



NEWS RELEASE
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Maine Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights Announces Release of Digital Equity Advisory Memorandum

Washington, DC – The Maine Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued an [Advisory Memorandum](#) following a series of briefings exploring digital equity in Maine. In a series of five briefings in 2020, the Committee examined key aspects of digital equity: whether Mainers have adequate access to affordable broadband, devices and digital literacy training and the interplay of digital equity and civil rights in the educational setting. These issues were brought into sharp focus during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Committee Chair Diane Khiel stated, “The pandemic has brought multiple inequities to front and center because it’s impacted our most vulnerable communities disproportionately. Maine’s ability to adapt to the pandemic has depended greatly on our connectivity, in the classroom, on the job, through telemedicine and through our legal system. For these reasons, the pandemic has brought urgency to the goal of recognizing digital equity as a civil right.”

The Committee heard testimony and gained valuable information and insight from representatives of the National Digital Equity Center, the National Digital Inclusion Alliance, ConnectME Authority, the Maine Department of Education, the Maine Library Association, AARP, Disability Rights Maine, the Island Institute, MaineCare, the Muskie School of Public Service, broadband providers, educators, and affected members of the community.

The Committee’s Advisory Memorandum sets forth its preliminary findings and recommendations, with a full report to the Commission to be issued in Fall 2021.

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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 reports and meetings of the Commission and its Advisory Committees, please visit <http://www.usccr.gov> and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).