

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Public Briefing**

***Mental Health in Juvenile Justice Facilities: Civil Rights Implications, Access, and Racial Disparities***

**June 12, 2026 | Washington, D.C.**

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights will hold a briefing on Friday, June 12, 2026, to examine mental health and consequences in juvenile justice facilities. Federal, state, and local officials have an obligation to uphold the civil rights of all youth in juvenile facilities, including access to adequate physical and mental health care. Briefing panelists will discuss potential violations of these civil rights, as well as racial disparities in access to mental health care during confinement.

Many youth in juvenile justice facilities have mental health needs that may go unidentified, untreated, or inadequately treated during confinement. Inadequate mental health care, coupled with abuse and violence in some youth facilities, can create an unsafe environment for children and adolescents sentenced to serve time in residential facilities. A recent [report](#) from the [Texas Advisory Committee](#) to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights finds that 69% of youth confined in the Texas Juvenile Justice Department have moderate to severe mental health needs, and that self-harm and suicide are increasing.

“Children should not enter the justice system for a minor mistake and be subject to deeper trauma, lifelong system involvement, or zero chance to come home,” said Chair Rochelle M. Garza. “If rehabilitation is the goal, mental health care must be prioritized and fully accessible.”

At this public briefing, the Commission will hear from subject matter experts, such as federal and state officials, researchers, community advocates, and people with lived or professional experience in juvenile justice facilities.

Immediately following the briefing, there will be a [Public Comment Session](#) starting at 3:30 pm. Members of the public who wish to speak may sign up through the linked [Public Comment Session](#) form. This session is an opportunity for the public to share personal experiences, perspectives, and recommendations to help inform the Commission’s work on this important issue.

The Commission will also accept written materials from the public for consideration as we prepare our report. Written materials may be submitted to [juvenilejusticebriefing@usccr.gov](mailto:juvenilejusticebriefing@usccr.gov) no later than July 13, 2026.

This briefing is open to the public and will also be live streamed on the [Commission's YouTube page](#).

**DATE:**

Friday, June 12, 2026, 9 am – 4:50 pm ET\*

**LOCATION:**

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights  
1331 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Suite 1150  
Washington, DC 20425 (National Place Building F Street Entrance)

**AGENDA:**

**Opening Remarks:** 9:00 – 9:10 am

**Panel 1:** Research, Legal, and Policy Experts, 9:10 – 10:15 am

**Break:** 10:15 – 10:25 am

**Panel 2:** Federal, State, and Local Juvenile Justice Officials, 10:25 am – 11:30 am

**Lunch:** 11:30 am – 12:30 pm

**Panel 3:** Directly Impacted Persons and Families, 12:30 – 1:35 pm

**Break:** 1:35 – 1:45 pm

**Panel 4:** Community Advocates and System Stakeholders, 1:45 – 2:50 pm

**Closing Remarks:** 2:50 – 3:00 pm

**Public Comment Session:**

**Introductory Remarks:** 3:30 – 3:40 pm

**Public Comment Period:** 3:40 – 4:40 pm

**Closing Remarks:** 4:40 – 4:50 pm

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\*Schedule subject to change

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