



# **Contemporary Civil Rights Challenges: A View from the States**

**2018 Survey of the State Advisory Committees**

**SEPTEMBER 2018**

**U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS**

## **U.S. Commission on Civil Rights**

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency established by Congress in 1957. Congress directed the Commission to:

- Investigate complaints alleging that citizens are being deprived of their right to vote by reason of their race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin, or by reason of fraudulent practices.
- Study and collect information relating to discrimination or a denial of equal protection of the laws under the Constitution because of race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin, or in the administration of justice.
- Appraise federal laws and policies with respect to discrimination or denial of equal protection of the laws because of race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin, or in the administration of justice.
- Serve as a national clearinghouse for information in respect to discrimination or denial of equal protection of the laws because of race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin.
- Submit reports, findings, and recommendations to the President and Congress.

Issue public service announcements to discourage discrimination or denial of equal protection of the laws.<sup>a</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> 42 U.S.C. §1975a.

# **Contemporary Civil Rights Challenges: A View from the States**

**2018 Survey of the State Advisory  
Committees to the  
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights**

**September 2018**



## UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

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1331 Pennsylvania Ave., NW • Suite 1150 • Washington, DC 20425 [www.usccr.gov](http://www.usccr.gov)

### Letter of Transmittal

September 7, 2018

President Donald J. Trump  
Vice President Mike Pence  
Speaker of the House Paul Ryan

On behalf of the United States Commission on Civil Rights (“the Commission”), I transmit our report, *Contemporary Civil Rights Challenges: A View From the States, 2018 Survey of the State Advisory Committees*. The report is available on the Commission’s website at [www.usccr.gov](http://www.usccr.gov).

Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1975a(d), the Commission maintains 51 independent State Advisory Committees (SACs), with one in each state and the District of Columbia, comprised of appointed expert members who advise and assist the Commission with investigations at the state level.

This report details the Commission’s survey of SAC members, capturing data on which civil rights issues SAC members believe should be prioritized. Some of the key conclusions in the report include that, of the eight areas of civil rights that fall within the Commission’s jurisdiction, 35.8 percent of the survey respondents rank race/color as currently the area of highest importance, followed by 22.8 percent who rank the administration of justice as highest, and 16.6 percent who rate voting rights as the highest importance. High priority civil rights topics included education, criminal justice, voting rights, freedom of expression, and civil rights enforcement.

We at the Commission look forward to incorporating these priorities into our own work, in addition to continuing to take in other pertinent information from the SACs, as they have a unique perspective to advise the Commission about civil rights issues that impact their individual states. These survey results reflect the considered judgment of experts across the country regarding critical civil rights issues affecting Americans; we hope and expect the information in the report will be useful to you as you shape policy judgments.

For the Commission,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "C. Lhamon".

Catherine E. Lhamon  
Chair

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Commission's Office of Civil Rights Evaluation (OCRE) produced this survey and report under the direction of Katherine Culliton-González, Esq. Sarale Sewell, OCRE Social Scientist, drafted the survey and performed the principal research and writing of this report. Commissioners and their Special Assistants also reviewed the report, and provided suggested edits. The Commission's General Counsel Maureen Rudolph reviewed and approved the report for legal sufficiency. The Commission's Regional Programs Unit provided valuable outreach assistance to State Advisory Committee members.

The Commission appreciates the participation of the State Advisory Committee members in responding to this survey and sharing their expertise and views.

## INTRODUCTION

In 2010, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (“the Commission”) conducted a survey of its State Advisory Committees (SACs) to determine which civil rights issues the SAC members considered most pressing and significant in their respective states, and issued a subsequent report entitled *Civil Rights Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A View from the States*. Nearly a decade later in 2018, the U.S. continues to be confronted by unique and ever-evolving civil rights challenges. The Commission voted to provide an update to its 2010 report, so in April 2018, the Commission developed a survey to capture the viewpoints of SAC members on essential civil rights issues that impact this nation. The survey captured data on which civil rights issues are persistent and which are emerging; which civil rights issues should be prioritized; and how perspectives on the importance of certain civil rights issues may differ among varying states across the U.S. This report will provide an assessment of that survey data, with the goals of helping to reflect and shape a national conversation on current and future civil rights issues, and identifying civil rights priorities for the Commission, which may also be helpful to policymakers, researchers, advocates, and other stakeholders.

