

THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

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U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION RELEASES REPORT ON CIVIL RIGHTS AND THE MORTGAGE CRISIS

Washington, D.C.--The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has released an enforcement report examining civil rights issues with respect to the mortgage crisis: *Civil Rights and the Mortgage Crisis*. The Commission addressed the question of whether the actions taken to affirmatively further homeownership unintentionally weakened underwriting standards and lending policies to the point that too many borrowers were vulnerable to financial distress and a heightened risk of default.

The report examines federal policies adopted to increase minority homeownership as well as critiques regarding the relationship of such policies to the mortgage crisis. In addition, the report analyzes the policies and activities of various federal agencies charged with enforcing laws against predatory lending, mortgage fraud, and mortgage lending discrimination. The report also examines the role of credit scoring and other factors used by lenders in the granting and pricing of loans and the issue of whether such tools are objective predictors of creditworthiness.

The body of the report was approved by Chairman Reynolds, Vice Chair Thernstrom, and Commissioners Kirsanow and Taylor, with Commissioners Yaki, Melendez, Heriot, and Gaziano abstaining. The report includes a joint statement submitted by Commissioners Melendez and Yaki and a statement by Vice Chair Thernstrom; separate rebuttal statements by Commissioners Melendez and Yaki to Vice Chair Thernstrom's statement; and Commissioners Gaziano, Reynolds, Kirsanow, and Taylor's joint rebuttal statement to the joint statement by Commissioners Melendez and Yaki.

Copies of this and other Commission reports are available through the agency's Robert S. Rankin National Civil Rights Library—(202) 376-8110; TTY: (202) 376-8116—and online at www.usccr.gov.

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with monitoring federal civil rights enforcement. Members include Chairman Gerald A. Reynolds, Vice Chair Abigail Thernstrom, Commissioners Todd Gaziano, Gail Heriot, Peter N. Kirsanow, Arlan D. Melendez, Ashley L. Taylor, Jr., and Michael Yaki. Martin Dannenfels is the Staff Director. Commission meetings are open to the general public. The Commission's website is <http://www.usccr.gov>.