; (2) function as project leader; and (3) be responsible for daily operations. She also did not want any pension offset. As a full-time State employee, she made more than \$65,000 per year, which equated to just over \$33 per hour for a 37½-hour week. The agency said she probably worked more than 60-75 hours a week while employed full-time, so the dollar per hour should not be compared to a 40-hour week. It said that many of its employees were working those kinds of hours, and were not paid by the hour, as were consultants.

The Commission noted that as a matter of law, employees at her level, and many other State employees with such salaried positions, were not entitled to overtime pay. After she retired at the beginning of the year, she was hired as a temporary State employee, receiving \$75 per hour. By law, retirees hired as temporary State employees are subject to a pension offset. 29 *Del. C.* § 5502(a). However, if she privately contracted with her agency there would be no pension offset. The agency said it knew that privately contracting with her would violate the post-employment law and would require a waiver. The agency said that "replacement

knowledge" could be obtained, either internally or in the competitive market. However, it later said it could not find one or even several persons to replace her "knowledge of the application of the vendor product to accommodate Delaware's unique process and legal requirements." It said that any combination of hiring, reassignment or contractual arrangement that did not include her would either delay implementing the system from six (6) months to one (1) year or terminate the project. It said that "in any scenario, [she] would need to be retained to train her replacement." However, it later said that if she did not continue, it would not terminate the project. It also said that the Governor and General Assembly were aware of the resources needed for implementing the system and had given it substantial financial resources to obtain software, etc., but it was more difficult to obtain persons to "backfill" so that knowledge transfer could occur.

A. Should a waiver be granted because the literal application of the prohibition is not necessary to achieve the public purpose?

The public purpose of the Code of Conduct is to ensure public confidence in the integrity of its government and that public employees avoid conduct in violation of the public trust or conduct which creates a justifiable impression among the public that such trust is being violated. 29 *Del. C.* § 5802(1). In the context of post-employment, it has been noted that public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that government officials use their office for personal gain, particularly after leaving the government. "*Ethics in Government Act*," *United States Senate Report No. 95-170*, p. 32. The main reason for public concern is that former employees may use information, influence, and access acquired during government service for improper and unfair advantage in later dealings with that department or agency. *Id.* at 33. Reflecting that concern, post-employment laws set a "cooling off period" in areas where the ex-employee dealt with the agency on certain matters. *Id.* Here, if a waiver were granted, she would receive more than double her hourly wage when she was employed full-time, while working fewer hours and having significantly less responsibilities, and receive her entire State pension.

While the agency pointed out that she was being paid less than its private vendors who program the system, those private vendors were not subject to the Code of Conduct. Moreover, she was not a programmer. The agency had stated that it knew the marketplace for those programmers bears out the kind of hourly rates that they get. Thus, not only was her work not comparable, but the field selected by the agency on which to base her pay was one of the best paying of all career fields. No facts indicated what the "marketplace" would bear for her "knowledge transfer," nor was such information sought. The agency said, "there wasn't any negotiation over price." Rather, "it was willing to do whatever it took"; but "we had to stay within the \$50,000 bid requirement" so the contract would not require public notice and bidding. While the agency stated that comparing her State salary of just over \$33 per hour was not justified, there were several reasons why her State salary had bearing:

- (1) That was the job she was doing [except for fewer hours and fewer responsibilities] and that was the pay rate she would have received if she stayed full-time with the State until the project was completed.
- (2) The General Assembly acknowledged a relationship between the State salary and the salary to be paid when a State retiree turns around after retirement and is re-hired to perform the same State job because it provided specific laws for such persons and connected the salary to existing State positions, and directed that they have a pension offset. 29 *Del. C.* § 5502(a). The Commission has previously noted that the effect of

those laws was to prevent State employees from experiencing a windfall as a result of their public position. *Ethics Bulletin 007*.

(3) Using the State salary as the pay base was a common method used by agencies in negotiations. In every situation where an agency had sought and been granted a waiver of the post-employment law, they had used the former employee's State salary to establish the pay rate. *Commission Op. Nos. 91-18; 95-11; 96-60; 97-41; 98-15*. Basing the salary on the State pay served to diminish the perception that former employees were using their former State job to financially capitalize and obtain an unfair advantage. Here, the public could suspect that she used her public position involving access to information on the program, access to colleagues, etc., to create a very favorable employment opportunity for herself, giving her an unfair advantage over other possible competitors, especially as the agency acknowledged that the "replacement knowledge" can be obtained either internally or in the competitive market, but then eliminated the possibility for persons in the competitive market to compete by keeping the total below the procurement law's public notice and bidding requirement. The public could see that as preferential treatment by her former colleagues or using public office for private gain. That was not to say that she, in fact, used her public position to capitalize, but the public purpose is to "avoid any justifiable impression" that the public trust was violated. 29 *Del. C. § 5802(1)*. Thus, the literal application of the statute was necessary to achieve the public purpose, and no waiver was granted on that basis.

B. Should a waiver be granted because of an "undue hardship" on the employee or the agency?

"Undue hardship," means "more than required" or is "excessive." *Commission Op. No. 97-18 (citing Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, p. 1290 (10th ed. 1992))*. No facts were presented to indicate a hardship on the former employee.

The basis for the alleged hardship for the agency was that she had job knowledge which needed to be transferred. The agency based its request on her knowledge of both the old and the new system. Basically, it was saying that she knew the system. What any former employee brings to the table in a post-employment situation is that they have an understanding of the policies, procedures, etc., and can arguably do the work faster and cheaper because of their prior work in the same area. *Commission Op. No. 97-18*. However, the very hardship imposed by the statute is that the former employee's familiarity with the work is lost. Logically, the "loss of knowledge" argument could be used any time a former employee is contracted with to perform the same function for which such employee was directly and materially responsible. *Id.* If those facts alone created "an undue hardship," then the two-year restriction would never apply. *Id.*

The agency also stated that it had time constrictions to meet. The Commission first noted that the agency said she had worked on the program "for the last 5 or 6 years." During that time, certainly knowledge of the system was imparted by her to others working in the agency. Additionally, the agency was alerted to her retirement a full year ago. The agency said it had started the transition plan, so there should have at least been some "knowledge transfer." Further, it had hired her replacement who knew the current system, thus, reducing the "knowledge transfer" that needed to occur. The function of project leader had already been transferred to her replacement. The agency also said that the "crash course" with the replacement had started before the former employee was enticed to stay. Thus, some "knowledge transfer" had occurred. Additionally, the agency had her for more than three months as a part-time employee since her retirement to make the "knowledge transfer."

There were other options the agency could have pursued but did not implement. According to an agency representative the agency could have kept her on at her old salary and reduced her hours and responsibilities. It also could have stayed within the confines that the General Assembly provided in the statute on temporary hiring of retirees and avoided a post-employment violation. It could have explained to her that her condition that the pension not be offset, which would require a private contract, would result in a violation of the post-employment law. The Commission noted that when it informed her that she would have to keep the contract below \$50,000 so that they did not "run into the problem" of the procurement law requirements, she agreed to stay within those confines. It also could have continued the "crash course" since it knew what she wanted would violate the post-employment law. However, in the face of knowing that contracting with her would violate the Code of Conduct, the agency did not try to negotiate. On the day the agency came to the Commission for a waiver, it still had never spoken with her about remaining as a temporary employee rather than violating the Code. It had not even asked what she would do if the Commission did not grant a waiver. When the Commission has granted waivers as a result of time restrictions, the agencies have at least negotiated with the former State employee to try to keep the salary in line with their State salary to reduce the actual or perceived possibility that the former employee has turned their public position into a means of financial gain. Moreover, in those cases, agencies tried to find other sources through internal sources or public notice and bidding, etc., before seeking a waiver. *See, e.g., Commission Op. No. 97-18.*

The Commission understood that "hindsight is always 20/20," but in this case there were still options available to the agency:

- (1) stay within the confines of the statute regarding temporary hiring of retirees, and there would be no violation of the post-employment provision;
- (2) negotiate an agreement, like other agencies, that was based on a salary that diminishes the actual financial capitalization of the former State position and the appearance of favoritism in the award of the contract.

No waiver was granted based on the foregoing facts because: (1) the literal application of the prohibition was necessary to achieve the public purpose; (2) no facts indicated an undue hardship on the former employee; and (3) the facts did not substantiate an undue hardship on the agency when there was a legal means to achieve the same result-- having her continue with the agency--without violating the post-employment law and there were means of diminishing the very concerns which the post-employment law was meant to prevent--having former employees capitalize on their past relationship with the State.

99-13 – Post Employment—Serving as a Mediator: A former State officer was asked to mediate between his former agency and a company regulated by that agency. The dispute concerned implementing a regulation. While employed by the State he was directly and materially responsible for the regulation that the company later challenged in Court. He was asked by another State to mediate because the dispute could affect other States in regulating similar companies.

While he was employed by the State, a regulation was passed, which the company contested in court. The Court found the official record supporting the regulation was insufficient and remanded the regulation to the agency. The agency re-drafted the regulation, with minor adjustments, and resubmitted it with a more robust record. The proposed regulation was signed

by the individual who took over his former position. The State requesting that he serve as the mediator was one of 13 States, including Delaware, which comprised a regional commission created by the U.S. Congress. Its purpose was to make recommendations for federal measures to be applied in all or part of the region if such measures were needed. Consequently, the member States of the commission had an interest in seeing a resolution reached because of a possible regional impact on their States. Moreover, States outside the commission's area had an interest in seeing the matter resolved because if the region could not resolve compliance problems, States outside the region could go to the federal agency involved and argue that if this region were not complying, then their regions should not have to comply with the federal measures.

The former State officer was approached by one of the commission States to mediate because of his knowledge and understanding of the control measures, with the understanding that both parties (the State of Delaware and the private enterprise) would agree to have him as the mediator. Mediators act as a neutral third party to help disputing parties reach agreement and normally cannot impose a decision on the parties. *Black's Law Dictionary*, p. 981 (6th ed. 1990). The concern which the post-employment provision seeks to address in restricting former employees from representing or assisting a private enterprise before their former agency is to ensure they do not use their influence to obtain a decision or action favorable to their private enterprise. Here, the former employee would not be seeking a decision or action favorable to his private enterprise as a result of his mediation. Based on those facts, the Commission concluded that his conduct did not constitute "representing or assisting a private enterprise.

99-11 – Post Employment—State Job Required Interacting with Contracting Agency's Division: A State agency asked if one of its divisions could contract with a former State employee to provide staffing services on a division project. Based on the following law and facts, the Commission held that it would not violate the post-employment provision.

While employed by the State, the former employee did not work for the agency which sought to contract with her. However, her State duties required her to work with one of its divisions on certain budget matters. The same division wanted her to contract on its project. The matter on which she gave an opinion for the division while employed by the State related to its budget. If she contracted with the division, she would not be responsible for its budget. Rather, she would write requests for proposals for certain aspects of the agency's programs; arrange community forums; perform staff work for the agency (e.g., put together agenda, draft minutes; and participate in meetings); attend agency meetings; work on assignments from those meetings; act as liaison with contractors; assist in writing contracts; and perform day-to-day project coordination. As the matters for which she would contract were not matters on which she gave an opinion; conducted an investigation or was otherwise directly and materially responsible for while employed by the State, the Commission found no violation of the post-employment provision.

98-41 – Post Employment—Work on Contract Issued by State Agency: A private enterprise was awarded a contract in 1991 which remained inactive until the General Assembly approved going forward on the project. The agency turned to the private enterprise to begin the contract performance. Because it had hired a former employee from the agency, a decision was sought on whether it would violate the post-employment provision if he worked on the

project.

The project was awarded to the company to establish the parameters of the work, prepare a concept, and give a cost estimate in 1991-1992. The former employee was not employed by the agency until several years later. After going to work for the agency, he was asked several years ago to provide an updated cost estimate for the project. After he left State employment, the company was advised that the long dormant project would be re-activated.