### **State Advisory Committees: Composition and Function**

The Commission is an independent, bipartisan, fact-finding federal agency that seeks to inform the development of national civil rights policy and enhance enforcement of federal civil rights laws.<sup>1</sup> The Commission studies civil rights issues related to the deprivation of voting rights, or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, national origin, or concerning the administration of justice.<sup>2</sup> The Commission’s unique statutory mandate affords it the opportunity

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, “Mission,” <http://www.usccr.gov/about/index.php>.

<sup>2</sup> See 42 U.S.C. § 1975a(1) (setting forth the jurisdiction of the Commission to “investigate allegations in writing under oath or affirmation relating to deprivations (A) because of color, race, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin; or (B) as a result of any pattern or practice of fraud; of the right of citizens of the United States to vote and have votes counted”); see also 42 U.S.C. § 1975a(2), (setting forth the jurisdiction of the Commission to “(A) study and collect information relating to; (B) make appraisals of the laws and policies of the Federal government with respect to; (C) serve as a national clearinghouse for information relating to; and (D) prepare public service announcements and advertising campaigns to discourage; discrimination or denials of equal protection of the laws under the Constitution of the United States because of color, race, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin, or in the administration of justice.”).

to continue to enhance enforcement of civil rights laws, and to appraise laws and policies of the federal government with respect to contemporary civil rights challenges.

As per its statutory requirement, the Commission has established and maintains 51 SACs in each state and the District of Columbia.<sup>3</sup> Chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act,<sup>4</sup> the SACs are comprised of appointed members, serving as uncompensated special government employees, who advise and assist the Commission about civil rights at the state level.<sup>5</sup> The SACs operate as eyes and ears of the Commission, and have a unique perspective to advise the Commission about civil rights issues that impact their individual states.

## **Methodology**

In order to capture information about civil rights issues and priorities as well as information about the SAC members themselves, the Commission disseminated a 23-question survey. This survey was administered electronically in April 2018, sent to approximately 660 SAC members across the country. Respondents were provided approximately two weeks to complete the survey. The survey was divided into three sections:

1. Section 1: Geographic Information and SAC Affiliation
2. Section 2: Information about Civil Rights Issues/Priorities
3. Section 3: Demographic Information

Respondents were required to answer questions in Sections 1 and 2, and Section 3 was optional. The Commission requested this optional demographic information from SAC members for research purposes, to help the Commission understand the demographics of the respondents and assess how the overall survey response data may break down into meaningful groups. All responses were kept confidential, in accordance with federal law, and any demographic data that respondents did choose to provide are reported here in statistical form only; the data offered in this report does not identify any specific individuals.

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<sup>3</sup> 42 U.S.C. § 1975a(d) (“The Commission shall establish at least one such [advisory] committee in each State and the District of Columbia composed of citizens of that State or District.”).

<sup>4</sup> 5 U.S.C. App. §§ 1- 16.

<sup>5</sup> 45 C.F.R. § 703.2.



Survey respondents were not asked to identify their names on the survey, but were asked to identify which SAC they are members of, and in which city they currently reside.

Survey questions pertaining to civil rights issues and priorities were focused around four central themes:

- SAC members' views about how the civil rights areas within the Commission's statutory mandate rank in order of importance;
- SAC members' views about how the most important civil rights issues, as identified by SAC members in 2010, rank in importance in 2018;
- SAC members' views about what specific civil rights issues are most important (that fall within or outside of the Commission's statutory mandate), and should be prioritized by the Commission within the next year; and
- SAC members' views about what specific civil rights issues (that fall within or outside of the Commission's statutory mandate) are emerging in importance, and should be prioritized by the Commission over the course of the next five years.

