



PRESS RELEASE
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Mississippi Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights Releases Report:

Qualified Immunity and Civil Rights in Mississippi

The Mississippi Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released a [report](#) following a series of public meetings and a collection of public testimony on the qualified immunity of law enforcement officials in Mississippi. Qualified Immunity is a judicially created legal doctrine which protects law enforcement officials from facing civil liability when accused of depriving a person of their “statutory or constitutional rights.”¹ In this study, the Committee considered the impact of qualified immunity on police accountability and the equal protection of civilians in the administration of justice. The Committee examined the impact of qualified immunity on disparities based on race, color, sex, national origin, religion, and/or disability status that exist throughout the criminal justice system.

Primary concerns identified in the report include the continued judicial expansion of qualified immunity protections outside of the legislative process; the stagnation of case law when courts grant immunity without first ruling on the constitutionality of the underlying official conduct; the tension between allowing law enforcement officers the flexibility to confidently fulfill a difficult and dangerous job while also protecting the public from unchecked abuses of power; and lack of available data to adequately understand qualified immunity and disparities in its current application. The memorandum concludes with a series of recommendations regarding actions that can be taken to better understand and address the identified civil rights issues moving forward.

Committee Chair, Susan Glisson said, “At this important moment in national conversations about public safety and the role of police, we join leaders across the country in calling for more data and attention to the crucial issue of qualified immunity. We must know more in order to know how to best move forward in the interest of protecting all communities.”

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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 56 state and territory 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](#).

¹ Whitney K. Novak, Policing the Police: Qualified Immunity and Considerations for Congress, *Congressional Research Service, Legal Sidebar*, Updated June 25, 2020, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/LSB/LSB10492>.