The facts clearly demonstrated he could not have given an opinion; conducted an investigation; or have been in any manner directly and materially responsible for any part of the contract when it was awarded more than 7 years ago, as he was not employed by the State. As to the cost estimates provided by him some time ago, it was the Commission's understanding that such estimates were not material to the re-activation of the project because: (1) the scope of the project had changed; (2) the alignment was moved; (3) the updated estimate was a rough estimate for construction, not design, and the former State employee's duties with the private enterprise would be design; and (4) new cost estimates must be prepared as a result of the changes in the project and the elapsed time. As the project was not the same as when he gave a cost estimate; as new estimates were necessary for the project as now envisioned; and because he would be working on the design aspect, not construction for which he gave an updated estimate, the Commission found that his proposed activity would not violate the post-employment provision.

98-39 – Post Employment—Contracting to Provide Training to Former Agency: A State agency contracted with a private enterprise to provide training to its staff. It had contracted with the private enterprise for similar training about 6 years before. However, a former employee from the agency was now the Director of the private enterprise. She would be part of its training team. The Commission concluded that her activities would not violate the post-employment provision.

The former employee would represent/assist a private enterprise as its new Director and as a trainer before her former State agency. To decide if she would be representing the private enterprise on matters in which she: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation; or (3) was otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State, the Commission compared her activities while employed by the State to those she would perform for the private enterprise before the State.

Her State job was as head of an agency which performed oversight functions of a regulated industry, such as initial licensing, license renewals, monitoring and supervision, complaint investigation, enforcement, development of regulations and policies, technical assistance to the facilities, interpretation and technical assistance to the community. As the head of the agency, she was responsible for ensuring those functions were performed. As part of her duties, she also approved contracts, including a contract for the private enterprise to provide training to her staff more than six years ago. The agency sought to contract with the company again to provide training on such topics as complaints, rules, legal and constitutional issues, enforcement and ethics. It was expected that the former employee would provide training on regulatory investigations. She had made such presentations at national conferences and was considered an expert in the field. The reason the agency wanted to contract with the private enterprise for training was because it had an influx of staff needing training. Although the private enterprise provided annual seminars, the agency could not afford to send all of the

staff to the seminar and wished to bring the company in to perform the training.

Here, the contract had not yet been entered into and no facts indicated that the former employee was in any manner responsible for the contract. On a broader level, her responsibilities as head of the agency were not as a trainer to the agency, which she sought to do. While she made presentations on regulatory investigations at national conferences while employed by the State, and it was expected that she would train her former agency's employees on investigations as part of the private company's team, the Commission did not find that training the staff on regulatory investigations was the same matter for which she was directly and materially responsible while employed by the State. Her State work focused on the licensing, investigation, etc., in the particular industry, while staff training was provided by outside agencies such as the private enterprise.

98-38 – Post Employment—Subcontracting on State Contract: A former employee wanted to serve as a consultant on certain aspects of a State contract. Approximately 40 other bidders were seeking to work on the same contract. The agency had not made any decision regarding who would get the contract, nor had decisions been made regarding subcontractors. Thus, it was possible that he might not even be selected. However, as he had approximately three months left on his post-employment restrictions, he asked if he could submit a letter of intent.

While employed by the State, he was not involved in any decisions on the particular contract. Thus, he did not give an opinion, conduct an investigation and was not otherwise directly and materially responsible for the contract while employed by the State. Regarding the substance of the contract, the Commission compared the substance of the contract to the work the employee performed while employed by the State to decide if the contract substance encompassed matters for which he was directly and materially responsible while employed by the agency. The particular contract projects had not yet been identified, as the contract was open-ended for "miscellaneous" projects. Thus, it could not be ascertained if the particular projects which would later be identified would be matters for which he was responsible while employed by agency. However, as the agency still needed to reduce the number of applicants to a short-list; have pre-proposal meetings with short-listed candidates; followed by possible oral interviews to select successful candidates; etc., it was likely that before the particular projects were identified that the 2 year period would expire.

Although the Commission could not address the particular projects, it considered the particular type of work he wished to do regardless of the projects. Specifically, he wanted to subcontract to perform work which he said he had not done for the State in 15 years. However, more recently, from 1992 until his retirement, he was responsible for similar work. He said that in that job he considered the work different because he had a broader scope of responsibility--more of a coordinator and facilitator than "hands-on" work which he would do if selected as a subcontractor. The Commission found no violation.

98-36 – Post Employment—Working for Company with Agency Contracts: A former State employee asked if it would violate the post-employment provision if he worked on projects which were awarded by his former agency to his new employer. The individual worked for a State agency for 2 years. During that time, he was rotated through various sections for exposure to a variety of aspects of his agency's projects. He was assigned to work on four specific agency

projects. None of them were awarded to his new employer.

His new employer sought to have the former State employee work on four projects it had been awarded by his agency. While working for the State, he was not involved in any manner with these projects. Accordingly, the Commission found that the projects on which the company sought to use him were not matters on which he gave an opinion, conducted an investigation or was otherwise directly and materially responsible, and there would be no violation of the post-employment provisions.

98-22 – Post-Employment—Developing Computer Systems: A State employee asked if she could work for a company which contracted with her former agency. While employed by the State, she did not participate in or have any decision-making authority regarding the company's contract with her agency. Also, the contract did not deal with the area for which she was directly and materially responsible--monitoring certain Delaware agencies for compliance with a federal program. As part of that program, she also used certain computer skills. Specifically, she was the data manager for an agency program which involved putting data into the program for reports to the federal government. She also put information on the website.

The private enterprise planned to use her managerial and computer skills. Specifically, as it related to dealing with State agencies, if an agency decided to have the company write a computer program, she would work with the agency to decide what was needed-- the kind of reports they wanted, how they wanted the final product to operate, etc. She would convey that to the company's computer specialists who would write the program. Once that was done, she would take it to the agency to see if the program filled the need; would provide training; and would write training materials. In effect, she would assist in developing systems. She had nothing to do with developing systems for her former agency, rather, she collected and input data into existing systems. At the time, the company wanted her to work with State agencies other than her former agency. However, the company said it was possible that she might be asked to work on the contract with her former agency. If the company decided it needed her to work on matters for her former agency, she was advised that she may not represent or assist the company on matters where she gave an opinion, conducted an investigation or was otherwise directly and materially responsible. As the Commission bases its decisions on particular facts, 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(c), it could not render a decision on speculation that she might possibly work for the private company on matters involving her former agency which would violate the Code. Accordingly, she was advised that if the company sought to have her work on matters involving her former agency, she should review the post-employment provision and cases interpreting that provision and could return to the Commission for further guidance based on the particular facts.

98-21 – Post-Employment—Working with Agency Clients: A State employee asked if it would violate the post-employment provision if she accepted a position with a private enterprise which contracted with her agency. The private enterprise had a contract with her former agency to provide certain services to clients. She was not involved in selecting the private enterprise for the contract or in preparing the contract for her agency.

In her State job, she worked with clients but did not refer any clients to the private enterprise. Rather, the clients she worked with were referred to another State agency for

particular services. If, after a given period of time, the clients still needed the services, the other agency could refer them to a contractor such as the private enterprise. If employed by the private enterprise, she would work with its clients and would have some dealings with her former agency. Specifically, if the client did not comply with the requirements needed to obtain the services, she could recommend to her former division that a sanction be imposed. Her former division would decide what, if any, sanctions were appropriate. She was not previously involved in recommending sanctions against clients assigned to the private enterprise. The Commission found no violation.

98-20 – Post-Employment—Computer Services for the State: The Commission determined that proposed post-employment activities by a computer specialist would not violate the post-employment provision.

While employed by the State approximately 14 months previously, the individual worked for his agency as a computer specialist. Before leaving State employment, his agency assigned him as a computer support specialist to another State agency. Before that, he was assigned as the computer support specialist for two other State agencies. He was seeking permission to contract as a computer support person for a different State agency.

As a computer support specialist, he worked with the agencies to assist them with identifying and developing their specific computer needs. The contract he sought would also require him to identify and develop specific computer needs for a different agency. However, he was in no manner involved with the agency decision regarding the issuance of the contract. Also, the new agency he would work for had its own specific needs and systems which did not overlap with those on which he previously worked. He had no dealings with anyone in that agency while employed by the State. As he was in no manner involved with the systems needs of the agency which needed the computer specialist, the Commission found no violation of the post-employment provision.

98-19 – Post-Employment—Training Contract with Former Agency: The Commission concluded that it would violate the post-employment provision if a State employee were selected and accepted a contract to develop a training program for a State council after she left State employment.

The purpose of the post-employment provision is to insure that former employees do not capitalize on their former employment to get a “leg up” on other competitors or exercise undue influence on their former colleagues or cause a public perception of impropriety. See e.g., *Commission Op. No 97- 41*. While employed by the State, she was responsible for a custom training program for her agency and said she was “the State expert” on the particular training subject matter “both nationally and locally.” The responsibilities included assisting employers with developing and underwriting this particular type of training program. Also, her former unit offered to act as consultants to private enterprises to design training programs suitable to their needs in a particular area.

One of her duties as the unit’s director was to serve on a State council. It identified how State and Federal funds would be used to develop and upgrade the particular area for which her unit had responsibility. This resulted in Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and selecting

contractors. This year the council issued an RFP seeking contractors for certain programs. She wanted to seek the portion of the contract pertaining to the specific training development requirements. According to the RFP, the training was designed to meet specific training needs of one employer or a group of employers in the same product area. Therefore, the Commission found that the subject matter of the services to be provided under the RFP were, in essence, the same services for which she was directly and materially responsible while employed by the State. Thus, the Commission found that it would violate the post-employment provision for her to contract for such services.

The council received responses to the RFP from a number of other persons for the contract. As nothing indicated that the applicants were not qualified to fulfill the contract, nothing indicated an undue hardship for the agency. Accordingly, the Commission did not grant a waiver under those circumstances.

98-17 – Post Employment—Returning to Work with Former Private Employer: A State employee had worked for his agency for a few months then decided to return to the private corporation where he worked before accepting State employment. He asked if returning to his previous employer would violate the post-employment provision. The Commission determined that his proposed post-employment activities with the private enterprise would not violate the post-employment provision as he would not have any dealings with his former State division.

While employed by the State, he investigated complaints by clients who received services from State agencies and private enterprises. While employed by the State, he was not aware of, nor involved in, any complaints against the private enterprise where he would be working. Although it had a State contract, he was not involved in putting together the contract or selecting the contractor. The contract was with a different agency than the one for which he worked.

The job with the private enterprise would not result in dealings with his former division. Rather, he would train the private enterprise's employees. He might also conduct in-house investigations of its employees, if a client filed a complaint. The clients were not the same clients he dealt with while employed by the State. The private enterprise had State clients referred by an agency other than his, and he was not involved in any of that agency's decisions and did not work with its clients. The private enterprise did not operate the same type of facility, or have the same clients, as the ones he was responsible for while employed by the State. Any contact he might have with the State would be with Divisions other than the one where he was employed. Although the private enterprise did not anticipate any attempt to contract with his former agency, he said at the Commission's meeting that he would not have any dealings with his former division during the 2-year period. Thus, his employment with the private enterprise would not violate the post-employment provision.

98-15 – Post Employment—Waiver Granted for Agency to Hire Former Employee: The Commission may grant a waiver to the Code provisions if the literal application of the provision is not necessary to serve the public purpose or there is an undue hardship on the agency or employee. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(a). When a waiver is granted, the proceedings are no longer confidential but are a matter of public record. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(b)(4).

In the following instance, the Commission granted a waiver for the Delaware Economic Development Office (DEDO) to hire a former employee during the 2 year period when the Code prohibits former State employees from representing or assisting a private enterprise before the State on matters in which they gave an opinion, conducted an investigation or were otherwise directly and materially responsible. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d).

The Commission reviewed the agency's written correspondence seeking a waiver and considered statements of Ms. Jan Abrams and Mr. James Lisa concerning DEDO's request to contract with Ms. Abrams to complete the "Incumbent Worker Project." Based on the following law and facts, a waiver was granted for DEDO to contract with Ms. Abrams for the particular project with the understanding that it would be completed, and the contract would terminate at the end of June 1998.

DEDO wanted Ms. Abrams to complete the "Incumbent Worker Project" for which she had "primary responsibility" while employed by the State. As she was directly and materially responsible for the matter, the issue was whether the Commission should grant a waiver. Waivers may be granted if there is an undue hardship on the State employee or agency. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(a).

