

Merom Brachman, *Chairman*
Mark A. Vander Laan, *Vice Chairman*
Bruce E. Bailey
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Julie A. Rutter
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February 25, 2022

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**ETHICS COMMISSION ELECTS LEADERSHIP
AND REVIEWS YEAR-END STATISTICS**

At its first 2022 meeting on February 23, the Ethics Commission unanimously voted to re-elect Merom Brachman (R-Bexley) as its Chairman and Mark Vander Laan (D-Cincinnati) as its Vice Chairman. The bipartisan Commission is composed of six members with equal numbers from the two dominant political parties in the state. Biographies of all Commission Members are available on the [Commission Member page](#) of the Commission's website.

Among other topics, the Commission reviewed reports on year-end statistics for 2021. The Commission has the unique authority to provide written guidance to public officials and employees that immunizes them from liability if they comply with the advice given. Of the 163 advisory opinions issued last year, over 80% were requested by government officials from counties, cities, villages, and townships throughout the state who requested guidance on complying with the law.

Under its governing statutes, the Commission also provides a robust educational program to proactively inform persons governed by the law on ethical standards. During the pandemic, staff has greatly expanded its available online content and almost 66,000 people attended live webinars or took one of the Commissions many electronic courses.

The Commission also carried a caseload of 158 active investigations. The majority of these investigations involved allegations received by the Commission that public officials had hired family members, violated post-employment restrictions, or misused their public authority or position to benefit their private financial interests.

Executive Director Paul M. Nick stated, “Despite the pandemic, the Commission has continued to maintain providing services to assist public servants with complying with the Ethics Law while also holding accountable those found to misuse their authority for private gain.”

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