



**PRESS RELEASE**  
November 15, 2022

Contact: Victoria Moreno  
[vmoreno@usccr.gov](mailto:vmoreno@usccr.gov)

**Tennessee Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights  
Releases Interim Memorandum on Access to Voting in Tennessee**

On November 15, 2022, the Tennessee Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (Committee) issued an [Interim Memorandum on access to voting in the State](#).

The Memorandum results from the testimony provided during a series of web briefings hosted by the Committee in Spring 2022. The Memorandum identifies concerns as they emerged from the testimony, specifically as they relate to barriers to voting during the COVID-19 pandemic and how access can be ensured for Tennesseans moving forward. The Memorandum also conveys the Committee's preliminary recommendations to the Commission for the Tennessee State Legislature and Governor's consideration, including, but not limited to expanding access to absentee voting, increasing the availability of polling place locations, and evaluating voting procedures to identify and eliminate any disparate impact on protected groups to guarantee the opportunity for all Tennesseans to engage in the political process.

Committee Chair Shaka Mitchell stated, "Through the testimony presented to the Committee, we have gained a better understanding of the varying obstacles that many Tennesseans face to fulfill their right to vote. These barriers became even more pronounced and confusing with the changes in procedures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee's goal is to develop final, actionable recommendations to the Commission that will take these lessons learned into account and improve these processes for future elections."

Committee Vice-Chair Yesha Yadav said, "In light of the recent election cycle, many communities remain vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic. The intention of the Tennessee Advisory Committee is that the testimony we heard and our preliminary recommendations be considered by state officials to improve access to the vote."

As part of this project, the Committee also held several briefings focused on Senate Bill 8005 and its impact on voting and civil rights. This Memorandum, however, is focused on the testimony received regarding access to voting during the pandemic. The Committee plans to continue exploring both subtopics and will issue a final report with recommendations in 2023.

#####

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