

In the Matter of

Ricky D. Smith

Respondent

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Before the

State Ethics Commission

Complaint No. C-8-25

ORDER

Having considered the Stipulation of Settlement Agreement entered into between the Respondent, Ricky D. Smith, and Katherine P. Thompson, Staff Counsel to the State Ethics Commission, on December 19, 2025, the State Ethics Commission hereby determines that the matter complained of herein has been settled by the Respondent's execution of the Stipulation of Settlement Agreement, attached hereto and made part hereof, and the completion of his 2024-2025 Financial Disclosure End of Service Statement on December 12, 2025.

ORDERED, that the Respondent is reprimanded, and that this Order and the Stipulation of Settlement Agreement are public documents.

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

Date: June 4, 2026

By:


Craig D. Roswell, Chair

In the Matter of:

RICKY D. SMITH

Respondent

Before the State Ethics Commission

Complaint No. C-8-25

STIPULATION OF SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

This Stipulation of Settlement Agreement (hereinafter "Agreement") was made on the 19th day of DECEMBER 2025, between Ricky D. Smith, Respondent, and Katherine P. Thompson, Staff Counsel to the State Ethics Commission ("Staff Counsel").

STIPULATIONS

1. The State Ethics Commission ("the Commission") is an executive agency of the State of Maryland established for the purpose of enforcing the Maryland Public Ethics Law (General Provisions Article, Title 5, Annotated Code of Maryland, (hereinafter the "Ethics Law")).
2. Ricky D. Smith (the "Respondent") was, at all times relevant to this matter, employed by the Maryland Aviation Administration ("MAA") within the Maryland Department of Transportation ("MDOT"), an executive agency of the State of Maryland, and an employee subject to the conflicts of interest and financial disclosure provisions of the Ethics Law.
3. The Respondent was employed as Executive Director / Chief Executive Officer to the MAA within MDOT. According to its website, the MAA, "...fosters the vitality of aviation statewide and promotes safe and efficient operations, economic vitality, and environmental stewardship."
4. Section 5-506 of the Ethics Law prohibits a State employee or official from intentionally using the prestige of his or her office for his or her own private gain or that of another. The Commission has determined that § 5-506 prohibits a State employee or official from engaging in activities unrelated to their State duties while on State time or using State resources and facilities for their own personal gain or that of another.
5. In August 2024, the Commission received anonymous correspondence alleging that the Respondent may have violated the Ethics Law. The Commission placed this matter on the docket at its meeting on September 12, 2024, and directed Staff Counsel to conduct a preliminary inquiry. During the inquiry into this matter, Staff Counsel and other Commission staff spent numerous hours reviewing documents for this inquiry.

6. During Staff Counsel's preliminary inquiry and review of documents, it was determined that the Respondent, while in his capacity as Executive Director / Chief Executive Officer to the MAA, performed an action in March 2022 related to a personal matter or for the benefit of a qualifying relative, which was transmitted through his State-issued email account using his State title, while on the job. The activity conducted by the Respondent involved email communication to potentially secure an employment opportunity for a family member.
7. The Commission met on November 13, 2025, and authorized the issuance of a complaint. Staff Counsel was directed to perform a preliminary investigation into the matter.
8. On November 14, 2025, a copy of the foregoing complaint issued in proceeding C-8-25 was forwarded by both regular mail and electronic mail to the Respondent.
9. The Respondent is voluntarily entering into this Agreement to admit certain violations of the Ethics Law, to accept certain sanctions, and to resolve the matter now pending against him without a hearing before the Commission.

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the agreed facts contained herein, and effective on the date of the Commission's acceptance of the terms of this Agreement, Ricky D. Smith, Respondent, and Katherine P. Thompson, Staff Counsel, agree as follows:

- A. The Respondent stipulates that his use of State resources for his own private gain or that of another was in violation of the prestige of office provision in § 5-506 of the Ethics Law.
- B. The Respondent understands that violations of the conflicts of interest and financial disclosure provisions of the Ethics Law may result in civil fines pursuant to § 5-902 of the Ethics Law. The Respondent further agrees to pay, in lieu of potential fines, the sum of ONE HUNDRED and no/100 DOLLARS (\$100.00) for the above admitted violations of the Ethics Law. That said sum will be paid by check or money order made payable to the "State of Maryland" in care of the Commission on or before January 2, 2026. The fee shall be distributed to the Fair Campaign Financing Fund established under § 15-103 of the Fair Campaign Finance Article. If the fee is not paid, it is agreed that the matter will be transferred to the Maryland State Central Collection Unit for the purpose of collecting the monies owed.
- C. This Agreement will serve as a reprimand to the Respondent for the above admitted violations of the Ethics Law effective the date of the Commission's acceptance of this Agreement.
- D. The Respondent waives any formal proceedings and hearing in this matter if the Commission accepts this Agreement and agrees that acceptance of

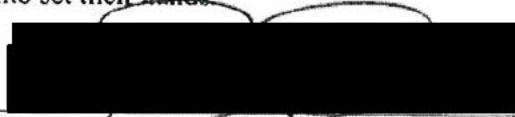
this Agreement by the Commission constitutes a final action and finding of violation by the Commission.

- E. The Respondent further agrees that this Agreement is not subject to the confidentiality provisions of the Ethics Law and will be public information unless otherwise protected.
- F. Upon execution of this Agreement by the Respondent, Staff Counsel will recommend that the Commission suspend any further proceedings against the Respondent and recommend further that the Commission issue a Final Order consistent with the terms of this Agreement. Should the Respondent fail to comply with the terms of this Agreement, and after written notice to him, the Commission reserves the right to issue a further order regarding this matter or to schedule a hearing in this matter.
- G. In the event that the Commission declines to accept this Agreement, both the Respondent and Staff Counsel are relieved of their respective obligations hereunder, and neither this Agreement, nor any admission it may contain, shall be admissible in any subsequent proceeding by the Commission.
- H. The Respondent and Staff Counsel are entering into this Agreement for the sole purpose of resolving this matter and for no other purpose.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, Ricky D. Smith, Respondent, and Katherine P. Thompson, Staff Counsel, State Ethics Commission, have hereunto set their hands.



Katherine P. Thompson, Staff Counsel
State Ethics Commission
45 Calvert Street, 3rd Floor
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(410) 260-7770


Ricky D. Smith

State of Georgia,
County of: Fulton, to wit:

Before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public in and for the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared Ricky D. Smith, who made oath in due form of law on this 19 day of December 2025, that the matters and facts hereinabove set forth in the Stipulation of Settlement Agreement are true to the best of his knowledge, information, and belief, and it is his voluntary act and that he executed this Agreement for the purposes set forth herein.

[Redacted Signature]
Notary Public

My Commission Expires: March 1, 2028

(Notary Seal)

State of Maryland,
County of: Anne Arundel, to wit:

Before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public in and for the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared Katherine P. Thompson, Staff Counsel to the State Ethics Commission, who made oath on this 23 day of December 2025, in due form of law that she executed this Agreement for the purposes therein contained.

[Redacted Signature]
Notary Public

My Commission Expires: June 20, 2029

(Notary Seal)



Accepted by the Commission

[Redacted Signature]
Craig D. Roswell, Chair
for the Commission

Date: 6/4/26