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***Press Release***  
***April 13, 2001***

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**JOINT PRESS RELEASE: HAMILTON COUNTY PROSECUTOR AND OHIO  
ETHICS COMMISSION**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**ETHICS COMMISSION CONCLUDES INVESTIGATION OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONER WITH HAMILTON COUNTY PROSECUTOR**

The Hamilton County Prosecuting Attorney announced today that the Ohio Ethics Commission has completed and closed its investigation into a complaint filed against Hamilton County Commissioner Tom Neyer by the Coalition Opposed to Additional Spending & Taxes (COAST). The complaint alleged that Commissioner Neyer violated state conflict of interest laws by participating as a County Commissioner and, on June 21, 2000, voting to negotiate a \$600,000 economic development grant to the Regional Cultural Alliance (RCA).

The Ethics Commission unanimously voted to close the matter and authorized its staff to review the decision with the prosecuting attorney. The Hamilton County Prosecuting Attorney has reviewed the Commission's conclusions and concurs with the Commission's determination that the facts and evidence do not support criminal charges. The Commission concluded that, although Commissioner Neyer should have abstained from voting on June 21, the evidence does not indicate that he acted with the intent necessary for a criminal violation. Furthermore, the June 21 vote authorizing the negotiation of the grant did not

result in the actual payment of any funds to the RCA by the County.

In December 2000, Commissioner Neyer separately requested an advisory opinion from the Ethics Commission as to whether he could vote to approve the final grant and disperse the funds. The Commission advised that he should abstain from further proceedings relating to RCA, given his prior membership in related organizations. The RCA then formally withdrew its request for funding.

The Ethics Commission's Advisory Opinions are public, but its investigations into specific allegations remain confidential by law, unless released by the prosecuting attorney or other authorized officials. Because of the significant public interest in this issue, it was felt that the results of this investigation concerning Commissioner Neyer should be announced so that the matter could be brought to a conclusion.