



→ Lauren Watson

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Lauren Watson is an associate in the Tax, Employee Benefits and Executive Compensation Practice Group in the firm's Chicago office.

Areas of Practice

Lauren advises public and private entities, specializing in executive compensation and employee benefits, particularly in mergers, buyouts, divestitures, acquisitions, IPOs, and other significant corporate transaction scenarios. With a focus on uncovering hidden liabilities in compensation and benefits arrangements, she provides essential guidance on sections 409A and 280G of the Internal Revenue Code.

Lauren works closely with corporate clients and leadership teams to develop and implement comprehensive compensation plans, with emphasis in nonqualified deferred compensation strategies for executive and key employees. This includes structuring equity investments, crafting executive employment and severance agreements, and designing custom cash and equity-based incentive programs.

Her practice also includes counseling on qualified retirement plans, cafeteria plans, fringe benefits, and health and welfare plans under ERISA, the IRC, and the ACA. Her comprehensive approach equips clients to handle complex compensation and benefits scenarios with confidence.

Prior to earning her law degree, Lauren was a pilot in the US Air Force, primarily flying the E-3 AWACS out of Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma. Notably, she deployed in support of Operation Inherent Resolve in 2017, where she flew more than 340 combat flight hours and earned an Air Medal for Meritorious Achievement in Aerial Flight. In addition to her flying duties, Lauren served in multiple command positions, including her position as a Training Squadron Flight Commander where she supervised new pilots, flight engineers, and navigators as they became initially qualified in the E-3. Lauren retired from the Air Force as a Captain (O-3) in 2019.

Practices

Employee Benefits

Executive Compensation

Tax

Education

LL.M. in Taxation, Northwestern University, 2022, with honors

J.D., University of Oklahoma, 2022, with distinction

B.A., Michigan State University, 2013

Admissions

Illinois

Kansas