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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**OHIO ETHICS COMMISSION ISSUES OPINION INCLUDING DOMESTIC PARTNERS
IN THE DEFINITION OF “FAMILY MEMBER”**

At its meeting on February 20, 2025, the Ohio Ethics Commission approved [Formal Advisory Opinion 2025-01](#) which addresses the definition of “family member” to include domestic partners.

“The Ethics Law prohibits public officials and employees from hiring or supervising their family members,” stated Executive Director Paul M. Nick.

Nick added, “This advisory opinion recognizes that ‘family’ could include domestic partnerships where someone is living with a public official or employee. Including domestic partners in the definition of family clarifies that the prohibitions in the Ethics Law fully apply to these relationships.”

This opinion also reminds public officials of the importance of recusal from all aspects of the public contract process – including hiring – that would impact any of their family members and would apply the penalties for violating the law.

The Commission reviewed how other Ohio agencies and courts have considered the issue and concluded this opinion is consistent with many state and local agencies that have included domestic partnerships in their family-related internal policies.

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