



PRESS RELEASE

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Washington Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Commission Issues Report on Excessive Use of Force by Law Enforcement Officers

On January 19, 2022, the Washington Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (Committee) issued a [Report](#) on the excessive use of force by law enforcement officers. The Memorandum was issued after a series of public hearings at which scholars, representatives of law enforcement, legal experts and community advocates testified.

The memorandum focuses on improving accountability for use of excessive force by law enforcement officers and highlights excessive force as a critical issue for ensuring that the civil rights of all Washington citizens are protected. Panelists were selected to provide diverse perspectives regarding the following issues: community impact from cases of excessive force; law enforcement policies and training; collective bargaining agreements; arbitration procedures following discipline for use of excessive force; and proposals for reform of policies and procedures addressing police discipline.

Several common themes emerged from the hearings, including the need for comprehensive data collection, the importance of increased transparency for the handling of police discipline cases, the perception that current procedures did not adequately protect the public from the use of excessive force, and the need to prevent appropriate disciplinary procedures related to the use of force or discrimination from being obstructed as a result of collective bargaining.

Committee Recommendations:

- (1) Creation and maintenance of a national registry of officers who have been decertified as a result of misconduct;
- (2) Creation and maintenance of a database that tracks incidents of serious injury or death resulting from police action;
- (3) Formulation and dissemination by the Department of Justice of best practices for reducing the need for use of force by law enforcement officers;
- (4) Allocation of increased resources for alternatives to the use of force, such as mental health intervention;

- (5) Exclusion from collective bargaining agreements of provisions that would obstruct the ability of law enforcement agencies to comply with federal prohibitions against excessive force or discrimination;
- (6) Narrowly tailored safeguards regarding arbitration of disciplinary action based on the use of force or discrimination, in order to assure that law enforcement agencies retain the ability to fully comply with the federal prohibitions against the excessive use of force and discrimination.

Committee Chair Alexes Harris said, “It is crucial for us to examine the occurrence of excessive force by law enforcement in Washington as well as the training and monitoring of our officers, and to establish systems of accountability for those officers who have engaged in such acts. Doing so is essential to protecting the civil rights of all citizens.”

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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.

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