Out of the approximately 660 SAC members who were invited to complete the survey, the Commission received 160 complete responses,<sup>6</sup> a 24 percent overall response rate. The Commission also collected an additional 105 partial responses, and data collected for those questions that were answered by the SAC members are included in the reported results, where applicable. SAC members from all 50 states and the District of Columbia participated and provided survey responses.<sup>7</sup> See Appendix A for the survey questions.

Regarding the optional demographic questions that were asked in Section 3, approximately 58 percent of survey respondents answered at least one demographic question. SAC members who responded are from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, have a variety of political affiliations, and have attained a high level of formal education. While there was demographic data provided from a number of survey respondents, there was a high number of respondents who chose to skip these questions. Ultimately, the data collected was not sufficient to be able to point to any trends

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<sup>6</sup> A completed response indicates that all mandatory questions (i.e., questions in Sections 1 and 2) were answered, and the survey was submitted electronically upon completion.

<sup>7</sup> This included SAC members who answered at least one question in Section 2 of the survey.

or links between certain personal characteristics of respondents and importance placed on certain civil rights areas or topics.

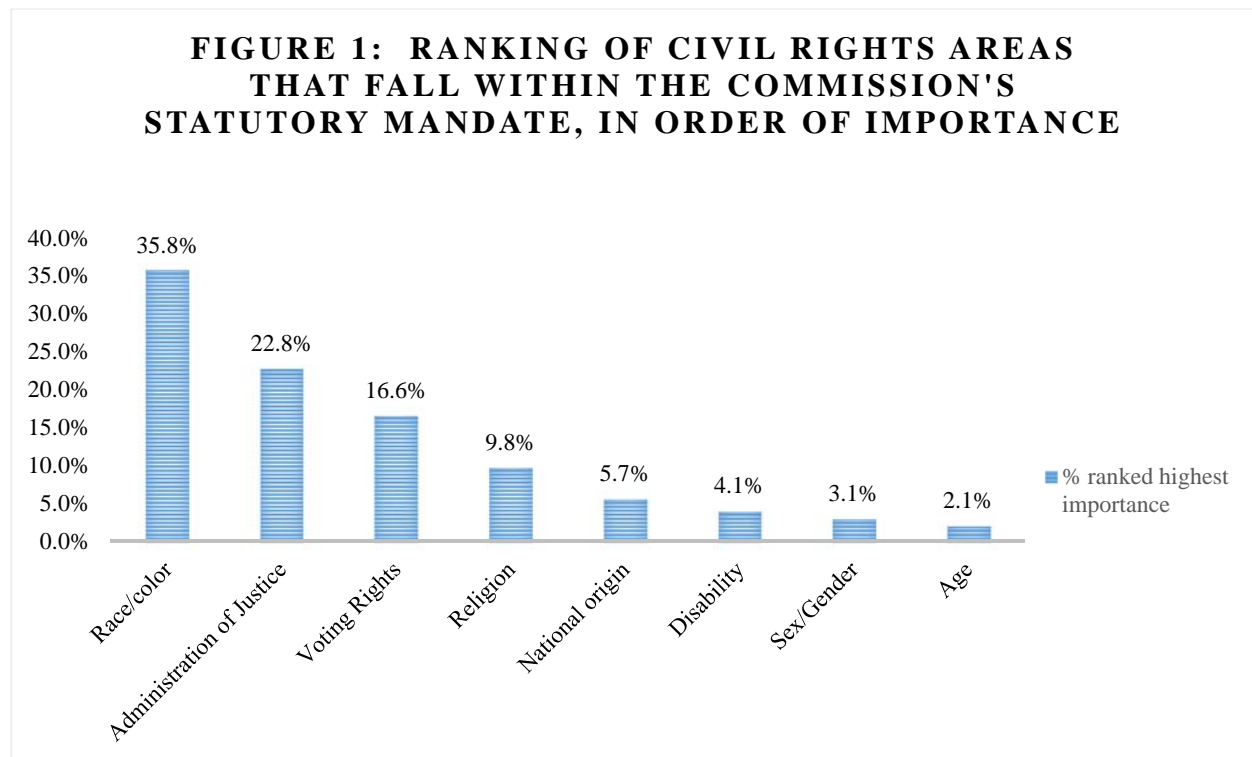
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## CURRENT CIVIL RIGHTS PRIORITIES: A NATIONWIDE PERSPECTIVE

