

FILED

APR - 9 2026

INDIANA STATE
ETHICS COMMISSION

IC 4-2-6-11
Post-employment waiver

As the Appointing Authority of the Office of the Governor, I am filing this waiver of the application of the Code of Ethics' post-employment restriction as it applies to Jason Johnson in his post-employment with the Applied Research Institute (ARI).

I understand that I must file and present this waiver to the State Ethics Commission at their next available meeting. I further understand that this waiver is not final until approved by the State Ethics Commission.

A. This waiver is provided pursuant to IC 4-2-6-11(g) and specifically waives the application of:

IC 4-2-6-11(b)(1): 365 day required "cooling off" period before serving as a lobbyist.

IC 4-2-6-11(b)(2): 365 day required "cooling off" period before receiving compensation from an employer for whom the state employee or special state appointee was engaged in the negotiation or administration of a contract and was in a position to make a discretionary decision affecting the outcome of such negotiation or administration.

IC 4-2-6-11(b)(3): 365 day required "cooling off" period before receiving compensation from an employer for which the former state employee or special state appointee made a directly applicable regulatory or licensing decision.

IC 4-2-6-11(c): Particular matter restriction prohibiting the former state employee or special state appointee from representing or assisting a person in a particular matter involving the state if the former state officer, employee, or special state appointee personally and substantially participated in the matter as a state worker.

Johnson seeks a particular matter waiver in an abundance of caution to the extent the below-described screens are not sufficiently tailored to avoid a potential conflict.

The particular matter involves the drone corridor awarded to Indiana in January 2026 by the Federal Aviation Administration and related activities. The drone corridor is administered by ARI in partnership with the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC). Part of Indiana's application was Executive Order 25-73, which created the Indiana Initiative for Drone Dominance Task Force. Proposed and drafted by the IEDC, the Executive Order assigns a seat to a representative of ARI appointed by the Governor.

In his role as a member of the Governor's senior staff, Mr. Johnson is generally involved with all policy matters in the executive branch. He was familiar with the federal drone corridor opportunity and Indiana's intent to pursue an application in partnership with ARI. He also reviewed EO 25-73, connected relevant agency heads with the appropriate contact at IEDC, and generally supported Indiana's efforts to be selected as an FAA drone corridor.

Approximately 85% of ARI's funding comes from non-State sources, but ARI does receive some funding from state entities. In particular, ARI has a contractual relationship with IEDC to pursue federal opportunities. ARI's relationship with the IEDC also includes managing the recently awarded FAA drone corridor.

In the ethics screen established in March 2026, Johnson agreed to be screened completely from any meetings that involve the Indiana Drone Task Force or the recently awarded FAA drone test site. At ARI, Johnson has agreed for one year to be screened from any involvement with the Indiana Drone Task Force, all matters involving the executive branch of State government and the FAA drone test site, or contracting discussions with the IEDC.

- B. IC 4-2-6-11(g)(2) requires that an agency's appointing authority, when authorizing a waiver of the application of the post-employment restrictions in IC 4-2-6-11(b)-(c), also include specific information supporting such authorization.
1. Please explain whether the employee's prior job duties involved substantial decision-making authority over policies, rules, or contracts:

As the Governor's deputy chief of staff for legislative affairs, Mr. Johnson's primary responsibilities in the Governor's Office are developing policy for the executive branch, orchestrating the executive branch's legislative strategy, and advocating for the Governor's legislative priorities with the Indiana General Assembly. He is involved with reviewing and approving proposed agency

initiatives to ensure they align with the Governor's policy priorities. He also is generally aware of some state agency rule proposals working through the rulemaking process, but does not have signature authority for the Governor in the rulemaking process. Mr. Johnson does not directly oversee contracts for the Governor or any agency.

Given the nature of Mr. Johnson's role individually and as a member of the Governor's senior staff, he is generally involved in all matters affecting the state's executive branch.

2. Please describe the nature of the duties to be performed by the employee for the prospective employer:

Mr. Johnson has an opportunity to become Senior Vice President for Advocacy at ARI. In this role, Mr. Johnson's core responsibilities would be to lobby policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels of government, working to facilitate federally funded opportunities for state and local government.

