



PRESS RELEASE
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**Alaska Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
Releases Report on Alaska Native Voting Rights**

The Alaska Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued a [report](#) that evaluates the state's efforts to meet legal requirements from a 2015 settlement to ensure language access for Alaska Native voters; and that examines the potential impact of a vote by mail system - a move the state initially considered prior to the Committee's report. The report expands upon the Committee's 2018 [Advisory Memorandum](#), and is based on testimony at a [public briefing](#) in August 2017, and web hearings in June and August of last year.

The Committee identified a number of findings, including:

- There is an unequal distribution of election equipment among urban and rural polling stations and election equipment in rural locations lacked privacy;
- The Division of Elections has no procedures in place to assess the effectiveness of poll worker training or outreach worker training;
- When the Division of Elections was considering a vote by mail system, there were no studies examining the impact of vote by mail on Alaska Natives, limited English proficient voters, geographically and linguistically isolated communities, and voters who receive mail exclusively by P.O. Box; and
- The settlement agreement mandates that language assistance be provided prior to and during the voting process. It is unclear, if language assistance could or would be provided prior to and during the possible implementation of a vote by mail system.

The Committee developed recommendations directed to the government of Alaska, the state legislature, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the U.S Postal Service, with a goal of helping remedy the above concerns.

The Alaska Committee is one of more than a dozen USCCR state Committees who have been addressing the broad range of voting rights challenges across the nation in the last two years. A compendium of their voting rights work can be viewed [here](#).

Committee Chair Natalie Landreth said: "On behalf of the Alaska State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights, we are pleased to share our report on the status of Alaska Native voting rights after two successful cases, and report on the potential impact of mail-in voting on these same communities. We would like to thank the many witnesses who testified and submitted written information for the record, and I personally would like to thank the members of the Committee for their many years of dedication and hard work on this important issue."

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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 and reporting annually on federal civil rights enforcement. Our 51 state Advisory Committees offer a broad perspective on civil rights concerns at state and local levels. For information about the Commission, please visit www.usccr.gov and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).