The agency announced, at the beginning of the year, that there was an opening for Ms. Abrams' former position. DEDO concluded that the applicants were not qualified and re-announced the job. DEDO also was trying to fill an unexpected vacancy in the same unit. Further, an employee in the unit was trying to care for an ill spouse and for aging parents out of State and had required emergency leave. Thus, DEDO was short-handed in the six-person unit which Ms. Abrams directed. Mr. Lisa said that even if DEDO filled Ms. Abrams' position the new person would have difficulty completing a project that had been underway for almost nine (9) months. The correspondence indicated that bringing in a new person midstream would cause DEDO to lose "significant momentum." Also, DEDO had a June 1998 deadline for the project to be presented at a national conference.

The agency expected to pay Ms. Abrams at her current hourly State salary rate, plus Other Employment Costs (OECs) and expenses. OECs are more than 30% of an employee's State salary. OECs are the costs the State pays for its full-time employees to cover health insurance, workers' compensation; pension, Medicare, FICA, and unemployment insurance. The State did not pay those costs for part-time employees. Generally, an advantage of using a private contractor for State work is so the State does not incur such costs. One concern of the post-employment law is to insure former employees do not get a "leg-up" on others who might compete for such contracts. Thus, the Commission asked Mr. Lisa whether the agency normally considered paying such costs for a private contractor. Ms. Abrams responded that the contract would be 25% below the market rate. Mr. Lisa said the agency was suggesting an hourly rate; it would be putting a cap on the contract; and the contract would expire at the end of June 1998. He said he did not believe there were competitors who could do the job.

Under those particular facts, the Commission granted a waiver for the limited purpose of completing the "Incumbent Worker Project" which would be completed by the end of June 1998.

98-12 – Post Employment-- Employment by Firm Regulated by Former Agency: A State employee planned to leave State employment and asked if he could accept a job with a company regulated by his former Division. The Commission concluded he could do so with the

restrictions identified below.

First, in several situations he had dealings with the company in his official capacity, but said he was not the final decision maker. However, the post-employment provision is not limited to situations where the former State employee is the *final* decision maker. Rather, it looks to the employee's responsibility and involvement in matters involving the State.

The matters involving the State on which the former employee would represent or assist the private enterprise were placed in the context of the three triggering provisions and the interpretation should serve the purposes for having a post-employment restriction. *Commission Op. No. 96-75*. The restriction recognizes, on the one hand, that moving between the government and private employment may create conflicts of interest or appearances of impropriety. The concern is that: (1) government employees who hope to move to the private sector will favor firms they think may offer rewards later; and (2) after they switch to the private side they may be able to exercise undue influence on those with government employees with whom they previously worked. *Id.* (citing *United States v. Medico*, 7th Cir., 784 F.2d 840, 843 (1986)). On the other hand, the chance to move from private to public employment and back again may allow the government to secure skilled people who might not otherwise make public service a career at current pay rates. *Medico* at 843. Thus, "matter" must be defined broadly enough to prevent conflicts of interest, without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers after their public service. *Id.*

Having laid the framework for interpreting "matter," the Commission addressed the particular situation using the examples of the former employee's dealings with the company in his official capacity. In the first situation, he said controversies had arisen over certificates issued by his Division. His role was "to advise Division staff members . . . and the ...Secretary on these matters as they have arisen over the years." He said that "ultimately, in none of these matters was I the final decision maker." Clearly, if he advised his staff members and his Cabinet Secretary on those controversies, he "gave an opinion" and was "directly and materially responsible." The mere fact that he was not the final decision-maker, did not mean he was not "directly and materially responsible." As noted above, the statute is not limited to *final* decisions. Rather, it looks to the employee's responsibilities. When the staff made decisions, as the Division Director, he was ultimately responsible. Similarly, when he advised the Cabinet Secretary, who may later decide an issue, his advice was based on his training and experience as a Division Director. Thus, as to "matters" dealing with permits and certificates, he was directly and materially responsible.

In the second situation regarding a certificate, he said he had no direct decision-making authority regarding the company because the certificate was a long-standing one and the choice of the company used was not discretionary. However, he said there was much controversy involving many parties and he "had a direct policy role in a case which resulted in this company serving the community," and he was "the Administration point person on most matters dealing with this case." He said the project was "on-going" and might be so for several more months. He believed the prospective job might have him involved with customers or government representatives as the project proceeded. Again, the fact that he was not the final decision maker did not mean he was not directly and materially responsible. His statements that he had a "direct policy role" and was the "point person" supported the conclusion that he was directly and materially responsible. As he expected to be involved with customers or government representatives on the matter, he would be representing or assisting the private enterprise. However, to the extent he would be involved with the company's customers, he would not be representing or assisting the company before the State. Similarly, if his representation or

assistance to “government representatives” was not before the State, e.g., local government, then he could represent or assist the private enterprise in those activities under those conditions.

Third, he gave an example of “an investigation” in which the Division was involved and was “on-going” concerning a complaint about the company. However, he indicated that he was not involved in conducting the investigation as those matters were in the jurisdiction of two other agencies. As to matters within the purview of other agencies, he would be permitted to represent or assist the company before those agencies on matters in which his agency did not participate. He said it was possible that the company might become involved in another area which his agency handled. As this matter was not one of certainty, the Commission concluded that a ruling would be premature because it must base its rulings on “a particular fact situation.” 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(c). However, the opinion could guide him, and, of course, he could come back for a specific opinion.

98-04 – Post Employment—Employment by Firm Which Contracted with Former Agency:

A former State employee went to work for a private enterprise which had a contract with his former agency. He was not in any manner involved in the contract decision. Additionally, while working for the State, he did not work for the same section with which the private enterprise contracted. Moreover, the subject matter of the contract was not within his area of responsibility. His work with the private enterprise was not likely to result in contact with the section which operated the programs he worked on for the State. Further, he would not disclose or improperly use any confidential information he may have gained through his public position. Accordingly, under those facts, the Commission found no violation of the post-employment provision.

98-01 – Post Employment—Working for a Firm Which Designs for State Agency: A State employee was his agency’s liaison with companies which could be affected by his agency’s design projects. Once a design was submitted to the agency by a contractor, a review process began. The employee’s sole job in the process was to send proposed designs to designated companies so they could decide if the design would impact their property. If the impact required changes, the changes were made by persons who were not State employees. He played no part in any changes. Once the initial review was completed, he continued to act solely as the liaison between his agency and the companies for any subsequent changes. He had no authority to select designers, nor did he design a project.

He left the State to work for a private enterprise. He was not involved in any of its projects while employed by State, except for one project, where he was the agency’s liaison. The company he went to work for had already submitted the designs, when he accepted employment. Thus, it had essentially completed its contract with the State agency. If design questions arose during construction, they would be answered by the company’s designer. The former State employee would not work on that project. Therefore, to the extent he might be considered to have given an opinion or been directly and materially responsible for the project because he acted as a liaison, he would not be representing or assisting the company on that matter. Under those facts, the Commission found that he did not give an opinion, conduct an investigation and was not otherwise directly and materially responsible for any matter involving the company, except for his limited involvement in acting as a liaison on one matter. As to that

“matter,” he would not be representing or assisting the private enterprise as the final plans were submitted to the agency before he was hired, and if a question arose regarding the plans, he would not handle the matter.

He was directly and materially responsible for liaison work between the State and private enterprises while employed by the State but would not work as a liaison for the private enterprise. Rather, he would be responsible for design, engineering, and planning, which were not his State responsibilities.

97-41 – Post Employment—Contract with Former Agency—WAIVER GRANTED: *NOTE: When a waiver is granted, the proceedings before the Commission are no longer treated as confidential matters. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a).*

Lois Studte asked if accepting a post-employment contract with her former State employer, Delaware Technical & Community College (Del. Tech.), would violate the post-employment provision, and if so whether a waiver would be granted.

In Ms. Studte’s case, her former agency wished to retain her immediately after retirement to develop an associate degree program for paramedics. While employed by Del. Tech, she was an advisor to the paramedic program at the Owens Campus and also represented Del. Tech in discussions regarding developing the associate degree program. Also, she worked with accreditation standards and would be involved with accreditation standards for the paramedic’s degree program. Her employment at Del. Tech. involved more than those duties, as she indicated that the paramedic program was only a “sliver” of her responsibilities. However, it was clear from those duties that, as the Del. Tech. representative at the discussions concerning the paramedic associate degree program, she gave an opinion on the very program on which she would be working. Moreover, she was directly and materially responsible for the existing paramedic program at the Owens Campus since she served as an advisor to that program. The Commission concluded that the proposed contract would violate the post-employment provision.

However, the Commission may grant a waiver if: (1) the literal application of the prohibition is not necessary to serve the public purpose; or (2) if there is an undue hardship for the employee or the agency. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a).

A. Is the literal application of the prohibition necessary to serve the public purpose?

The public purpose of the Code of Conduct is to ensure public confidence in the integrity of its government and that public employees avoid conduct in violation of the public trust or conduct which creates a justifiable impression among the public that such trust is being violated. 29 Del. C. § 5802(1).

In the context of post-employment, it has been noted that public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that government officials use their office for personal gain, particularly after leaving the government. *“Ethics in Government Act,” United States Senate Report No. 95-170*, p. 32. The main reason for public concern is that former employees may use information, influence and access acquired during government service for improper and unfair advantage in later dealings with that department or agency. *Id.*

at 33. Reflecting that concern, post-employment laws set a “cooling off period” in areas where the ex-employee dealt with the agency on certain matters. *Id.* In Delaware, that “cooling off period” is two years in the three areas described above. Here, while employed by Del Tech, she was specifically involved in putting together the very program for which she wished to contract. The public could suspect that she used her public position involving access to information on the program, and access to colleagues, etc., to create a future employment opportunity for herself, giving her an unfair advantage over other possible competitors. In fact, there were discussions between her, the Cabinet Secretary of Health and Social Services and the President of Del Tech beginning more than a year ago in which her willingness to contract with Del. Tech. upon retirement was sought. That is not to say that she, in fact, used her public position to capitalize, but the public purpose is to “avoid any justifiable impression” that the public trust was violated. Thus, the literal application of the statute is necessary to achieve the public purpose, and therefore would not be a basis for a waiver.

B. Undue Hardship

As noted above, however, a waiver may be granted if there is an undue hardship for the agency. “Undue hardship,” means “more than required” or is “excessive.” *Commission Op. No. 97-18 (citing Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, p. 1290 (10th ed. 1992).* Part of the basis for the request was: her 26 years of experience at the college; she knew the policies, procedures and guidelines of the College; she had extensive experience with health accreditation; and she was very knowledgeable about the Delaware health care system. As to the paramedic program, she indicated that she was “uniquely qualified” because she worked with all of the critical organizations involved with the program during the past year and could coordinate between Public Health and Del Tech. Basically, she was saying that she knew the players and knew the system. The Commission has previously noted that what any former employee brings to the table in a post-employment situation is that they have an understanding of the policies, procedures, etc., and can arguably do the work faster and cheaper as a result of their prior work in the same area. *Commission Op. No. 97-18.* However, the very hardship imposed by the statute is that any costs savings created by the former employee’s familiarity with the work is lost. Logically, that argument could be used any time a former employee is hired to perform the same function for which such employee was directly and materially responsible. *Id.* If those facts alone constituted “an undue hardship,” and thus a basis for a waiver, there would never be a “cooling off period.” *Id.*

The other “hardship” basis was that the agency said there were significant time constraints in developing the program and that “finding another individual or firm with the requisite history and qualifications to develop and implement this program would present an undue hardship and could significantly delay the implementation of the educational paramedic program.” To get the paramedic association program implemented and running by August 1999, the program development had to begin immediately. The agency looked internally for someone to perform the tasks, but the two employees who had an allied health background were not as familiar with the paramedic needs or some of the other related issues. The Dean of Academic Affairs thought if one of those two individuals were used it could delay program implementation anywhere from six months to as much as a year. The agency had not attempted to advertise the position to persons outside the agency. According to Mark Brainard, Del. Tech’s Assistant Vice President, Personnel and Legal Affairs, the agency did not know if persons outside the agency would have the experience she had in matters such as curriculum development, course development, admissions standards, accreditation issues which were necessary for a paramedic program and who had familiarity with the educational side. Even so, training or finding such an individual externally or internally would cause a serious delay in

meeting the deadline for starting the program.

