



NEWS RELEASE
For immediate release
Tuesday April 12, 2016

Media contact: Melissa Wojnaroski
Civil Rights Analyst
(312) 353-8311
mwojnaroski@usccr.gov

Nebraska Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights Releases Advisory Memorandum: Civil Rights and State-Level Immigration Enforcement in Nebraska

The Nebraska Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released an advisory memorandum following a series of panel discussions on state and local immigration enforcement in the State. The Committee's purpose was to examine concerns regarding disparate impact on the basis of race or color as a result of the State's implementation of Nebraska Rev. Stat. §§ 4-108 through 4-114. The 2009 law requires that State agencies and their political subdivisions verify the lawful presence of applicants before providing federal, state, or local public benefits. It also requires that State agencies and their political subdivisions verify the work eligibility status of all new employees.

The Committee heard testimony from community members, researchers, legal professionals, government officials, and experts in the field of state and local immigration enforcement. Through this testimony, the Committee identified a number of concerns regarding inconsistent and discretionary implementation which may disproportionately impact some of the state's most vulnerable residents, including noncitizen children entrusted to state custody. While incomplete and inaccurate data makes it difficult to ascertain the impact of any related civil rights deprivations, the Committee identified a number of recommendations to address the most troublesome of these concerns. Committee Chair Dr. Jonathan Benjamin-Alvarado said, "We felt very strongly that there needed to be a focus on how sensitive data and information was being utilized by state agencies in making determinations on benefits for all residents in Nebraska. More importantly, it helped us to refine our thinking on the issues and to open the discussion to whether the rights of eligible residents were being denied or abrogated in the process of those determinations."

Full text of the Committee's findings is available at: <http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/LB403_Final.pdf>

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with studying and advising the President and Congress on civil rights matters and issuing a federal civil rights enforcement report. For information about the reports and meetings of the Commission and its State Advisory Committees, visit <http://www.usccr.gov>.

###