



PRESS RELEASE
July 13, 2023

Contact: Melissa Wojnaroski
(202) 618-4158
mwojnaroski@usccr.gov

Pennsylvania Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Issues
Report: *Fair Housing Access & Zoning Practices in Pennsylvania*

The Pennsylvania Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has released a [report](#) following a series of public meetings on fair housing access and zoning practices in Pennsylvania. The Committee's study focuses on examining the impact of zoning laws, municipal nuisance and crime-free housing ordinances, and related fair housing concerns on disparities based on race, color, disability status, national origin, age, religion, sex, and/or familial status.

To examine this issue, the Committee conducted [seven virtual public meetings](#) throughout 2022. The Committee invited testimony from the legal community, academics, advocacy organizations, and individuals. Based on the testimony offered at these meetings, the Committee prepared a report detailing its findings and recommendations for addressing the issues raised by speakers.

In response to concerns raised by those who shared testimony with the Committee, the Committee made recommendations to federal, state, and local entities to encourage ongoing conversations and specific efforts to further fair housing practices. Specific recommendations are detailed in the report and include recommendations regarding renewing public investment in affordable or income-driven housing; requiring fair housing training for housing lenders in Pennsylvania; increasing the supply of quality, accessible, and affordable housing stock; codifying a right to counsel for anyone facing eviction; and implementing testing and enforcing compliance on existing regulations, programs, and structures that provide fair housing services, products, and resources to communities.

Committee Chair Steve Irwin said, "Our country faces a significant shortage of affordable housing. Through the dedicated and penetrating work of our bipartisan state advisory committee members during two years of hearing and investigation, we have come together unanimously to identify how the short-term pain and long-term consequences of the deficiency in many instances has fallen most profoundly on people of color and the disabled community. It is our hope that the Commission will focus on our recommendations and help advance them before the relevant agencies and Congress to achieve more equity in living conditions and the opportunity that should accompany such progress."

###

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 www.usccr.gov and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).