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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

ETHICS COMMISSION REVIEWS AND REVISES
CONSUMERS' COUNSEL POLICY

At its meeting on May 18, 2004, the Ohio Ethics Commission revised a draft ethics policy submitted by the Ohio Consumers' Counsel. The Commission applauded the Consumers' Counsel's efforts to address and communicate the Ethics Law in a clear and concise manner to employees through such a policy.

The Commission recommended several significant additions describing ethical conflict of interest statutes designed to assure greater protections to the public. The changes make the policy consistent within the Ethics Law and clarify circumstances under which a public employee might be faced with a conflict, in addition to prohibiting gifts and gratuities. Following discussion, the Commission endorsed the policy, contingent upon the amendments. Changes reflect those in a Model Ethics Policy the Commission recommends for public agencies.

"Consumer Counsel's draft contained clear and strong gifts and gratuity restraints. Conflict of interest protections to the public needed to be as apparent," stated David E. Freel, the Commission's Executive Director.

Consumers' Counsel informed the Commission today that she adopted all of the additions suggested by the Commission. The revised policy will be included in the Consumers' Counsel's response to the Ohio Inspector General's March 2004 Investigation Report.

The Ohio Ethics Commission is an independent state agency that applies and administers

the Ethics Law for state and local public officials and employees outside of the General Assembly and judiciary. The Commission was created 30 years ago upon the enactment of the Ohio Ethics Law in 1973.

- 30 -