



PRESS RELEASE
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Michigan Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights
Issues Report: *The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Voting Rights and Access in Michigan*

The Michigan Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released a [report](#) regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on voting rights and access in Michigan. This report follows a broader [study](#) of voting rights in Michigan that the Committee released in early 2020, and specifically considers the impact of the pandemic on challenges to voter access identified in the Committee’s original study.

In this report, the Committee found that (1) voters faced a series of challenges accessing the ballot in 2020, many of which were directly exacerbated by the pandemic; (2) despite these challenges, voters turned out in record numbers, aided in large part by a series of protective measures implemented by the state and supported by community partnerships aimed at mitigating risk to voters, poll workers, and election officials during the pandemic; (3) misinformation regarding these efforts created a series of opportunities for bad-faith, racially disparate criticisms of the integrity of Michigan’s elections during the November 2020 general election. The Committee submits this report to the Commission at a moment when members of the Michigan Legislature have proposed a 39-bill package that would restrict or eliminate many of the exact voting procedures that were put in place during the pandemic to protect access to the ballot.¹

Committee Vice Chair Roland Hwang said, “The Michigan Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is honored to submit its report about the impact of COVID-19 on voting in Michigan. The report documented that the COVID-19 pandemic created opportunities for bad-faith racially disparate criticisms of the integrity of Michigan's November 2020 elections. Despite COVID-19, Michigan voters turned out at high rates.”

Co-Vice Chair Emily Dievendorf said: “The Committee is grateful for the time and expertise offered by all those who offered testimony on this important issue. We feel that the report makes clear there is still much work to be done to ensure equal access to voting for all Americans. We must remain vigilant, especially during unique circumstances such as the current health crisis, to anticipate and safeguard against potential obstacles to voting where our communities most impacted by discrimination are concerned, while we continue to work toward equity overall in our electoral process.”

¹ Dept. of State, *Summary of Bills that restrict Voting Rights and Harm Elections*, 2021, https://www.michigan.gov/documents/sos/Summary_of_Bills_to_Restrict_Voting_Rights_722845_7.pdf

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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](#).