Because “time is of the essence” in getting the new degree program underway, it would be an undue hardship on the agency not to grant a waiver in these circumstances. However, such waiver was conditioned upon: (1) work limited to that “sliver” of responsibilities related to developing the particular program; (2) the contract was for one year; and (3) as stated at the Commission meeting, Ms. Studte would take a 30% reduction in pay and would take no pay for the meetings in the spring. While granting a waiver, the Commission strongly encouraged the agency to be cognizant of the post-employment provision, and where it had advance knowledge that an individual was planning to leave State employment, begin looking in a timely manner for a replacement.

97-27 – Post Employment—Short Term Contract: A former State employee asked if it would violate the post-employment restrictions if he entered a short-term contract to provide computer services to input data provided by an agency for its fiscal year budget. He also asked if, in the future, he may work for a firm which might bid on other State contracts.

Here, the former employee was never employed by the agency with which he sought to contract to provide computer services. While employed by the State, he worked with computers and provided information to his agency regarding its computer needs. Some of the agency’s needs were provided by the agency with which he sought to contract. However, he was not involved in any manner in providing information for his former agency’s budget that would be part of the information he would input under the contract. He also was in no manner responsible for the contract which he now sought. In performing the contract obligations, he would not have any decision-making authority over what numbers were input, rather he would perform merely the technical function of inputting data. He would not input any data regarding his former agency. Regarding the possibility that he may, in the future, wish to work with a firm which may bid on other State contracts, any decision on that matter would be premature because the State contract in which the firm could be interested had not yet been published for bid.

97-21 – Post Employment—Application to Temporary Employees: A State agency was considering hiring an individual to fill a position that was not funded as a permanent position. It asked about the applicability of the post-employment restrictions to the individual should she be hired. It said she would not be “the typical employee” because she was leaving private employment and may be asked to leave State employment through no fault of her own. It indicated that it believed the limit that may be imposed on others may not be fairly applied to her situation. The Commission noted the concern about those matters; however, the statute mandates that the Commission base its decisions on a particular fact situation. See, 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(c). As she had not even begun work for the State, there were no facts to apply at this juncture. The Commission said that the individual was obviously aware of the post-employment restriction and the Commission assumed she would factor that into her decision to accept State employment.

The Commission may provide assistance to an agency in understanding the Code. See, 29 *Del. C.* § 5809(10). It pointed out the following: No specific exemption or distinction appears

in the post-employment restriction based on whether the employee was temporary, did not hold a permanent position, etc. Realistically, a number of people have worked for the State that did not have a permanent position: casual, seasonal employees who are hired for limited periods of time; non-Merit employees, who could be dismissed at any time with no “cause” required for termination; and Merit position employees who have a probationary period and can be terminated during that period under the applicable Merit Rules. Although a two-year restriction applies to post-employment activities, the Commission had previously noted that the General Assembly limited the restriction to “discrete and isolated transactions” that trigger the provision so people may move from private employment to public employment and back again. *Commission Op. 96- 75.*

Thus, the effect of the post-employment provision depended on which activities she engaged while employed by the State and whether, upon exiting State employment, she would be assisting any private enterprise on matters involving the State in the three areas listed above.

97-18 – Post Employment—Contract with Former Division: A few months after a State employee retired, the agency asked if it could privately contract with him to work on certain projects. The projects in the contract were projects for the Division from which he retired. The agency said if the employment would violate the post-employment provision that it wished to have a waiver granted.

Although the individual did not work specifically on the projects in the contract while assigned to the Division the Commission concluded that in reviewing his responsibilities in the Division and comparing that with the post-employment contract responsibilities proposed for the same Division, the contract would be for matters for which he was directly and materially responsible while employed by the State. In his most recent State position, he had oversight responsibility for the Division’s projects. He was responsible for overseeing the last step before a project was advertised. That authority required him to review each project using the principles and practices of his profession to decide not only alternate ways to ensure cost efficiency, but also to question, because of his past experience as a designer of similar projects in the same Division, the technical aspects of the project. He was also responsible for oversight of the Division employee who actually worked with the consultant to review the types of products used in design of the project.

Additionally, he was responsible for the “stewardship arrangement” on federally funded projects of the same nature. That entailed insuring that other sections involved in putting the total project together coordinated on the various project elements. He also oversaw the function where the technical project elements came together from the various sections with the financial arrangement. Thus, he administered the project contracts and supervised administrative, professional, technical, and support staff through his oversight responsibilities. As indicated in his job description, that position had “full technical responsibility for interpreting, organizing, executing, and coordinating assignments, and for planning and developing . . . projects. A significant aspect of the work involved coordination of the administrative and technical factors related to multiple programs.”

His responsibilities, if awarded the proposed contract, would require him to coordinate with other Department sections in putting together the various elements of the contracts such as administering and drafting the contracts for final advertising and award. Such work was

essentially the same responsibilities he performed for the Division while employed by the State. The agency said it was interested in contracting with the former employee because he was “very familiar with the process...” and “he knows how to take a project from the start and come up with a completed ... design.” Regarding his responsibilities for the Division, it was stated that “what he did was make sure all these things come together.” Thus, it was his ability to manage a project that made him an attractive candidate.

The Commission recognized that while employed by the Division he had less “hands on” input but more oversight in the process because he possessed the requisite design skills. The fact that he would be expected to do more “hands on” input under the proposed contract was of little significance because his duties would still involve matters over which he was directly and materially responsible while employed by the State. Accordingly, the Commission found a post-employment contract with the former employee to perform duties for which he was directly and materially responsible only several months previously would violate the post-employment provision.

Regarding the agency’s request for a waiver, waivers may be granted if the literal application of the statute is not necessary to achieve the public purpose of the statute or would result in an undue hardship to the employee or agency. 29 Del. C. § 5807(a). The post-employment restriction was designed to prevent former employees from getting a “leg up” on other private enterprises that deal with the State. *Commission Op. No. 95-11*. In discussing the federal post-employment provision similar to Delaware’s, Congress noted: like other conflict of interest statutes, post-employment provisions are an attempt to insure public confidence in the integrity of the government. “*Ethics in Government Act*,” *Senate Report No. 95-170*, p. 32. It noted that public confidence in government had been weakened by a widespread conviction that government officials use their office for personal gain, particularly after leaving the government. *Id.* The main reason for public concern is that former employees may use information, influence, and access acquired during government service for improper and unfair advantage in later dealings with that department or agency. *Id.* at 33. Reflecting that concern, post-employment laws set a “cooling off period” in areas where the ex-employee dealt with the agency on certain matters. *Id.* Similarly, the Delaware Legislature sought to insure public confidence in the integrity of government. 29 Del. C. § 5802. It then set a two-year “cooling off period” in areas where the former employee was “directly and materially responsible.” 29 Del. C. § 5805(d). This limits the actual or perceived unfair advantage in subsequent dealings with a department or agency.

While the agency admitted that there were other consultants who could perform the work, it wanted a waiver because it could hire him for less money than other outside consultants because the agency would have to pay others a price which would include charges for overhead and profit. The agency said that while it could negotiate with other consultants on the amount charged for profit, it could not do so as to overhead. A contract with the former employee would not contain a charge for overhead because the agency intended to make its staff available to him. Thus, the State would pay those employees’ wages and benefits to work on the contract with the former employee. Additionally, the agency said he was familiar with the process and, therefore, it would take less time for him to put together a project. As noted by a Commissioner at the hearing, nothing in the Code creates a waiver only on the basis that it would be cheaper to hire a former employee. While the Commission found the agency’s concern over the cost to be commendable, it noted that every former employee could bring continuity and familiarity to performing a contract on the same duties which were performed as a State employee. That would arguably always create a cost savings to the State. If a waiver were granted only on that basis, the former employee would always have the advantage against competitors.

Further, “undue” hardship means “more than required” or is “excessive.” See, *Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, p. 1290 (10th ed. 1992); *Black’s Law Dictionary*, p. 1370 (5th ed. 1989). The very hardship imposed by the statute is that any cost savings created by the former employee’s familiarity with the work is lost. Logically, the “cost savings” argument could be used any time a former employee is hired to perform the same function for which such employee was directly and materially responsible. If such a hardship were considered “undue,” there would never be a “cooling off” period. Thus, to affect the public purpose of precluding an actual or perceived unfair advantage and to give meaning to “undue hardship,” the Commission would not grant a waiver merely on the basis that there would arguably be a cost savings if the former employee were the contractor. As noted before, the statutory purpose is to preclude former employees from capitalizing on their past employment. Here, the agency sought to contract with a former employee who left employment with the same Division only a few months ago, on a contract which would run for more than a year. At a minimum, it could appear to the public that he had an advantage over other contractors based on his prior responsibilities with the agency and could be capitalizing on his past relationship with the agency.

97-09 – Post Employment—Facilitating a Retreat—WAIVER GRANTED: A State agency asked if hiring a former employee, Albert Edwards, III, to serve as a facilitator at a two-day retreat on Team Building, in July, would violate the post-employment provision. While employed by the State, he performed the same duties. He left State employment in January 1997.

The Commission has held that private contracts with the State constitute a “private enterprise.” *Commission Op. No. 94-10*. While employed by the State, he facilitated the same type of training. Thus, he would be performing the same duties for which he was “directly and materially responsible.” As the two-year period had not expired, such activity would violate the post-employment provision.

The agency asked for a waiver if the activity would violate the Code. Waivers may be granted if the literal application of the statute is not necessary to achieve the public purpose of the statute or would result in an undue hardship to the employee or agency. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(a). The post-employment provision is designed to prevent former employees from getting a “leg up” on other private enterprises that deal with the State. *Commission Op. No. 95-11*. In discussing the federal post-employment provision similar to Delaware’s, Congress noted: Like other conflict of interest statutes, post-employment provisions are an attempt to insure public confidence in the integrity of government. “*Ethics in Government Act*,” *Senate Report No. 95-170*, p. 32. It noted that public confidence in government has been weakened by a widespread conviction that government officials use their office for personal gain, particularly after leaving the government. *Id.* The main reason for public concern is that former employees may use information, influence, and access acquired during government service for improper and unfair advantage in later dealings with that department or agency. *Id.* at 33. Reflecting that concern, post-employment laws set a “cooling off period” in areas where the ex-employee dealt with the agency on certain matters. *Id.*

Similarly, the Delaware legislature sought to ensure public confidence in the integrity of government. 29 *Del. C.* § 5802. It then set a 2 year “cooling off period” in areas where the former employee was “directly and materially responsible.” 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). This limits the actual or perceived unfair advantage in subsequent dealings with a department or agency, while minimizing the burden on individuals who undertake government service. Here, the written

request asked for a waiver on the basis that: “While other individuals could be hired to provide this service, Mr. Edwards’ familiarity with the group and the program would reduce the advance planning time required of the facilitator. This, coupled with his residing close to the retreat site, should result in cost-savings for the state.” Every former employee can presumably bring continuity and familiarity to performing the same job, which arguably would always affect a cost savings. If a waiver were granted only on that basis, the former employee would always have the advantage against competitors.

Further, “undue” hardship means “more than required” or is “excessive.” See, *Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, p. 1290 (10th ed. 1993); *Black’s Law Dictionary*, p. 1370 (5th ed. 1989). The very hardship imposed by the statute is that any cost savings created by the former employee’s familiarity with the work, which also results in continuity, is lost. Logically, the “cost-savings” argument could be used anytime a former employee is hired to perform the same function for which such employee was directly and materially responsible. If such a hardship were considered “undue,” there would never be a “cooling off” period. Thus, to affect the public purpose of precluding an actual or perceived unfair advantage and to give meaning to “undue hardship,” the Commission examined other factors brought to its attention at the hearing by Ms. Nancy Pearsall, Staff Development/Project Management. She agreed that there were others available who would like to perform the work. However, she stated that: (1) there were no internal resources or outside resources which could adequately provide the services that Mr. Edwards could provide in the time frame given; (2) it would take her a lot of time to bring someone else up to his level; and (3) his vacant position had been announced but not filled and it would require a lot of time to prepare that individual even when hired.

