



PRESS RELEASE
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South Dakota Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights **Issues Report: *Voting Rights and Access in South Dakota***

The South Dakota Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has released a [report](#) following a series of public meetings on voting rights in South Dakota. The Committee's study focused on identifying barriers to voting access for American Indians, people with disabilities, and non-English speakers in South Dakota. To examine this issue, the Committee conducted [five virtual public meetings](#) in 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.

Significant concerns raised in the report include widespread confusion around South Dakota's voter ID and voter eligibility requirements; challenges in navigating long distances to registration, polling, and absentee balloting locations; and, for American Indians specifically, distrust in non-Tribal government efforts to genuinely encourage access in supporting the equal right to vote for American Indians.

In response to the concerns raised by those who shared testimony with the Committee, the Committee made recommendations to federal, state, and local entities to make sure to include American Indians, people with disabilities, and non-English speakers in ongoing conversations and specific efforts to ensure they can vote. Specific recommendations are detailed in the report and include recommendations around providing improved education on Voter ID requirements, clear information on registration and voting rules, and addressing the transportation, technological, and language access issues that pose particular challenges towards exercising the right to vote for American Indians, people with disabilities, and non-English speakers.

Committee Chair Travis L. Letellier said, "The South Dakota Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is honored to submit its report on Voting Rights and Access in South Dakota. We sincerely thank the speakers who took the time to share their experiences, expertise, and knowledge as we undertook this study. We hope the findings and recommendations found in our report drive meaningful change for voters in South Dakota."

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