

PRESS RELEASE

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**U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS ANNOUNCES
MAY 31, 2013 BRIEFING ON
PROTECTING THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF OUR VETERANS AND SERVICE
MEMBERS**

WASHINGTON, DC - The United States Commission on Civil Rights announces that it will hold a briefing to examine whether the Federal Government is adequately protecting the civil rights of our veterans and service members who have fought for our rights. The briefing will take place on Friday, May 31, 2013 at 9:00 AM ET at a site soon to be announced. Updated information will be posted on the Commission's website by Wednesday, May 15, 2013.

With the ongoing war in Iraq & Afghanistan, it is expected that between 2011 and 2016 more than one million service members will leave the armed forces and return home. Returning military veterans will likely face competition in our labor and housing markets and could potentially experience discrimination, based on disabilities acquired as a result of service-related injuries, along with, employment and housing discrimination. Female veterans with children are also likely to experience discrimination in housing programs due to the fact that most of the established housing programs for veterans do not allow children. The Commission will seek to gather information on the difficulties being experienced by veterans and servicemembers alike with the hope of being able to identify best practices for helping our veterans transition from the battlefield to the workforce and their community.

The Commission will hear from a range of experts, including Federal agencies such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Defense, Labor and Housing and Urban Development who will address their agencies' enforcement of existing laws protecting the civil rights of veterans and service members. Advocacy groups participating in this briefing will include the American GI Forum, Black Veterans for Social Justice, American Veterans for Equal Rights, and VetsFirst, who will discuss their programs and how they provide assistance to veterans. Also participating will be affected servicemembers and veterans, who will speak about their experiences interacting with federal agencies and advocacy groups.

Written comments from the public will be accepted by email at publiccomments@usccr.gov until June 30, 2013. Public comments received will become part of the public record.

Deaf or hearing-impaired persons who will attend the meeting and require the services of a sign language interpreter should contact Pam Dunston at (202) 376-8105 at least seven business days prior to the briefing.

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with monitoring federal civil rights enforcement. Members include Chairman Martin R. Castro and Commissioners Roberta Achtenberg, Todd Gaziano, Gail Heriot, Peter Kirsanow, David Kladney, Abigail Thernstrom, and Michael Yaki. Commission meetings and briefings are open to the general public. The Commission's website is <http://www.usccr.gov>.