Surveyed SAC members were asked to rank the following eight areas of civil rights that fall within the Commission's statutory jurisdiction in order of current importance ("1" being the area of highest importance). These areas of civil rights are:

- Race/color
- National origin
- Religion
- Sex/gender
- Age
- Disability
- Voting Rights
- Administration of Justice

On a national level, survey respondents indicated that race/color is currently the area of highest importance, having been ranked highest by 35.8 percent of respondents. Administration of justice was ranked highest by 22.8 percent of respondents, and voting rights was ranked highest by 16.6 percent of respondents. See Figure 1, which displays how all eight civil rights areas ranked among respondents.

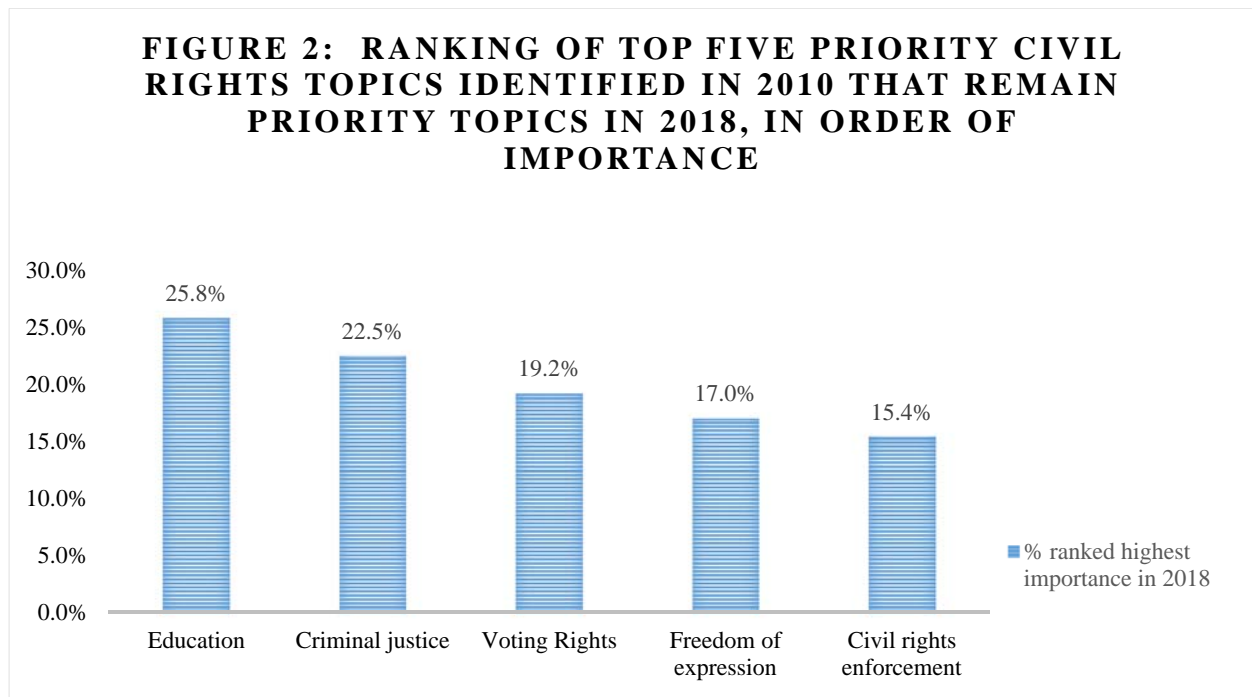


In spite of the rankings shown above, approximately 6 percent of respondents expressed difficulties with ranking these eight civil rights areas, indicating that they are all of the utmost importance.

