



PRESS RELEASE
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**Texas Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
Releases Interim Report on Mental Health Care in the Juvenile Justice System**

On May 16, 2023, the Texas Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (Committee) issued an [Interim Report](#) on mental health care in the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD). The report was issued after a series of public hearings where the Committee heard from individuals, organizations, and professionals with specific knowledge of and experience with the conditions and challenges within TJJD.

What the Committee has learned through this investigation is deeply concerning, and for every day that it continues unchecked we feel is another day that the rights of those held in TJJD facilities are violated. The Committee issues this interim report to advise the Texas Legislature while it is still in session to act on this very important issue. The Committee plans to issue a supplementary and more in-depth report later this year.

Committee Chair Merrill Matthews stated, “In recent years, allegations of civil rights violations and reports of abuse and mistreatment have plagued the Texas Juvenile Justice Department. After hearing testimony from individuals, families, and organizations with specific expertise, we learned of numerous, serious problems in the TJJD, especially relating to those with mental health care needs. Our interim report identifies several needed reforms, and the Committee urges state legislators and the governor to address those problems immediately.”

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights matters and issuing an annual federal civil rights enforcement report. The Commission, by Congressional mandate, establishes Advisory Committees in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Committee members conduct reviews and produce reports and recommendations concerning local civil rights issues, including justice, voting, discrimination, housing, education, and other important themes. For information about the Commission and our Advisory Committees, please visit <http://www.usccr.gov> and follow us on Twitter and Facebook.