



PRESS RELEASE
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**Texas Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
Releases Advisory Memorandum on Government Response to Hurricane Disasters**

On May 20, 2021, the Texas Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (Committee) issued an [Advisory Memorandum](#) on the government's response to hurricane disasters, specifically Hurricane Harvey.

The Memorandum results from the testimony provided during virtual panels and related testimony submitted to the Committee in writing during the relevant period of public comment. The Memorandum identifies primary findings as they emerged from the testimony and conveys the Committee's recommendations for addressing related civil rights concerns.

Specifically, the Committee found that experiencing a natural disaster, like Hurricane Harvey, exacerbates pre-existing inequalities, compounding challenges for the already marginalized populations due to the lack of consistent policies, programs, and assistance criteria that would ensure common and unique needs were met. Areas of inequality include policies on aid distribution, housing assistance, wealth inequality, wage theft of reconstruction workers, and more.

Recommendations made by the Committee include increased coordination between federal and state agencies to apply best practices to improve the aid-decision making process, improvements to the aid application process, increased real-time language translation resources, and the allocation of additional funding for outreach to the marginalized communities.

Committee Vice-Chair Merrill Matthews stated, "This effort has been both timely and critical as Texas has seen more than its fair share of disasters that have disproportionately affected our marginalized communities. Many of those communities are still recovering from Hurricane Harvey, the devastating floods, the global pandemic and the recent historic freeze and power collapse. We hope this Memorandum will identify areas needing attention and improve the situation for everyone, but particularly our most vulnerable populations."

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights matters and issuing an annual federal civil rights enforcement report. The Commission, by Congressional mandate, establishes Advisory Committees in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Committee members conduct reviews and produce reports and recommendations concerning local civil rights issues, including justice, voting, discrimination, housing, education, and other important themes. For information about the Commission and our Advisory Committees, please visit <http://www.usccr.gov> and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).