In 2010, SAC members identified the following civil rights topics as current civil rights priorities:

- Education
- Employment
- Housing
- Immigration/Immigrant rights
- Freedom of expression
- Criminal justice
- Health care
- Government services, benefits and/or funding
- Public accommodations
- Hate crimes and/or hate speech
- Federal contracting
- Domestic abuse/violence
- LGBT rights
- Issues facing Native Americans/  
Alaska Natives/Native Hawaiians
- Voting Rights
- Accessibility
- Civil rights enforcement
- Reverse racial discrimination
- National security
- Language access
- Data security and privacy rights
- Technology

Survey respondents were asked to choose and rank five generalized civil rights topics from the 2010 list above, which they feel are still current topics of importance and should be prioritized by the Commission in the next twelve months. Education topped the rankings, with 25.8 percent of respondents indicating that it is currently the topic of highest importance. Following in rank order were criminal justice, voting rights, freedom of expression, and civil rights enforcement, which was ranked highest by 22.5 percent, 19.2 percent, 17.0 percent, and 15.4 percent of respondents, respectively. See Figure 2.



Respondents also indicated that immigration/immigrant rights and hate crimes are civil rights topics identified in 2010 that are still currently of higher importance, after the top five indicated above. Topics from 2010 that were not ranked as high included language access, technology, and federal contracting.

In addition, survey respondents were asked to share five specific civil rights topics in rank order that they felt were of the highest importance for the Commission to prioritize in the next 12 months. These identified topics expanded upon the generalized topics identified from 2010. Specific topics

relating to criminal justice topped the rankings, followed by topics relating to education, voting rights, race, and the First Amendment.

Specific topics identified that relate to criminal justice include:

- Criminal justice reform
- Juvenile justice reform
- Police violence against people of color and people with disabilities
- Civil asset forfeiture
- Jail and prison conditions
- Municipal fines and fees
- Judicial process
- Disproportionate minority contact/arrests/incarceration

Specific topics identified that relate to education include:

- Educational opportunities for Native American students
- Education funding/finance equity
- School-to-prison pipeline
- School discipline and the disproportionate treatment of minorities
- Unequal school facilities
- Cost of education

Specific topics identified that relate to voting rights:

- Voting access/voter suppression
- Voting rights for Native Americans
- Documentation requirements/ID requirements for voter registration
- Voting Rights in light of the repeated speculation of voter fraud and its impact in upcoming elections
- Gerrymandering

Specific topics identified that relate to race include:

- Racial equality/equity
- Native American rights
- Reverse discrimination

Specific topics identified that relate to the First Amendment include:

