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January 26, 2022

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**ETHICS COMMISSION RECOMMENDS ENHANCING PENALTIES  
FOR ETHICS VIOLATIONS**

The Ohio Ethics Commission has given to the General Assembly its strong recommendation to enhance the Ethics Law's penalties for persons or entities convicted of providing unlawful gifts or payments to any public official or employee in state or local government.

This week, the Commission submitted to both the House and the Senate a recommendation that the criminal penalties for providing unlawful payments to any public official in the State of Ohio be enhanced to include prohibition from participating in any future public contracts for 5 years, plus the authority for courts to order additional fines equal to the amount of such payments. Currently, such violations of this criminal law carry only a fine of up to \$1,000 and/or 6 months in prison.

Executive Director Paul M. Nick stated, "Passage of this amendment will enable the Commission and other sectors of law enforcement to deal more fully with misconduct that may be related to bribery, such as in federal cases pending in Ohio." Nick added, "Adoption of these

penalties will also serve as an additional deterrent against companies or vendors who seek to wrongfully influence the use and expenditure of public funds.”

According to Commission Chairman Merom Brachman, “The Commission’s bipartisan membership aims to ensure that the Law will clearly serve to uphold public confidence by stiffening penalties available for such misconduct in Ohio.”

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