Because of the difficulties in finding an adequately trained facilitator and the difficulty in training someone to his level in time for this one retreat, combined with other facts such as the limited employment period, the Commission granted a waiver for the agency to contract with him for the two-day retreat. The waiver was limited to that two-day period and did not include any follow-up work.

96-81 – Post Employment—Computer Consultant to State Agency: A State agency notified 30 vendors of a computer consulting opportunity. A State employee learned of the opportunity and applied. The employee asked if it would violate the post-employment provision if she left State employment and accepted the position.

While a State employee, the individual had worked on computer programs which she would be doing if she was selected as the consultant. However, she had not worked for the same agency while employed by the State; had not been in anyway involved with the agency while employed by the State; and the computer work was not on the same subject matter for which she was responsible while employed by the State. Thus, she would not be representing or assisting the private enterprise on matters on which she gave an opinion, conducted an investigation, or was otherwise responsible for while employed by the State. Further, the type of information she had access to while employed by the State was not information that would aid her in the agency contract. She said she would not disclose or use any confidential information gained as a State employee. The Commission found no violation under these facts.

96-75 – Post Employment—Defining “Matter”: A State employee obtained an advisory

opinion from the Commission regarding his post-employment activities. See, *Commission Op. No. 96-32*. He had asked if it would violate the post-employment provision if he sought contracts with State agencies. He was not attempting to contract with his former agency. The Commission held that his proposed activities did not violate the Code. Once he submitted bids on contracts, the agencies asked to the Commission to review the situation. It asked the Commission to focus on the meaning of “matter” and the meaning of “confidential information,” in the post-employment provision.

That provision restricts State employees from representing or assisting a private enterprise on any *matter* involving the State, for 2 years after terminating employment, if he: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation; or (3) was otherwise directly and materially responsible for such *matter* in the course of his official duties. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d) (*emphasis added*). The provision also provides: “Nor shall any former State employee, State officer or Honorary State official disclose *confidential information* gained by reason of his public position nor shall he otherwise use such information for personal gain or benefit.” *Id.* (*emphasis added*). “Matter” means “any application, petition, request, business dealing or transaction of any sort.” 29 *Del. C.* § 5804(6). “Confidential information” is not defined by the Code.

At the hearing, an agency representative noted that “matter” is “fairly broad,” and wanted to know: “Is it the same matter even though it’s not the same contract, but it’s a similar process?” Putting that question in the context of this case: Is the “matter” (providing computer services to other agencies) the same “matter” for which he was responsible while employed by a different agency since the “process” of developing computer programs is similar? And does understanding the “process” constitute “confidential information”?

A. Approach to Interpreting the “Matter”

Under the Delaware rules of statutory construction, words and phrases are to be read within their context and the construction should be consistent with the manifest intent of the General Assembly. 1 *Del. C.* § 303 and § 301. In the Code of Conduct, the broad intent of the General Assembly is expressed in its “Legislative findings and statement of policy.” See, 29 *Del. C.* § 5801. The General Assembly said that the conduct of State employees and officers must hold the respect and confidence of the public, which is achieved by following “specific standards” of conduct. 29 *Del. C.* § 5802. It went on to say that: “all citizens should be encouraged to assume public office and employment, and that therefore, the activities of officers and employees of the State should not be unduly circumscribed.” 29 *Del. C.* § 5802(3).

To assure that these findings and policy considerations are applied with a fair understanding of such legislative intent, the General Assembly was careful to provide specific standards to determine whether proposed post-employment activities are permitted. Thus, the “matter” in the post-employment provision must be one in which the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation; or (3) was otherwise directly and materially responsible. See, 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). The Delaware post-employment restriction uses the term “matter,” and it separately defines it as “any application, petition, request, business dealing or transaction of any sort.” The federal statute does not separately define “matter,” but lists examples in the statutory text such as contracts, claims, etc., “or other particular matter.” Regardless of approach, both restrictions identify types of “matters.” Placed within the framework of the statute, the “matter” must be related to the former employee’s activities and subsequent representation. In Delaware, it must be “directly and materially” related and in the federal statute, it must be “personally and substantially” related. These standards are similar. See, *WordPerfect Thesaurus* (“directly” is listed as synonymous with “personally”; “material” is

synonymous with “substance”; See also, *Black’s Law Dictionary*, p. 880 (5th ed. 1979) (“material” encompasses representation which is “so substantial and important”; *Id.* at 1281 (“substantially” includes “materially”).

The Commission then considered cases analyzing the term “matter” in the federal post-employment provision, which is similar to Delaware’s provision. See, *United States v. Medico*, 7th Cir., 784 F.2d 840, 842 (1986); *CACI, Inc. v. United States*, Fed. Cir., 719 F.2d 1567 (1983). In those cases, the federal statute restricted former employees from acting “as agent or attorney for anyone other than the United States in connection with any . . . contract, claim, . . . or other particular matter . . . in which he participated personally and substantially as an officer or employee.” *Medico* at 842. The *Medico* Court spoke at length about the purpose of the post-employment provision and how that affects the definition of “matter.” *Id.* at 842-843. It said that moving between government and private employment creates a risk of a conflict of interest--that people who hope to move to the private sector will favor firms they think may offer rewards later and after they switch to the private side may exercise undue influence on those they leave behind. *Id.* at 843. On the other hand, the chance to move from private to public employment and back again may enable the government to secure skilled people who are unwilling to make public service a career at current pay rates. *Id.*

The Court stated:

“The government can hire people for less, and attract specially, skilled agents if it allows them to put their skills to use later for private employers. It is therefore important to define ‘particular matter’ broadly enough to prevent disloyalty without defining it so broadly that the government loses the services of those who contemplate private careers following public service.” *Id.*

The Court said those concerns were addressed by the manner in which the statute was drafted. *Id.* The court noted the “discrete and isolated transactions” which trigger the prohibition. *Id.* It said the limits of the statute must be put together. *Id.* The court pointed out that the triggering factors were whether the “matter” was the same “matter” and whether the former employee participated “personally and substantially.” *Id.* It said that even where the subject was the same, the facts must overlap substantially. *Id.* Similarly, Delaware’s law has triggering factors--the “matter” must be the same “matter” in which the former employee: (1) gave an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation; or (3) was otherwise directly and materially responsible. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). The decision on whether the Delaware code factors are triggered is based on comparing the factual “matter” on which the employee worked, and the factual “matter” of the proposed post-employment and whether the two overlap.

In *Medico*, the facts overlapped substantially because the former employee represented a company before his former agency on a contract that was a mirror image of a previous agency contract that he negotiated. *Id.* at 842 and 844. The Court held the “matter” was the same and “nothing more was required.” *Id.* at 844. By way of contrast, the *Medico* court pointed to another federal case where the subject was the same but the facts did not substantially overlap. *Id.* at 843 (citing *CACI, Inc. v. United States*, Fed. Cir., 719 F.2d 1567 (1983)). In *CACI*, a federal Department of Justice (DOJ) employee was Chief of the computer section that provided services to a DOJ division. *Id.* at 1570. When the computer staff could not supply services, private contractors did so through noncompetitive contracts. *Id.* While employed by the DOJ, the Chief “contemplated” obtaining the services through competitive contracts. *Id.* at 1576. After he left government service, the DOJ issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the computer services. *Id.* at 1570. The Chief, now a former employee,

helped prepare a company's response to the RFP and represented the company before his former agency. *Id.* An unsuccessful bidder challenged the contract award on the basis that, among other things, the post-employment provision had been violated. The lower court held that the prior data processing contracts and the current procurement contract were part of the same particular "matter." *Id.* at 1576. However, the Appellate Court reversed that decision, holding that they were not the same "matter" because the former employee had not developed the concept or formulated the RFP, and the contract was broader in scope, different in concept and incorporated different features than the prior contracts. *Id.* It noted that the new contract was to consolidate services, eliminate redundant services, improve management control, provide new services, include some services under the old contract and exclude some services provided under the old contract. *Id.* Thus, the *CACI* court, like the *Medico* court, looked at a specific, identifiable "matter."

Like the federal courts, the Delaware Superior Court looked to the particular matter on which a former State official was representing a private enterprise, rather than a process, to decide if the post-employment provision applied. *Beebe v. Certificate of Need Appeals Board*, Del. Super., C.A. No. 94A- 01-004, Terry, J. (June 30, 1995). In *Beebe*, a former member of the Health Resources Management Council represented a company before the Council on a certificate of need (CON) request. *Id.* at 17. In his introductory remarks, he said that he had served on the Council for five years. *Id.* It was argued that his representation of the company violated the post-employment statute. *Id.* The Court found that while he was a Council member, he participated in reviewing CONs; however, the record showed that he did not take part in reviewing the two applications being considered by the Council. The Court held that "since he appeared before the Council in a *matter* for which he had no direct and material responsibility while on the Council, he did not violate the statute." *Id.* (*emphasis added*).

Here, the "matter[s]" on which the Delaware former employee wanted to represent a private enterprise were contracts to provide computer services to two agencies. Those contracts, like the ones in *CACI*, were not concepts or proposals he developed. The contracts required developing programs based on the specific agency needs to eliminate redundancy, improve control, provide new services, and integrate or exclude existing computer services as needed. Unlike the *Medico* contracts, they were not mirror images of each other, and no facts indicated that they mirrored any of his former agency's computer systems. Those systems were developed for his former agency's specific needs and the other two agencies had identified their own specific needs.

While the former employee was involved with his agency's computer system, it was not a technical requirement of his job. Moreover, the contracts were with other State agencies, not with his former agency. Thus, he was not even representing a private enterprise before his own agency as was done in *Medico* and *CACI*. The first contract he sought was with a Board on which he served as his agency's representative. The Board met periodically and was charged with developing policies. His position with the Board was as a policy maker. He was not its computer specialist, nor was he responsible for the day-to-day operations of the agency over which the Board developed policy. While the Board discussed the need for a better information system, like the individual in *Beebe*, the former employee did not review, vote on or develop the concept or proposal.

As for the second contract, he did not work for the agency with which he wanted to contract; nor was he involved in developing its proposals. Thus, the contracts were not "matters" on which he gave an opinion, conducted an investigation or was otherwise directly and materially responsible for while employed by his State agency.

B. Interpreting “Confidential Information”

The post-employment provision provides: “Nor shall any former state employee, state officer or honorary state official disclose confidential information gained by reason of his public position nor shall he otherwise use such information for personal gain or benefit.” 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). Both agencies said: “The question presented by this set of circumstances is whether the former employee had access to confidential information through his employment with his agency and as a member of the Board which could conceivably give his company an unfair advantage over other contractors in developing these issues [developing computer programs].”

The Commission noted at the outset that:

- (1) the Code does not define the term “confidential information”;
- (2) it was to decide if the former employee gained “confidential information,” through his State employment;
- (3) if so, he may not disclose such information following employment with the State nor may he otherwise use such information for personal gain or benefit.

The Commission noted in another decision that the Code does not define “confidential information.” Thus, it followed the rules of statutory construction which require that words and phrases be read within their context and be construed according to the common and approved usage of the English language. *Commission Op. No. 95-05 (citing 1 Del. C. § 303)*. The ordinary usage of “confidential” means “containing information whose unauthorized disclosure could be prejudicial.” *Id. (citing Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, p. 242 (10th ed. 1993))*. The concern expressed was not that the government would be prejudiced if he got the contracts, but that a competitor for the contracts might be prejudiced.

In the prior decision, the Commission also looked at case law and statutes dealing with release of government information as relevant precedent in deciding if a specific matter was confidential under the Code of Conduct. *Id. (citing 2A Sutherland Stat. Constr. § 45.15 (5th ed. 1992) (decision on a point of statutory construction has relevance as precedence if the language of one statute has been incorporated in another or both statutes are such closely related subjects that consideration of one would naturally bring the other to mind)*. To ensure consistency in its opinions, as required by 29 *Del. C.* § 5809(b), the Commission used the same approach in this instance, but dealt with the particular facts of the case. See, 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(c) (advisory opinions are to be based on particular facts). Therefore, the Commission noted that, in this case, provisions in Title 11 and in Title 29 might restrict disclosure of certain information which might be in the existing data systems.

