

## Statement from Helen Jones-Kelley

Several years ago, my co-pastors delivered separate sermons about “punctuation”. The thread of both messages remains with me and provides the context for this statement. One spoke of the importance of the “dash”, as in the mark that separates the date of our birth and our death. The “dash” represents everything in between – how well we live our lives and fulfill our purpose. The other discussed the meaning of the “comma” and how that particular mark reflects the times when we need to *pause* before continuing.

With that said, it is with sadness *and* clarity that I have decided to resign my position as director of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. This decision comes after having a time of pause, in which I realize that I continue to be used as a political postscript, providing a distraction from urgent state priorities.

My professional career, and the legacy of service I have established, has been, and continues to be, far too important for me to allow my reputation and my commitment as a servant leader to be disparaged. I also remain concerned for the safety of my family and myself.

I appreciate Governor Strickland providing me the opportunity to serve in his Cabinet and I am proud of my staff at the department; the talent they represent and the many accomplishments we achieved, working with our county partners and other stakeholders on behalf of Ohio’s citizens over our short tenure. I encourage them to remain focused and committed. Indeed, it is through our ongoing service to others that our own lives gain true meaning.