- Freedom of speech
- Freedom of expression

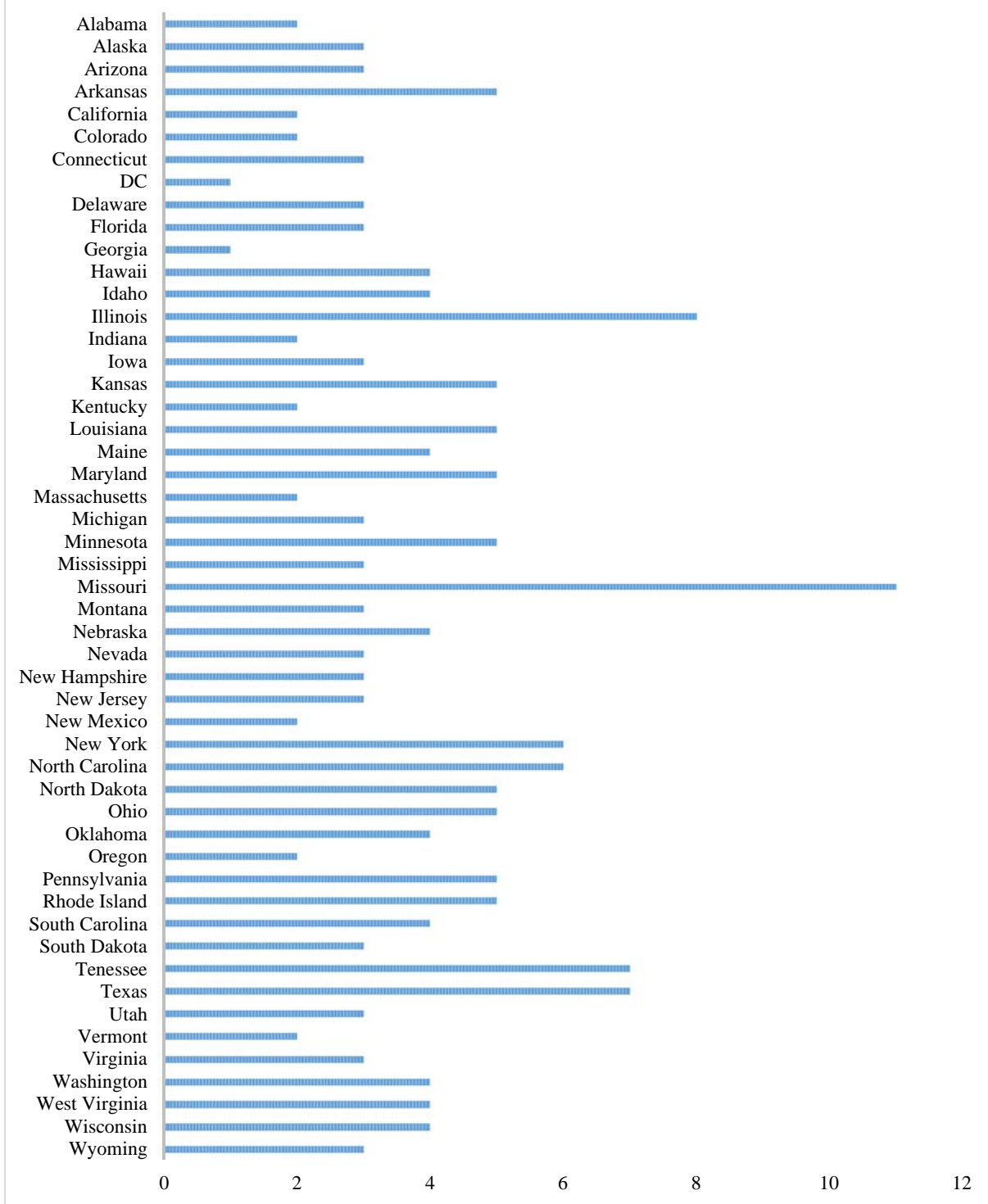
Other specific topics that were indicated, that did not fall within the top five categories, capture a wide range of civil rights areas and include:

- Access to health care
- Resolving ambiguities in immigration status and creating a clear path to citizenship
- Religious liberty vs. nondiscrimination laws
- Price discrimination in pharmaceuticals
- LGBT rights
- Individual rights v. personal responsibility
- Public employees' rights with respect to union representation
- Civil rights enforcement
- Poverty and how it hinders the exercise of civil rights
- Domestic abuse/violence
- Discrimination in housing based on race, disability
- Employment discrimination based on race/national origin/language, disability
- Ageism
- Elder abuse

## **CURRENT CIVIL RIGHTS PRIORITIES: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE STATES**

As mentioned above, SAC members from all 50 states and the District of Columbia participated and provided survey responses. Missouri topped the list with the highest number of survey respondents (11 respondents) of any state. See Figure 3 for a breakdown of participation by state.