First, to the extent the information in the existing data systems was protected from release as a matter of law, its disclosure would be unauthorized. The former employee stated that in developing the computer programs he would have no need to use any of the information contained in the existing programs. Thus, he would not be using non-disclosable contents of the systems for his personal gain or benefit. An agency representative said that any computer analyst could technically perform the job. As non-disclosable information in the data systems was not needed to write the programs, even assuming the former employee had that particular information, his competitors would not be prejudiced as they also would not need it to develop a program.

As to the activities of the Board, its Executive Director said the meetings were subject

to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). FOIA provides that meetings are to be public unless they are closed based on specific statutory provisions. 29 Del. C. § 10004(b). Thus, open sessions would not be considered confidential proceedings. The statements at the Commission meeting were that all the meetings were open and that any member of the public could have attended the meetings and listened to the discourse. Thus, information at those meetings was information any citizen could have obtained. Again, it was admitted that any computer analyst could technically perform the job. Thus, the Board's discussions were available to competitors causing no prejudice. Furthermore, the job could be performed without that information, giving the former employee no edge over competitors. The Commission noted that information on developing computer systems was readily available to any person through, for example, classes offered at schools and universities. See, e.g., *Delaware Tech Spring 1997 Course Schedule*, p. 15. Public information also was available on how to create computer systems in a specialized environment. See, e.g., *Kinney, Litigation Support Systems (1985)* which included sample government RFPs, etc. Also, information on how to contract with the State of Delaware was publicly available. See, e.g., 29 Del. C. § 6901, et. seq. The Commission also gave weight to the statement of an agency representative that no privacy statute or freedom of information type of privilege or proprietary information was involved, especially as no facts to the contrary were revealed.

Rather, the expressed concern was that while the Board's contract was subject to notice and public bidding, the contract with the other agency was not. No evidence was offered to show that such a non-public bid contract involved any use of "confidential information." However, if the concern was based on awarding a contract under circumstances where the public was less likely to know about it because it was not subject to public bidding such concern had more to do with openness of government than with use of confidential information. There is no provision in the Code prohibiting former employees from bidding on contracts that are not subject to notice and public bidding. If the General Assembly believed it was a distinction that made a difference, it could have imposed a restriction on former employees as it has on current employees and officers. See, 29 Del. C. § 5805(c) (*current employees and officers may not contract with the State on contracts of less than \$2,000 unless there is notice and public bidding*). Further, the State can award certain contracts without notice and public bidding. See, e.g., 29 Del. C., Chapter 69. Thus, the Commission would not graft such a distinction onto the statute.

Another concern was that a data systems analysis program applicable to other State agencies was developed while the former employee was with his agency. Again, it is unclear how this connects to "confidential information," especially when any computer analyst could perform the contract. If it was being suggested that the former employee gained some special advantage because of his employment with his agency, contacts he may have made with other agencies, and through membership on the Board, the Commission failed to see how such activities could be classified as part of the "confidential information" rubric. The relationship or lack thereof did not impact on the ability to perform the service. Any computer analyst could perform the contract. Also, no evidence was submitted to suggest that the former employee used any relationship with such persons to obtain the contracts. In fact, the former employee's undisputed testimony was that he first learned that funding might be available for a computer contract with the Board when he read about it in the State's proposed budget, a public document. The Board's contract was subject to public notice and bidding and was open to anyone regardless of prior associations or friendships. Thus, the relationship or lack thereof does not impact on the ability to perform the service.

As to the other contract, the former employee did not know, nor did he have any

involvement with persons within the agency.

No evidence was submitted to suggest that the former employee used his relationship to obtain any of the contracts. See, *CACI*, 719 F.2d at 1582 (to ascribe “evil motives” to State employees who make contractor selection or to the former employee for whom they had worked without factual basis is “clearly erroneous”); See also, *Brown v. District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment*, D.C. App., 486 A.2d 37, 44, n. 7 (1984) (there must be, among other things, a showing of access substantially related to the subsequent representation before a Court infers that an individual actually gained confidential information); See also, *Medico*, 784 F.2d at 844 (fact that former employee did not use “inside information” was “irrelevant” to a determination of whether the post-employment provision was violated because the statute restricts representation on matters where the individual is personally and substantially responsible and “avoids any reference to such difficult-to-prove events”).

The Commission concluded that there was no evidence that confidential information relative to the contracts was gained through the former employee’s employment or his position on the Board. Therefore, he could not have used such information in connection with the contracts.

C. Can the former employee use computer analysts from his partner’s firm?

When he first requested an opinion from the Commission, the former employee said that one of the partners in his firm was also head of another firm which contracted with his former agency. He said he would not: work on those contracts; seek to recruit programmers to fulfill the other firm’s obligations; or seek a contract with his former agency. Commission Op. No. 96-32. One agency said that it understood that the two computer consultants who might be used by the former employee for this work had previously performed work for his partner’s firm. It asked if the use of those consultants violated the prohibition against the disclosure or use of confidential information for personal gain or benefit. No facts suggested that the two consultants worked on the contracts with his former agency. However, assuming they did, no facts indicated that any confidential information they may have learned would be used on these contracts. The Commission noted again that fulfillment of the contracts required technical skills that were within the public domain, and any computer analyst could technically perform the task. Assuming the computer analysts were familiar with his former agency’s needs, they must use their skills to develop a specific program based on the specific needs of the contracting agencies. Even though the “process” of fulfilling the contracts was the same “process” used for his former agency, the Commission had already addressed the “process” issue at length. The fact that two of the analysts had worked for another firm did not change the conclusion that the former employee was not disclosing or using confidential information for personal gain or benefit or that he was using it to the prejudice of competitors.

96-74 – Post Employment--Insufficient Facts: A State employee’s duties entailed not only working on computer systems, but planning, designing, etc. He also wrote bid specifications, evaluated bids, gave opinions on the abilities of contractors to perform the contracts, participated in selecting vendors, etc. He was actively engaged in those activities until 1994. Later, his participation in contractual aspects was reduced. In 1996, two computer companies offered him employment. One company did not have a contract with his State agency, but it was expected to bid if the agency re-bid the contract. The other company had a State contract with his agency. However, he had not participated in that contract decision.

A. The Company with a State Contract

The Commission found that there were insufficient facts to decide if his participation in the contract would violate the post-employment provision. Clearly, in the past, he had participated in decisions on contracts on which this company bid. However, in later years he did not participate in contract decisions. If the subsequent contracts were mirror images of the ones in which he participated, then it was possible the contract could be one on which he gave an opinion or was otherwise directly and materially responsible. But if the contract on which the company wished him to work was substantially different, it may not be one on which he gave an opinion or was otherwise directly and materially responsible. Without such specific facts, the Commission could not issue a final decision.

B. The Company without A State Contract

While the other company did not have a State contract with his former agency, he anticipated that if the agency re-bid the contract the company might respond to the request for bidders. If it responded, it was possible that it might be selected. Conversely, it was possible that the agency might not re-bid the contract; the company might not respond if the contract were re-bid; and it might not be selected if it did respond to a re-bid. If the latter occurred, it was possible that he might go to work for the company but have no occasion to represent or assist it before the State within the two-year period.

If the contract were re-bid, the contract terms were not known at the time. Those terms could affect whether the contract would be a “matter” on which he gave an opinion, conducted an investigation or was otherwise directly and materially responsible. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). The Commission pointed to a federal case where a former federal employee was working for a private enterprise on a contract which was a mirror image of a contract he drafted, negotiated, etc., while employed by the government. See, *United States v. Medico*, 7th Cir., 784 F.2d 840 (1986) (a mirror image contract was the same “matter” on which a federal employee worked on during his federal employment and therefore participation on behalf of a private enterprise violated the federal post-employment law). Participating in a mirror image contract might violate the Delaware post-employment provision. However, if the contract sufficiently differed from contracts worked on while employed by the State, it might be possible that the activity would not violate the Code. See, *CACI, Inc. v. United States*, Fed. Cir., 719 F.2d 1567(1983) (federal employee was chief of computer section and contracted with private vendors; as part of his post-employment activities, he represented a company which bid on a contract with his former agency; federal court held that the contract was not the same “matter” because the contract was broader in scope, different in concept and incorporated different features than contracts he worked on during his government employment).

C. Restrictions on Using Confidential Information

The post-employment restriction also prohibits improper disclosure or use of confidential information gained while employed by the government. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). The Commission noted that the State employee said proprietary systems were “out there,” and that he had been involved in contract negotiations for the State with various computer companies. It pointed out that even where a contract is subject to public notice and bidding, some information may be confined to closed hearings. See, 29 *Del. C.* § 6919. Also, trade secrets, and commercial or financial information obtained which is of a privileged or confidential nature, is not to be disclosed. See, 29 *Del. C.* § 10002(d)(2). The Commission cautioned the employee that if he

accepted either job, he was not to improperly disclose or use confidential information that he may have gained from his public position.

96-73 – Post Employment—Computer Consulting with Former Agency: A State agency contracted with a firm to provide computer services for a multi-year project. Later, the contractor defaulted, and the agency needed to hire another contractor. The agency wanted to use a firm owned and operated by a former State employee. Also, the firm's systems designer who would be assigned to the project, was a former State employee. The agency wanted them to complete part of the multi-year project and then would publicly notice and bid the remainder of the project.

As neither the owner of the firm or the program designer had been terminated for more than 2 years, both former employees had worked for the same agency. However, neither had worked for the section that was seeking to contract; neither had participated in anyway in putting together the contract that the defaulting contractor had been awarded; and neither had been involved with the project which was the subject of the contract while employed by the State. The post-employment provision also prohibits disclosing or otherwise using confidential information gained while a State employee. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d). In designing the contract program, the type of information the employees worked with as State employees would not be used, nor would they disclose any confidential information.

96-71 – Post Employment—Company Contracts with Former Agency: A former State employee went to work for a company which had projects regulated by his former agency. While employed by the State, he had reviewed and approved some projects. If he worked on those projects for the private employer, he would be representing or assisting a private enterprise on matters in which he gave an opinion while employed by the State. Such activity would violate the post-employment restriction. However, the private company said it had other projects he could work on which the State did not regulate. Participation in those projects would not violate the post-employment provision. Additionally, the company had projects which he did not review and approve while employed by the State. On those projects, he was expected to have contact with his former agency. The Commission held that as he was not representing his employer on matters which he reviewed while in his official capacity, his participation would not be prohibited. In reaching that decision, the Commission relied on *Beebe v. Certification of Need Appeals Board*, Del. Super., C.A. No. 94A-012-004, Terry, J. (June 30, 1995), *aff'd*, No. 304, Del. Supr., Veasey, J. (January 29, 1996) (former member of Health Resources Management Council did not violate the post-employment restrictions when he represented a private company on an application before the Council as he had not reviewed the application while serving on the Council).

96-69 – Post Employment—Particular Facts Required: An individual who intended to leave State employment asked if his proposed post-employment activities would violate the Code of Conduct. He had not accepted any offer with any employer, nor had he decided if he would pursue a consulting contract with the State. He said it was possible that he might work for a company that could have State contracts. The Commission must base its decisions on a "particular fact situation." 29 Del. C. § 5807(c). As he had no particular company in mind, nor

was he aware of any particular State contract on which he might work, the Commission held that the facts were insufficient for a decision. It referred him to the Commission's synopses of post-employment opinions and advised that once he identified a specific post-employment position, he could return for a decision.

96-65 – Post Employment—Company Contracting with Agency for Which Former

Employee Developed Guidelines: The Director of a State agency left his employment and accepted a fellowship position with a federal agency. At the end of the fellowship, he was offered a job by a computer firm which had won a competitive contract with Delaware to provide a tracking program for a case management system. The company also had a contract with another State. The firm wanted him to manage the technicians who would be putting together programs for Delaware and the other State. The contract was not with his former agency. However, while employed by the State, the former employee served on a Committee which developed guidelines for the State agency which later contracted with the company. He said it was possible that the Committee discussed a computer tracking system, but he had no specific recollection of such discussion and was not aware of any specific Committee action regarding such systems. The former employee was not involved in any facet of the contract or in selecting the company, as he had left State employment and therefore was not serving on the Committee at the time of the contract.

