



**U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
Planned Public Briefings for Fiscal Years 2020 & 2021
As approved July 19, 2019**

Fiscal Year 2020

Subminimum Wages for People with Disabilities

The Commission will undertake an examination of the payment of sub-minimum wages to people with disabilities under a special certificate program administered by the Department of Labor. The Commission will investigate the civil rights implications of paying people less than minimum wage based on their disability status and the oversight of this program by the Departments of Labor and Justice. Reports have indicated at least some of these employees earn extremely low wages, do not gain marketable skills, and are not assisted to transition to competitive employment. Some states have outlawed payment of wages below minimum wage and fully transitioned away from this model of employment services. The Department of Justice has found state systems supporting these programs may violate the Americans with Disabilities Act when they do not serve people with disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate. The Commission unanimously selected this project.

The Federal Role in Calling for Bail Reform

This project will evaluate how money bail is used in states and local jurisdictions around the country: how the use of money bail impacts the fair administration of justice and whether jurisdictions operate in a manner that denies equal protection of the law to individuals on the basis of race or another protected class. The Commission will also examine the role of the private bail industry and how the involvement of the private sector exacerbates or mitigates these impacts.

The project will also evaluate different reforms that have been enacted to address these systemic impacts, either by state legislation, citizen referendums, litigation settlements, or otherwise. In evaluating these reforms, the Commission will look at whether federal involvement has impacted the state of money bail, and what the appropriate role of the federal government is to ensure the fair administration of justice.

Maternal Health Disparities

The United States has the worst rate of maternal death in the developed world. Current data suggests that black women in our nation experience unacceptably poor maternal

health outcomes, including disproportionately high rates of death related to pregnancy or childbirth, when compared to non-black women.

The Commission's investigation will analyze current data regarding pregnancy-related and pregnancy-associated deaths, including data collected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities, and the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) State Partnership Initiative to Address Health Disparities. The Commission will also examine the current efforts of HHS offices regarding the prevention of disparities in maternal health outcomes, including the Office of Civil Rights, Administration for Children and Families, Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and the Office of Minority Health.

The Commission's findings and recommendations will aim to inform work being carried out in the federal government to address racial disparities in maternal health outcomes.

Fiscal Year 2021

FEMA's Natural Disaster Response

The Commission's investigation will evaluate the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)'s compliance with its mission to ensure all people receive help before, during, and after disasters. The Commission will also investigate FEMA's compliance with civil rights laws and policies; a particular focus will be the civil rights implications of FEMA's response to significant hurricane systems, including Hurricanes Harvey and María. The Commission will look specifically at FEMA's Office of Response and Recovery and Office of Equal Rights. The Commission unanimously selected this project.

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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. The Commission: in our 7th decade, a continuing legacy of influence in civil rights. For information about the Commission, please visit www.usccr.gov and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).