



NEWS RELEASE
For immediate release
March 14, 2016

Media Contact: Gerson Gomez
publicaffairs@usccr.gov
(202) 376-8371

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Issues Letter to Health and Human Services Regarding Child Care Subsidies Distribution in the State of Mississippi

Washington, DC — By majority vote the United States Commission on Civil Rights (“Commission”), has issued a letter recommending program changes to the Child Care Subsidies Distribution Program in the state of Mississippi within the purview of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and Health and Human Service (HHS). The recommendations are the result of the Advisory Memorandum entitled “Low-Income Child Care Subsidies Distribution in the State of Mississippi” produced by the Commission’s Mississippi State Advisory Committee. The letter and Memorandum can be viewed here: http://www.usccr.gov/press/2016/PR_LettertoHHSonLow-IncomeChildCare.pdf.

In 2015, the Mississippi State Advisory Committee voted to investigate discriminatory claims against recipients and providers of child care services based on race or color by the federal low-income child care subsidy program in Mississippi. The investigation and subsequent Memorandum found that many eligible children, predominantly within the African-American community, were not serviced by the subsidy program and that funding that should have gone to support eligible children was redirected. The investigation also found that program rating system used in Mississippi to promote higher quality childcare limited the participation of African-American owned and operated childcare facilities.

The Memorandum issues recommendations to promote a successful childcare subsidy program in the state of Mississippi that is transparent, inclusive and without bias in its application. Recommendations include; allocating funding to support child care facilities in low-income areas, reviewing the effectiveness of evaluation criteria for child care facilities and its ability to predict improved developmental outcomes for children of diverse communities; and creating written policies and guidelines regarding factors that define quality in child care.

Commission Chairman Martin R. Castro on behalf of a majority of the Commission stated, “When the most vulnerable and needy children are prevented from accessing urgently needed resources because of their race, color or other improper reasons, it is the role of this Commission and our State Advisory Committees to demand action and changes. To fail to heed these recommendations by our Mississippi State Advisory Committee will continue to

doom a generation of children to living in the cycle of poverty—and that must not be allowed.”

#####

For more information about the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, visit <http://www.usccr.gov>.