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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

OHIO ETHICS COMMISSION REMINDS PUBLIC OFFICIALS THAT ETHICS LAW GOVERNS STIMULUS (AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT) CONTRACTS AND FUNDING

At its June 16, 2021 meeting, the Ohio Ethics Commission reminded public officials in Ohio to review the previously issued [Advisory Opinion 2009 – 06](#) regarding the Ohio’s Ethics Law governance over federal stimulus funds, including the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

“The Commission initially issued that opinion with the conclusion that stimulus expenditures constitute public contracts and are therefore governed by the Ethics Law. It remains applicable,” said Commission Chairman Merom Brachman.

“The Ethics Law assures Ohioans that government decisions and public expenditures, whether at the state or local level, are objective and serve the public’s interest,” Ethics Commission Executive Director Paul Nick stated. “This opinion serves as clear guidance that public officials remain subject to the Ethics Law when making any determinations regarding federal stimulus funds.”

The opinion concluded that public officials cannot profit from federally funded contracts or participate when family members or business associates might benefit from them. It outlines prohibitions against public officials misusing their public positions to secure stimulus funds or participating in any actions involving the funds, where family members or business associates of the public official may otherwise lawfully have some direct benefit from the contract.

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