As he was involved in the specific contract while employed by the State and because the private employment would consist of managing computer technicians, which was not part of his responsibilities while employed by the State, the Commission found that he had not given an opinion, conducted an investigation and was not directly and materially responsible for the matter while employed by the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d).

96-60 – Post Employment—Limited Waiver: A State employee was a Training Administrator in the Division of Mental Retardation (DMR). In addition to other duties, she served in the lead capacity for the "Essential Lifestyle Planning" (ELP) project, which had a goal of restructuring the way DMR provides support and services to clients. She wanted to leave full-time employment because of injuries suffered in an accident. It was possible that the agency might need her expertise on the ELP project. An agency representative said he supported her waiver request due to the unusual circumstances of her accident, and because it would give the Division the option of contracting with her if it needed her expertise on the ELP program. He said the Division would follow all State guidelines on competitive bidding.

As her employment by the State included work on the ELP program and she wanted to seek a contract on that same matter, if the Division sought a contractor for the work, her participation in such contract would violate the post-employment provision. The Commission may waive Code of Conduct restrictions if the literal application of the law is not necessary to serve the public purpose or if there is an undue hardship on the employee or the agency. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(a). If a waiver is granted, the proceedings become a matter of public record. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(a). The Commission granted a waiver for the limited purpose of allowing the agency to have the option of contracting with her, if it decided it needed her expertise in the limited area of the ELP process.

96-46 – Post Employment—Working for Company Contracting with Prior Agency: A computer company offered a former State social worker a job. The company had a contract with her former State agency. The Commission held that her employment by the computer company would not violate the post-employment provision as she had not given an opinion; conducted an investigation; and was not directly and materially responsible for selecting the contractor or developing the contract requirements, while employed by the State. *See, 29 Del. C. § 5805(d)*. She used the computer system provided under the contract for the ministerial work of tracking clients. However, the type of activity for which she was directly and materially responsible was not the ministerial tracking of cases but fulfilling the job requirements of a social worker. Those responsibilities were dissimilar to the employment with the private enterprise, as she would work in the systems end of the computer program. While her general knowledge of the agency's needs might help to develop computer requirements, the Commission found that such general background differed from the particular duties for which she was directly and materially responsible--evaluating the needs of a particular client and making decisions such as whether intervention was necessary. The Commission held that moving from the operational area of direct services to families into a computer systems position, with no contact with her former clients, would not violate the post-employment provision.

96-44 – Post Employment—Contracting with Former Agency but Different Section: A private company hired a former State employee 22 months after she left State employment. The private employer had a contract with the agency for which she had worked. She was not involved in the contract negotiations; did not work in the same section that entered the contract; and her State duties did not involve testing, which was the subject matter of the contract. Her private employment would require her to coordinate scheduling/testing with the same department for which she had worked. However, those activities were not done by the same section where she had worked, and she would be at a different site location. Based on those facts, it did not appear that she gave an opinion, conducted an investigation, nor was she directly and materially responsible for either the contract with the company or the subject matter thereof, while employed by the State. *See, 29 Del. C. § 5805(d)*. She advised the Commission that her private employment would not require her to disclose confidential information she may have obtained while working for the State.

96-43 – Post Employment—Former Employee Selecting Replacement: When a State employee decided to leave State service, his agency announced an opening for the position. No replacement was found before he left State service, and his job was re-announced. The agency wanted to contract with him to be part of a three-person panel which would review and rank the applications of persons applying for his prior position. State employees who applied for the job had not been under the supervision of the former employee. The agency expected the task to take two days and wanted him as part of the panel because of his expertise in both computer and finance systems. He and the panel would review and rank the applications, but would not interview candidates, as a separate panel would conduct the interviews.

The Commission found that he had not: (1) given an opinion; (2) conducted an investigation; or (3) been directly and materially responsible for the “matter” [reviewing job applications] while employed by the State, except the single occasion when he had decided to leave State service and reviewed the applications after the first announcement of the job

opening. He had not reviewed and ranked job applicants while employed by the State; had not evaluated the State applicants who applied for the job while employed by the State; would not interview candidates; and would use his expertise to evaluate applications.

96-32 – Post Employment—Computer Services Contract: A former State employee asked if it would create a conflict for him to form his own company and seek State contracts. He would not seek contracts with his former agency, but wanted to seek contracts with other State agencies, including a Board on which he had served.

Here, he intended to represent a private enterprise (his company) on a contract to provide computer services to various agencies. While employed by the State, he was not involved in any decision concerning the contracts. Thus, while employed by the State, he did not give an opinion, conduct an investigation, and was not otherwise directly and materially responsible for the particular contracts he wanted to seek. On a broader level, his primary State duties included various administrative and operational decisions for his agency, which included implementing operational aspects in areas of personnel, finance, payroll, etc., that resulted in computer programs to facilitate and expedite access to the data for his agency. Computer systems were not a technical requirement of his employment, but an area of interest to him and he used that interest to develop and improve operations in his agency. However, as he was not seeking to contract with his former agency, his activities did not violate the Code of Conduct.

As a secondary aspect of his State employment, he served on the Board of Managers of an agency. At its periodic meetings, the Board had discussions, over a course of twenty years, about computer systems as a means of enhancing the flow of information. However, the Board never took formal action and he never voted on any proposal to develop such a system. He subsequently learned, by reading the Budget bill, that the agency was seeking proposed funding for a computer system. He was not involved in the budget proposal and, in fact, was not even aware until he read the proposed budget that funding was being sought. If the funding became available, the contract would fall within the range of contracts which must be publicly noticed and bid under the State procurement law. As he did not have any involvement, or even knowledge of the proposed funding, it was determined that he had not given an opinion, conducted an investigation, and was not directly and materially responsible for the funding for the contract. Thus, it would not violate the Code for him to seek the contract if it were funded.

The former employee also stated that one of his business partners had a contract with his former agency as an independent contractor. The former employee's firm would not be working on any aspect of his partner's contract, nor would he seek to recruit programmers to fulfill the contractual obligations. As the former employee would not contract with his former agency and would not be involved in the agency's contract work with his business partner, the Commission found no violation.

96-01 – Post Employment—Soliciting Former State Clients: Just before leaving her State job, an employee wrote to the clients assigned to her by the State and told them she was going to work for a private enterprise. She also told them that the private enterprise could be selected as a service provider by the client. Federal law required that clients be offered a choice of providers. It was the agency's intention to notify clients of their right of choice and it planned to identify private enterprises which had contracted with the State as providers, such as the one

where the employee was going to work. No facts indicated that a substantial number of her clients selected the provider for which she was going to work as a result of her letter. Additionally, she did not participate in any decision to select the private enterprise as a service provider for the State. Further, she had sought an advisory opinion from the Commission for a determination of whether she could accept employment with the contractor. *Commission Op. No. 95-17*. At that time, she said she was not using the list of her State clients to encourage them to switch to the private contractor. Rather, she sought to inform them of their rights. Agency representatives and the former employee met with the Commission to discuss this situation and review the letter. There apparently was some confusion between the agency and the employee regarding whether who should notify clients of her change in status and of their ability to select her new employer, who had contracted with the State, as a service provider.

The agency did not seek a decision on whether, in this particular instance, the former state employee violated the Code. Rather, it sought guidance on avoiding possible confusion in the future. The Commission may “provide assistance to state agencies, employees and officials in administering the provisions of this law.” 29 *Del. C.* § 5809(10). The Commission noted that the Code prohibits disclosure of confidential information beyond the scope of the employee’s position or the use of such information for personal gain or benefit. 29 *Del. C.* § 5806(g).

While the Commission believed it was of service to notify clients when a person handling their case leaves State service, it noted that the clients are clients of the State, not of the individual. To the extent that client names could be considered proprietary or confidential, the Commission suggested that the agency could avoid future questions regarding such use of the information, by establishing the type of notice to clients that would best suit the agency, its clients, and employees. For example, the agency may wish to develop a policy on notifying clients of an employee’s departure, rather than having the employee send such notice.

95-32 – Post Employment—Nursing Home: A State employee asked if it was proper to accept employment with a nursing home after they left State employment. The employee’s State duties did not include referring clients to nursing homes, nor did the employee, or any person supervised by the employee, determine the facility to which clients were admitted as that decision was made by the individual or their family. The employee had no direct dealings with any of the agency’s clients. The employee supervised people who evaluated clients for certain benefits. The employee reviewed the evaluations for determination of benefits to ascertain if proper procedure was followed. The State agency had no contract with the nursing home which wanted to hire the employee. The duties with the nursing home would require little, if any, contact with the State agency, as the nursing home clients were primarily clients that would not seek the type of benefits offered by the agency. The only anticipated contact with the agency was that it might inquire about the number of beds available in the facility and/or seek confirmation of admissions or discharges. Such information would be purely objective in nature, with no relationship to eligibility for State benefits. The skills required at the nursing home related more to the employee’s professional educational training than to the specific skills used at the agency. The Commission found no conflict of interest based on those facts and directed that any confidential information learned as a State employee could not be used during employment with the nursing home.

95-18 – Post Employment—Grant Program: A State employee developed a technical proposal for a federal grant program which was later approved by his State agency and by a federal agency. Contractual arrangements were made, and various private enterprises were selected to start the project. As part of his official duties, the State employee worked with one of the companies selected. When he left State employment, the employee began a consulting firm and was offered a consulting opportunity with a subsidiary of that company. The subsidiary's project was unrelated to the agency project; the subsidiary was not involved with the agency project in any manner; nor was it seeking any State assistance or contract relative to the program he was to consult on; the consulting work was in the marketing area, not the technical area in which he worked for the State; no proprietary or confidential information from the agency was to be used in developing the marketing program; and the client base was not the same. Based on those facts, the Commission found no violation of the post-employment provision.

95-17 – Post Employment—Counselor: A former State employee sought a decision on whether employment as a counselor, which was part of her responsibility as a State employee, violated the post-employment provision. The Commission concluded there was no violation of the Code of Conduct because although the private enterprise had a contract with the State, the employee was not involved in the decision resulting in that contract. Further, while her former State clients might elect to receive treatment from the private enterprise because of the contract with the State, the contract was the result of a federal law requiring that clients be given a choice of provider, and it was the clients' choice, not a decision that could be made by the former employee. The Commission also was advised that the individual was not using the list of her clients from the State to encourage them to switch to the program offered by the private enterprise.

95-11 – Post Employment—Medical Professional: A State agency wanted to contract with a medical professional after he retired from the State. The individual would perform some of the functions he was responsible for during his State employment. The Commission found that because he would perform the same functions as while employed by the State, the contract would violate the 2-year post-employment restriction against employees representing or assisting a private enterprise on matters they were directly and materially responsible for during State employment. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). (The Commission, in a previous decision, ruled that a private personal contract with the State constituted a "private enterprise," making former State employees with such contracts subject to the post-employment restrictions. *Comm. Op. No. 94-10*). The Commission advised that the 2-year prohibition was a measure to assure the public that former State employees could not use information acquired during their employment or their former position as a means to "get a leg up" on other private enterprises that have dealings with the State. The Commission noted that despite these restrictions, the Legislature recognized that a total ban against a former State employee working for a private enterprise was not realistic and thus limited the prohibition to instances where the individual was directly and materially responsible for the matter during State employment. Further, it granted the Commission authority to grant a waiver where "the literal application of such prohibition in a particular case is not necessary to achieve the public purposes of this chapter or would result in an undue hardship on any employee, officer, official or State agency." 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(a).

There was testimony that the agency would incur a hardship if it could not contract with

the individual as his services were “unique” because of his extensive professional background in the area where he would be working; he had established a rapport with hospitals and doctors that was needed to ensure success of the agency’s programs; his particular medical training and experience were not easily found; despite a search no one qualified to assume the duties was available at the time; his skills were needed to complete programs already implemented; and he was familiar with the data system being used on programs that were “pretty well on their way” to conclusion. The Commission granted a five-month waiver to the post-employment restriction with the opportunity for the agency to seek an extension of the period with supporting evidence showing good cause.

