



PRESS RELEASE
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**Georgia Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
Announces study:
Civil Asset Forfeiture and its Impact on Communities of Color**

The Georgia Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights announces its forthcoming study of the impact of civil asset forfeiture on communities of color in the state. The Committee will convene a series of meetings during which they will hear public testimony regarding the extent to which civil asset forfeiture practices in Georgia may have a discriminatory impact on the basis of race, color, or national origin.

The first meeting will take place via web conference on **Wednesday March 10, 2021 from 2-3:45 pm Eastern Time**. The public may register for the event online (audio/visual), at: <https://bit.ly/2YAYcm0>. The public may also join the call by phone (audio only) at 800-360-9505; Access code 199 287 8225. Closed captions will be provided. Individuals requiring other accommodations should contact the regional program unit at (202) 618-4158 five business days prior to the meeting to make their request.

The agenda for this first panel of speakers includes:

- **Dan Alban**, Senior Attorney, Institute of Justice
- **Marissa McCall Dodson**, Public Policy Director, Southern Center for Human Rights
- **Leah Nelson**, Research Director, Alabama Appleseed Center for Law and Justice
- **Chris Bellamy**, Attorney, Neal & Harwell, PLC, Adjunct Professor, Vanderbilt University Law School
- **Jon Guze**, Director of Legal Studies, John Locke Foundation

The Committee will hear testimony from additional speakers to be scheduled throughout spring 2021. Members of the public will be invited to speak during an open comment period near the end of each meeting. The Committee will also accept written testimony submitted to mwojnaroski@usccr.gov throughout the duration of this project.

“Civil forfeiture allows police to seize, then keep or sell the property alleged to be involved in a crime. This practice allows many police departments to use forfeiture to benefit their bottom lines, which increases seizures motivated by profit rather than fighting crime,” said Committee Chair Chantel Mullen. “The owners of said property may not ever be arrested or convicted of a crime for them to permanently lose their cash, cars, businesses, or even their homes. This is a civil rights issue of enormous concern that deserves deeper research and discussion on its impact on Georgians from already marginalized communities.”

The Georgia Advisory Committee will issue findings and recommendations in a report to the Commission after all testimony has been received.

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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. For information about the Commission, please visit www.usccr.gov and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).