



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**Georgia Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights Releases Report: *Civil Asset Forfeiture and its Impact on Communities of Color in Georgia***

The Georgia 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 use and impact of civil asset forfeiture in communities of color in Georgia. The report examines the extent to which property seized in Georgia (through civil asset forfeiture and/or related federal equitable sharing agreements) is seized without due process of law. The Committee also examined the extent to which, in practice, these forfeitures result in a disparate impact on communities of color in the state.

Primary concerns identified in the report include financial incentives for law enforcement to engage in forfeiture coupled with lagging protections against abuse; the targeting of suspected low-level criminal activity, primarily in communities of color; and the impact on public safety and community wellbeing. The report concludes with a series of recommendations regarding actions that can be taken to understand and address the identified civil rights issues moving forward.

Committee Chair Chantel Mullen said, “Civil asset forfeiture is a civil rights issue of enormous concern that impacts Georgians from already marginalized communities. Civil forfeiture allows law enforcement to seize, then keep or sell the property ‘alleged’ to be involved in a crime. The owners of said property may not ever be arrested, charged, or convicted of a crime to permanently lose their cash, cars, businesses, or even their homes. While the intent of civil asset forfeiture laws is to give law enforcement the tools to address high-level organized crime, we must question its use, application, effectiveness, and necessity, when it appears that: (1) the targets are low-income minority communities, (2) the median civil asset forfeiture in Georgia is \$500, and (3) in a majority of the cases no arrest or criminal charges follow the seizure.”

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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](#).