95-06 – Post Employment: An individual who was preparing to leave State employment asked whether accepting a position with a private enterprise would violate the post-employment restriction. The Commission found that accepting the position would not violate the post-employment restriction because: (1) the nature of the two positions was dissimilar as the State position was primarily administrative and the private position was operational; (2) the employee’s State responsibilities did not involve preparing Requests for Proposals (RFPs) in the specific area in which the employee worked; (3) the State’s contractual process in that area was administered by a person not within the supervision of the person leaving State government; and (4) the State responsibilities did not encompass review of responses to RFPs submitted by the private enterprise for which he wished to work. While not finding a technical violation, the Commission found that because the private enterprise was seeking or might seek a State contract with the agency, any direct participation in writing or presenting RFPs to the agency on such matters might appear improper, and directed the individual not to be involved in writing or presenting RFP responses from the private enterprise for 2 years after termination.

95-02 – Post Employment: A State agency asked if contracting with a private enterprise, which employed an individual formerly employed by the agency, would violate the post-employment provision. That provision prohibits State employees, officers or honorary officials from representing a private enterprise on matters involving the State, for 2 years after terminating State employment, if the individual gave an opinion, conducted an investigation or otherwise was directly and materially responsible for such matter in the course of official duties while with the State. 29 Del. C. § 5805(d). It also prohibits disclosure of confidential information gained by reason of public position and otherwise using such information for personal gain or benefit. *Id.*

As a State employee, part of the individual’s duties included administrative assistance to a task force which developed findings/recommendations in a particular subject area. About six years before the task force was formed, the individual worked in that area for the State. However, the work for the task force required no special knowledge of the subject as the responsibilities were purely administrative, such as locating filed materials, providing them to the task force, editing the task force’s report, etc. The report covered the findings/recommendations voted on by the task force. The substance could not be altered from that vote. The employee was not asked for any personal or professional opinion on the subject. The employee also assisted in preparing a presentation of the report to the Governor, but the presentation was given by the agency director, who did not deviate from the findings and facts voted on and adopted by the task force. Once the task force’s recommendations were adopted, it was determined that contracts would be issued after public notice and bidding. An outside vendor

was selected to develop the Request for Proposals (RFPs). The employee had no input in selecting the vendor and gave no input to the vendor in developing the RFP. The vendor established extensive and detailed guidelines for responding to the RFP, which were provided to all bidders.

The Commission found that the employee gave no opinion on the work of the task force or the vendor and had no input to either the findings/recommendations of the task force or the development of the RFP. It concluded she was not directly and materially responsible for the subject matter of the contract while employed by the State, and therefore, found no violation of the post-employment restriction. However, after leaving State employment, the individual worked with several non-profit agencies in drafting her new employer's response. The Commission found that such action raised a close question as to whether such involvement created an improper appearance, as one purpose of the Code of Conduct is to avoid any improper public perception. 29 Del. C. §§ 5802 and 5806(a).

To determine if such action created an improper appearance, the Commission noted that it had already found that the employee's duties as they related to the task force did not violate the post-employment restrictions. It also found that: (1) the employee had a background in the subject of the contract in terms of education and work experience prior to working for the State which would give her familiarity with and knowledge of the substance to be addressed in the RFP response; (2) the response was not the sole work of the former State employee as other employees of the private enterprise and four non-profit agencies provided input; and (3) the development of the response was overseen by the private enterprise through its grant and research office. The Commission found that those actions, to a certain degree, limited her control over the response. Further, as she had no control of the findings/recommendations of the task force or the vendor, again, her control over what would be in the response was limited. The Commission also found that while the employee was present at task force meetings, sworn statements from the employee and persons within the State agency were that she gained no superior knowledge as a result of her administrative work. The Commission also noted that the detailed guidelines and specific, objective scoring criteria, rated by a multi-agency committee, tended to place all bidders on an even field, and that the private enterprise for which the former State employee worked was found, by the multi-agency committee, to have a "clearly superior" response. The Commission also noted that another bidder had an executive director who was a voting member on the task force. As there were only three bidders, if the former employee's private enterprise and the private enterprise which had a voting member on the task force were not permitted to bid, then the agency would have only one bid, which was determined to be inferior. The Commission also found that if that bidder were selected, the agency would have to devote time and resources to that bidder, putting a strain on the agency.

The Commission's final conclusion was that: there was no technical violation of the post-employment restriction; the findings eliminated any possible improper public perception, although it was a close call; and that even if there were an improper public perception, the Commission would grant a waiver because if the agency could not offer the contract to the selected company, it would create an undue hardship as the agency would not be able to offer the contract to the superior bidder and would have to devote time and resources to any other bidder.

94-10 – Post Employment: A waiver of post-employment restrictions was granted to a Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) employee, who was the lead person with the

Delaware Health Care Commission in developing policy for the managed care program, and was assigned the lead responsibility within DHSS to oversee implementing the program. She subsequently retired and the Department sought a waiver to the post-employment restriction, which prohibits former employees from representing or assisting private enterprises in matters before the State for two-years after leaving employment, in order to award her a contract to continue carrying out the assignment. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). "Private enterprise" means any activity conducted by any person, whether conducted for profit or not for profit. 29 *Del. C.* § 5804(8). The Commission found that the broad definition of "private enterprise" encompassed such contract and that her actions, while an employee, made her "materially responsible" for the matters upon which she would continue to work.

The Commission granted a waiver to the post-employment prohibitions because if she was not permitted to continue the work after retirement, it would cause an undue hardship upon the Department in carrying out its mandated time limitations in implementing the program. See, 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(a) (waivers may be granted if a literal application of the prohibition in a particular case is not necessary to achieve the public purposes or would result in an undue hardship on any employee, officer, honorary official or State agency). The Commission also noted that the post-employment contract would not be an increase in her hourly rate, and she would not be working full-time.

94-05 Post Employment: A State agency requested an advisory opinion on the post-employment restriction. Advisory opinions may be issued on the written request of a State employee, officer, honorary official or a State agency. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(c). The restriction provides that former employees cannot represent or assist a private enterprise on any matter involving the State, for a period of two years after termination of employment or appointed status with the State, if they gave an opinion, conducted an investigation or otherwise were directly and materially responsible for such matter in the course of official duties. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). In this instance, while employed by the State, the employee conducted a technical evaluation that was part of the selection process which led to the award of a contract. Less than a year after the evaluation, the employee left State employment and after working in private employment in other areas, accepted a position with the private enterprise that was selected to perform the State contract. The Commission found that the employee gave an opinion when he conducted the technical evaluation, and therefore was prohibited from working on that specific contract for the private enterprise for a period of two years after his State employment terminated.

93-13 – Post Employment – Grant: A State employee submitted an application for a research grant to a national agency. It was prepared on his own time, including a week of annual leave. He subsequently left State employment to work in another State. The grant was later approved and once awarded would be performed by a company which contracted with the State agency for which he had worked. The research would involve a study of clients which the contractor obtained through its contract with the State. The former employee would be a principal investigator for the grant. The agency where he had worked would not receive funds from the proposed grant, but had entered an agreement endorsing the grant application and agreeing to work with the contractor on certain aspects of the research, such as providing a point of contact for information sharing, attending research team meetings, insuring the research did not affect another contract the agency already had with the contractor, referring eligible consumers to the

research program, etc.

The Commission found that the employee's participation in the research program would not violate the post-employment restriction which prohibits former employees from representing a private enterprise on matters pending before the State for 2 years after terminating employment if the individual gave an opinion, conducted an investigation, or was otherwise directly and materially responsible for the matter in the course of official duties while employed by the State. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d).

93-02 – Post Employment – Contract with Former Agency: A State employee, who retired under the Early Retirement Option, asked if he could contract as an individual or as a consultant with his State agency. Employees cannot represent a private enterprise on matters before the State where they gave an opinion, conducted an investigation or were directly and materially responsible during State employment for two years after they leave State employment. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d). At the time of this request, the General Assembly had passed legislation providing that persons who retired under the Early Retirement Option could not work for the State for five (5) years, except that in special cases the Early Retirement Committee could allow the individual to contract with the State for a period of up to one year. 29 *Del. C.* § 5301(d)(4). The Commission held that the employee's situation fell under the ERO Act and should be pursued with the Early Retirement Option Committee.

91-18 – Post Employment - Professional Services: A State employee, who served in a professional capacity, due to personal circumstances moved out of State. The agency requested that it be permitted to contract with the individual for professional services on a part-time basis. The agency anticipated the contract might last from six months to possibly a year.

The Code prohibits employees, officers or honorary State officials from representing or assisting a private enterprise on matters involving the State for 2 years after terminating employment if the person gave an opinion, conducted an investigation or otherwise was directly and materially responsible for such matter in the course of official duties. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d).

The Commission heard testimony that the employee had played a central role within the agency. The testimony also indicated the employee would work on a part-time basis; the rates would be well below the hourly contractual rates for such professional services; the employee had established trust with the staff and its clients and continuation on a part-time basis would assure continuity that would benefit the clients; the services could not be readily provided by anyone else in the community as there was a shortage of such professionals; and the agency had pursued recruitment for the position, but without success. Based on these facts, the Commission concluded the contract would violate the post-employment restrictions; however, it held that the literal application of the Code was not necessary to achieve the public purposes of the statute and would result in an undue hardship to the agency. It therefore granted a waiver as permitted by 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(a).

91-11 – Post Employment - Representing Private Enterprise: A former State employee sought a waiver from the restriction prohibiting State employees from assisting a private

enterprise on matters involving the State for two years after leaving State employment, if the individual gave an opinion, conducted an investigation, or otherwise was directly and materially responsible for such matter in the course of official State duties. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d).

While employed by DNREC, an employee received applications submitted to the Air Resources Section. He decided if the applications complied with regulations. His decisions were reviewed by two levels of supervision above him. His employer, after he left State service, was a private enterprise regulated by his former agency. He sought a waiver so he could discuss options of emission control equipment with his new employer. He believed it was possible and probable he would represent the private enterprise on matters that he had dealt with while with the State agency.

The Commission may grant a waiver to specific prohibitions in the Code of Conduct if the Commission determines the literal application of the prohibition in a particular case is not necessary to achieve the public purpose of the Code or would result in an undue hardship on an employee or agency. 29 *Del. C.* § 5807(a). The Commission found that: the private enterprise had a strong history of compliance before hiring the State employee; there was no discretion by individual business managers regarding obedience to the law; EPA oversaw DNREC's actions in issuing major permits; no confidential information gained from employment at DNREC would be compromised as the regulations and any interpretations were public information; and all cases on which the employee worked had been resolved. This reduced the possibility of the former State employee influencing DNREC to bend regulatory requirements. The Commission also found that DNREC encouraged the use of such expertise in the private sector as it could help assure compliance by the private enterprise with public laws and environmental regulations. The employee testified that an undue hardship would result if the private enterprise placed him in an area where his expertise was not used as both he and the company would be at a disadvantage.

The Commission distinguished this opinion from *Commission Op. 91-10*, (below) where a former State employee sought to contract with the State after retiring. The Commission noted that the former DNREC employee's activities, unlike those proposed by the other former State employee, would not result in compensation from the State.

91-10 – Post Employment - Professional Services/Early Retirement Option: Post employment restrictions prohibit State employees from representing or otherwise assisting a private enterprise on matters involving the State for two years after leaving State employment if the employee gave an opinion, conducted an investigation, or otherwise was directly and materially responsible for such matter in the course of official State duties. 29 *Del. C.* § 5805(d).

A State employee, who was retiring, requested determination of whether he could offer professional services to firms which contracted with his State agency. At the time of the request, the legislature had passed a one-time early retirement option (ERO) preventing employees from coming back to work for the State for five years, except that in special cases the ERO Committee could allow an individual to contract with the State for a period of up to one year. 29 *Del. C.* § 5301(d)(4). The Commission concluded that if the employee or any entity controlled by him intended to contract with the State to provide personal services, then he should apply to the ERO Committee for a determination of whether such contractual arrangement was permissible. Apart from such determination by the ERO Committee, the Commission found that the employee's statutorily imposed duties encompassed a broad range

of control over the agency's functions, including supervisory duties, contractual duties, and coordination, development and planning responsibilities for agency programs. Accordingly, the Commission held that any dealings with that agency would violate the Code, unless the former employee submitted information on specific projects to rebut the assumption that he was "directly and materially responsible" for that specific matter while employed by the State.