3. Please explain whether the prospective employment is likely to involve substantial contact with the employee's former agency and the extent to which any such contact is likely to involve matters where the agency has the discretion to make decisions based on the work product of the employee:

ARI is a non-profit entity that exists primarily to make Indiana and the Midwest a destination for federally directed projects and investment. ARI leads efforts such as Silicon Crossroads and Heartland Bioworks designed to create public, private, and higher education ecosystems to attract economic investment in Indiana.

Mr. Johnson's prospective employment would lead to collaboration and partnership with state and local entities in pursuit of federal opportunities. Some of those partnerships could include entities like the Governor and state agencies. In those instances, the State and ARI may jointly seek economic development opportunities that would require sharing work product. The Governor and state agencies would have discretionary decisions to make regarding whether or not to pursue the federal opportunities facilitated by Mr. Johnson's employment.

4. Please explain whether the prospective employment may be beneficial to the state or the public, specifically stating how the intended employment is consistent with the public interest:

ARI's work, and Mr. Johnson's prospective role, is largely designed to bring federally funded opportunities to Indiana and the Midwest, connecting state, local, and federal policy makers, the higher education community, and the

private sector to better Indiana's economy and improve Hoosiers' quality of life. Mr. Johnson's relationships with state, local, and federal policymakers will be of significant benefit to this work, and his role will allow him to use his skills broadly across the state to have a positive impact for all Hoosiers. It is in the public interest that Mr. Johnson be permitted to engage with state agencies and the Governor's Office in the pursuit of that goal.

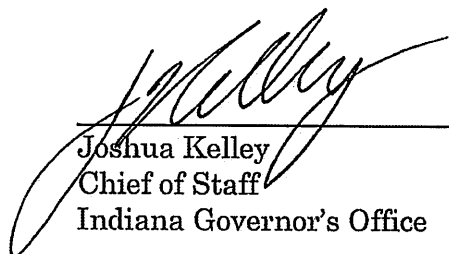
5. Please explain the extent of economic hardship to the employee if the request for a waiver is denied:

Given the nature of Mr. Johnson's role as a member of the Governor's senior staff and his key role in policymaking, most opportunities his background qualifies him for will involve the same types of relationships and conflicts as those presented by this opportunity with ARI. In effect, Mr. Johnson would need to engage in legislative branch lobbying or move out of state to avoid such conflicts, which would be an economic hardship for Mr. Johnson and his family.


C. Signatures

1. Appointing authority/state officer of agency

By signing below I authorize the waiver of the above-specified post-employment restrictions pursuant to IC 4-2-6-11(g)(1)(A). In addition, I acknowledge that this waiver is limited to an employee or special state appointee who obtains the waiver before engaging in the conduct that would give rise to a violation.



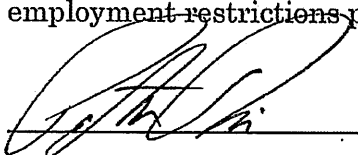
Joshua Kelley
Chief of Staff
Indiana Governor's Office

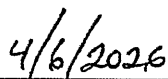


April 6, 2026

2. Ethics Officer of agency

By signing below I attest to the form of this waiver of the above-specified post-employment restrictions pursuant to IC 4-2-6-11(g)(1)(B).



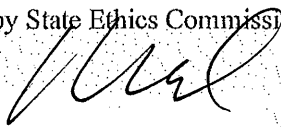


4/6/2026

Patrick Price
General Counsel
Indiana Governor's Office

April 6, 2026

D. Approval by State Ethics Commission

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
Approved by State Ethics Commission	
	
_____ Katherine Noel, Chair, State Ethics Commission	_____ 4-9-26 Date

Mail to:
Office of Inspector General
315 West Ohio Street, Room 104
Indianapolis, IN 46202
OR
Email scanned copy to: info@ig.in.gov

Upon receipt you will be contacted with details regarding the presentation of this waiver to the State Ethics Commission.