



PRESS RELEASE
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**Mississippi Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights Releases Report:
*Prosecutorial Discretion and Civil Rights in Mississippi***

Jackson, MS – The Mississippi Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (Committee) released a [report](#) following a series of public meetings and collection of public testimony on the role of prosecutorial discretion in the state. The report examines the influence of prosecutors’ discretionary decision making on disparities in charges, court proceedings, and sentencing by race.

In this study, the Committee sought to evaluate if, or how, prosecutorial discretion has led to racial disproportionality in criminal prosecution, and subsequently, incarceration rates. Primary concerns addressed in the report include: (1) points of prosecutorial discretion and influence in the criminal justice system; (2) mechanisms for prosecutor accountability in decision making; (3) the influence of implicit and explicit biases in prosecutorial conduct; (4) data available to assist prosecutors and the public to better evaluate potential areas of bias; and (5) the impact unaccountable discretion may have on the communities prosecutors serve. The report concludes with a series of recommendations regarding actions that can be taken to understand and address the identified civil rights issues moving forward.

Committee Chair Susan M. Glisson said, “When the Mississippi Advisory Committee selected prosecutorial discretion as a subject to explore more than one year ago, we could not have predicted the current national climate into which this report is being released. The wave of national protests resulting from the death of George Floyd, and so many other Black men at the hand of police, appears to offer new promise for addressing, repairing, and ending systemic inequities and racism. We hope that prosecutors and other decision makers will use our recommendations to take advantage of this moment to alleviate bias and prejudice from our criminal justice system.”

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, established by the Civil Rights Act of 1957, is the only independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights and reporting annually on federal civil rights enforcement. Our 51 state Advisory Committees offer a broad perspective on civil rights concerns at state and local levels. The Commission: in our 7th decade, a continuing legacy of influence in civil rights. For information about the Commission, please visit <http://www.uscrr.gov> and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).