



**PRESS RELEASE**

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**North Carolina Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights Announces Public Meeting Focused on Civil Rights and Equity of Legal Financial Obligations**

The North Carolina Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights will convene a public meeting – via webinar – examining civil rights and equity in legal financial obligations (LFOs). This will be a continuation of the study that was initiated by the advisory committee in 2020.

The scope of this project lies in examining the impact of LFOs on the basis of race, color and income and whether LFOs have a disparate impact on minority and indigent groups. The focus for this project will be post-conviction LFOs.

Chair Olga Morgan Wright said: “The North Carolina Advisory Committee’s focus for this public meeting will be Legal Financial Obligations (LFOs), previously referred to by some as “Debtor’s Prison” - while no longer existing as brick-and-mortar institutions, include court costs, non-cost fees, attorney fees, fines, and restitution. These costs are determined by a presiding Judge over a matter, without first inquiring into a person's ability to pay and whether there are adequate alternatives to imprisonment. The current use of LFOs is viewed as discriminatory against those least able to make these payments. ***We welcome all North Carolinians who have been affected by LFOs or are interested in this topic to join the meeting and provide public comment.***”

**EVENTS: North Carolina Advisory Committee Public Meeting**

**WHEN: Civil Rights and Equity in Legal Financial Obligations in North Carolina: Judicial System Stakeholders**

Tuesday, February 15, 2022, 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. ET, via webinar

Registration: <https://bit.ly/3eKbhRI>

Webex Meeting Number: 276 199 2982

Audio: (800) 360-9505

Meeting materials will be available after the event [here](#). The advisory committee is planning an additional public meeting that will further explore this topic through a research lens. Please contact Victoria Moreno (information above) for more details and regarding requests for accessibility.

Members of the public will be invited to speak during a public comment session and are encouraged to register in advance at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YXDL8Q7>. The Committee will also accept written testimony from members of the public for thirty days following the meeting, until March 17, 2022. Please send written statements to [lschiller@usccr.gov](mailto:lschiller@usccr.gov).

**North Carolina Advisory Committee  
Civil Rights and Equity in Legal Financial  
Obligations in North Carolina  
Web Hearing Agendas**

**Judicial System Stakeholders**

February 15, 2022 at 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. ET

- Andrew M. Gregson, District Attorney of Randolph County
- Judge Thomas H. Lock, Senior Resident Superior Court Judge, Johnston County
- Denise Hartsfield, Forsyth County District Court Judge (Retired)

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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 territorial Advisory Committees offer a broad perspective on civil rights concerns at state and local levels. For more information, please visit <http://www.usccr.gov> and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).*