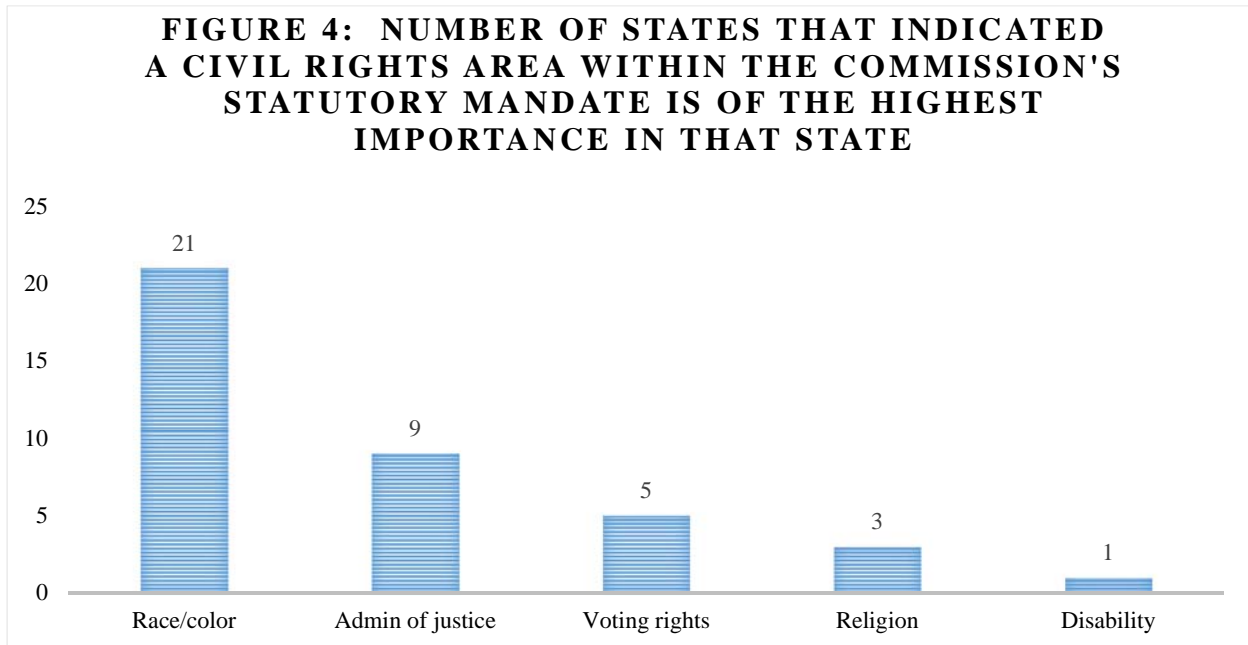
**FIGURE 3: NUMBER OF SAC MEMBERS WHO PROVIDED SURVEY RESPONSES,\* BY STATE**



\*The totals included all SAC members who answered at least one question in Section 2 of the survey.  
See Appendix A for the survey questions.



With regard to the eight areas of civil rights that fall within the Commission's statutory mandate in order of current importance ("1" being the area of highest importance), survey respondents from 21 states indicated that race/color is the area of civil rights of highest importance in their state. These states are Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, and Vermont. See Figure 4.



Respondents from nine states indicated that the administration of justice is the area of civil rights of highest importance in their state. These states are Arkansas, California, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Dakota, and Washington.

Respondents from five states indicated that voting rights is the area of civil rights of highest importance in their state. These states are Alaska, Kansas, Ohio, Texas, and the District of Columbia.

