



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**Florida Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights  
Releases Advisory Memorandum: *Voting Rights and Voter Disenfranchisement in Florida***

The Florida Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released an [advisory memorandum](#) to the Commission following a series of public meetings and collection of public testimony on voting rights in the state. In this study, the Committee sought to evaluate voter access in Florida, with a particular emphasis on areas of concern that may demonstrate a disparate impact on protected classes under the Voting Rights Act.

The memorandum addresses a wide range of concerns including: (1) limitations on voter registration and strict maintenance of voter rolls that may erroneously cancel the registration of disproportionate numbers of voters of color; (2) unnecessary limitations on early voting; (3) rejection of mail in ballots that are deemed as having a “signature mismatch” by untrained officials, or that do not meet strict arrival deadlines; (4) structural barriers to election day voting; (5) voting barriers facing individuals with limited English language proficiency, voters with disabilities, and voters with felony convictions; and (6) election security concerns. The report concludes with a series of recommendations regarding actions that can be taken address the identified civil rights concerns moving forward.

Committee Chair Nadine Smith said, “In 2001, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights held voting rights hearings across Florida and found widespread voter disenfranchisement. Now, nearly two decades later, it is time to see how our state is ensuring every vote counts and every voter can vote. The right to vote is fundamental to democracy and every Floridian must have confidence that their access to the ballot is safeguarded. As the November election approaches, we hope this report can help to spotlight the urgency of protecting the rights of all Floridians to know their vote is protected.”

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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.usccr.gov> and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).