



April - June 2018 Newsletter

We are pleased to share an overview of the Commission's civil rights advocacy work during the second quarter of this year.

STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC) ACTIVITY

Our state Advisory Committees (SACs) continue to be active in investigating and reporting on civil rights issues in their states. We thank the members of all SACs for selecting critical topics for investigation, hosting briefings, and issuing reports on these important topics:

- Our Alaska SAC issued an advisory [memorandum](#) on the voting rights of Alaska Natives;
- Our Maine SAC issued a [report](#) on voting rights;
- Our New Hampshire SAC issued a [report](#) on voting rights;
- Our Ohio SAC issued an advisory [memorandum](#) on voting rights;
- Our Oregon SAC held four public [sessions](#) in [April](#) and [May](#) to discuss and hear testimony on human trafficking;
- Our Rhode Island SAC held a public [meeting](#) in April to discuss and hear testimony on the civil rights concerns of payday lending; and
- Our Kansas SAC held a public [meeting](#) in May, and two web meetings, on civil rights and school funding.

Chair Lhamon, on behalf of the Commission, sent letters to federal, state, and local government entities, transmitting the findings and recommendations from these recent SAC reports:

- Illinois voting [report letters](#);
- Minnesota policing practices [report letters](#);
- New York "Broken Windows" policing [report letters](#).



Our Oregon Advisory Committee held two public briefings on human trafficking: May 2018

COMMISSION ACTIVITY

April

The Commission majority issued a [statement](#) strongly objecting to the Department of Justice's imposition of an annual 700 case closure quota on immigration judges.

May

The Commission held a [briefing](#) on hate crimes on May 11, in Washington, to examine best practices for local law enforcement on collecting and reporting data, and the role of the Education and Justice Departments in prosecution and prevention of hate crimes and bias-motivated incidents. The briefing was broadcast on C-SPAN2 ([panel 1](#), [panel 2](#), [panel 3](#), and [panel 4](#)), and you can view the archived video on the Commission's YouTube page ([morning session](#), [afternoon session](#), [public comment](#)). We also invite you to read panelists' submitted written [testimony](#).



The Commission held a public briefing on hate crimes: May 2018

June

The Commission [sent a letter](#) to Attorney General Sessions and Homeland Security Secretary Nielsen urging the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security to stop separating children from their families after crossing our southern border.

At our June business meeting, Minnesota SAC Chair Velma Korbel presented on the [report](#) “Civil Rights and Policing Practices in Minnesota,” and New York Advisory Committee Chair Alexandra Korry presented on the [report](#) “The Civil Rights Implications of ‘Broken Windows’ Policing in NYC and General NYPD Accountability to the Public.”

We also heard captivating [presentations](#) by Richard Avena, Robert Brischetto, and Candace Zepeda on the Commission’s public [hearing](#) on the civil rights of Mexican Americans, held in San Antonio in 1968. Our speakers reflected on the impetus for the hearings in 1968, as well as the progress in the fifty years since. We invite you to see [video](#) of the June meeting.

LOOKING AHEAD: 2018

The Commission’s report on voting rights will be released in September.

On November 2, in Washington, DC, the Commission will hold a public [briefing](#) on efficacy of federal civil rights enforcement.

Our Advisory Committees will continue to gather information and report on a wide range of crucial civil rights issues, including, inter alia, the collateral consequences that impact housing, employment, and other opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals; access to the ballot; and subtle forms of racism. *Stay abreast of our SAC activities on our [website](#) and on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).*

DID YOU KNOW?

Last month, we heard [remarks](#) on the Commission’s 1968 hearing on the rights of Mexican Americans (see details under “June,” above). At the multi-day hearing held in San Antonio, Texas, the Commission heard from more than 75 panelists, including officials and representatives of state and federal government; universities and K-12 schools; law enforcement; the U.S. military; organized labor; and a broad range of other civil rights advocates and interested individuals.

In the course of its visit to San Antonio, Commission staff interviewed more than 1,000 individuals. Among participating Commissioners were John Hannah, the first Chair; Frankie Muse Freeman, the first woman on the Commission, who [passed](#) earlier this year at 101 years of age; and the Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, who would go on to become Chair in early 1969.

The written transcript of the hearing – including appendices and other written submissions - is a whopping [1300 pages](#)! While five of our SACs – Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas - had before then held public sessions on the rights of Mexican Americans, the 1968 hearing was the first full-Commission national session on the subject.

We invite you to read [*Stranger in One's Land*](#), a 1970 Commission report resulting from the hearing.

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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 matters and reporting annually on civil rights. 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 more information, please visit <http://www.usccr.gov> and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).