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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

### **ETHICS COMMISSION PASSES RESOLUTION ENDORSING DISCLOSURE**

At its December meeting last week, members of the Ohio Ethics Commission discussed recent issues coming before the Commission and the General Assembly that involve how Ohio's Ethics Laws apply to non-profit corporations and their executives who contract to perform significant public services. At the end of the discussion, the Commission adopted this resolution:

As a matter of public policy, the Ohio Ethics Commission strongly believes that officials in non-profit corporations that are contracted to conduct significant public functions of government and expend substantial sums of public money have a duty to file financial disclosure and comply with the provisions of Ohio's Ethics laws. This disclosure and compliance with Ohio law (1) protects against the occurrence of conflicts of interest by officials or employees contracting with public agencies to perform important public services, and (2) promotes the accountability of non-profit corporations that expend considerable public funds in serving citizens.

Commission Chairman Dr. Herb Asher stated: "The Commission encourages openness as an essential element in promoting citizen confidence in government. Even though they may not be required to file financial disclosure statements, the Commission believes that executives in non-profit entities that provide significant public services should file disclosure to help protect against conflict of interests, and should otherwise follow ethics laws."

David E. Freel, the Commission's Executive Director, explained: "Strong public policy issues are presented when non-profit executives receive substantial public funds to perform continuing governmental duties. Citizens are entitled to expect that these non-profit officers adhere to the same ethical standards that govern public officials and employees performing similar services."

The Ohio Ethics Commission is an independent agency of state government, charged with interpreting and administering the Ohio Ethics Law, including the financial disclosure requirement. More than 10,500 public officials and employees filed financial disclosure statements with the Ethics Commission in 2003. The Ethics Commission also provides advice about the law and investigates alleged unethical conduct. The Ethics Commission has been serving the public, and state and local governments, since its formation as part of the Ohio Ethics Law in 1973.