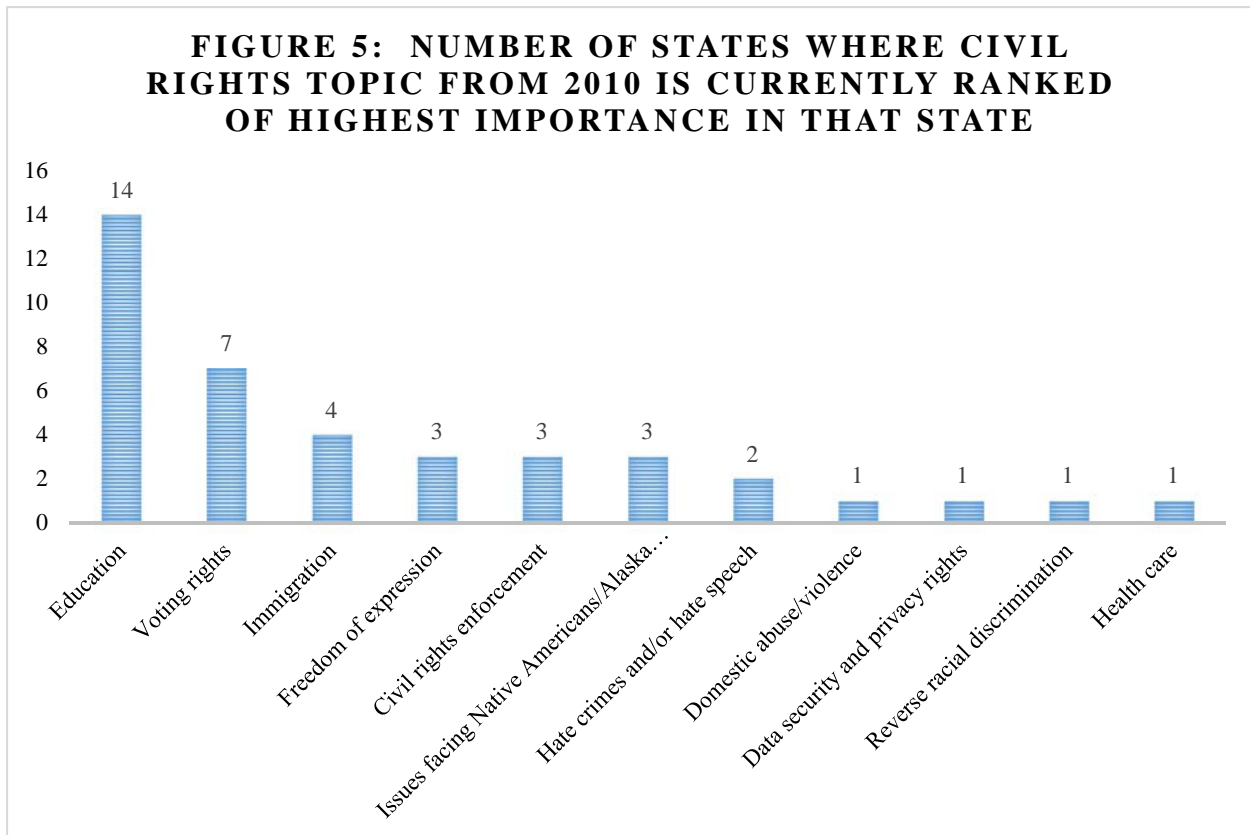
Respondents from three states indicated that religion is the area of civil rights of highest importance in their state. These states are Delaware, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

Respondents from North Dakota indicated that disability is the area of civil rights of highest importance in their state.

In 16 states, there was no single area of civil rights that stood out as being of highest importance in that particular state. Respondents indicated that multiple areas of civil rights are of highest importance in their state, including:

- Alabama—race/color and voting rights
- Colorado—national origin and administration of justice
- Hawaii—sex/gender, age, voting rights, and administration of justice
- Idaho—race/color, national origin, religion, administration of justice
- Indiana—religion and age
- Iowa—disability, voting rights, and administration of justice
- Kentucky—sex/gender and administration of justice
- Maine—race/color, national origin, voting rights, and administration of justice
- Nevada—race/color, voting rights, and administration of justice
- New Hampshire—race/color, voting rights, and administration of justice
- New Mexico—race/color and age
- Oregon—race/color and administration of justice
- South Carolina—race/color, religion, voting rights, and administration of justice
- Virginia—race/color, religion, and voting rights
- West Virginia—race/color, sex/gender, and disability
- Wyoming—race/color, sex/gender, and administration of justice

With regard to the five civil rights topics from the 2010 survey that respondents feel are still current topics of importance and should be prioritized by the Commission in the next 12 months, survey respondents from 14 states indicated that education is the civil rights topic of highest importance in their state. These states are Connecticut, Hawaii, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Utah. See Figure 5.



Respondents from nine states indicated that criminal justice is the civil rights topic of highest importance in their state. These states are Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, and Washington.

Respondents from seven states indicated that voting rights is the civil rights topic of highest importance in their state. These states are Alabama, Alaska, Missouri, North Carolina, Virginia, Washington, and the District of Columbia.

Respondents from four states indicated that immigration is the civil rights topic of highest importance in their state. These states are Georgia, Maine, Maryland, and Washington.

Respondents from Delaware, Illinois, and Wisconsin indicated that freedom of expression is the civil rights topic of highest importance in their state; respondents from Maine, Ohio, and Washington indicated that civil rights enforcement is the civil rights topic of highest importance in their state; and respondents from North Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming indicated that issues facing Native Americans/Alaska Natives/Native Hawaiians is the civil rights topic of highest importance in their state.

Respondents from two states indicated that hate crimes is the civil rights topic of highest importance in their state. These states are Oklahoma and Wisconsin.

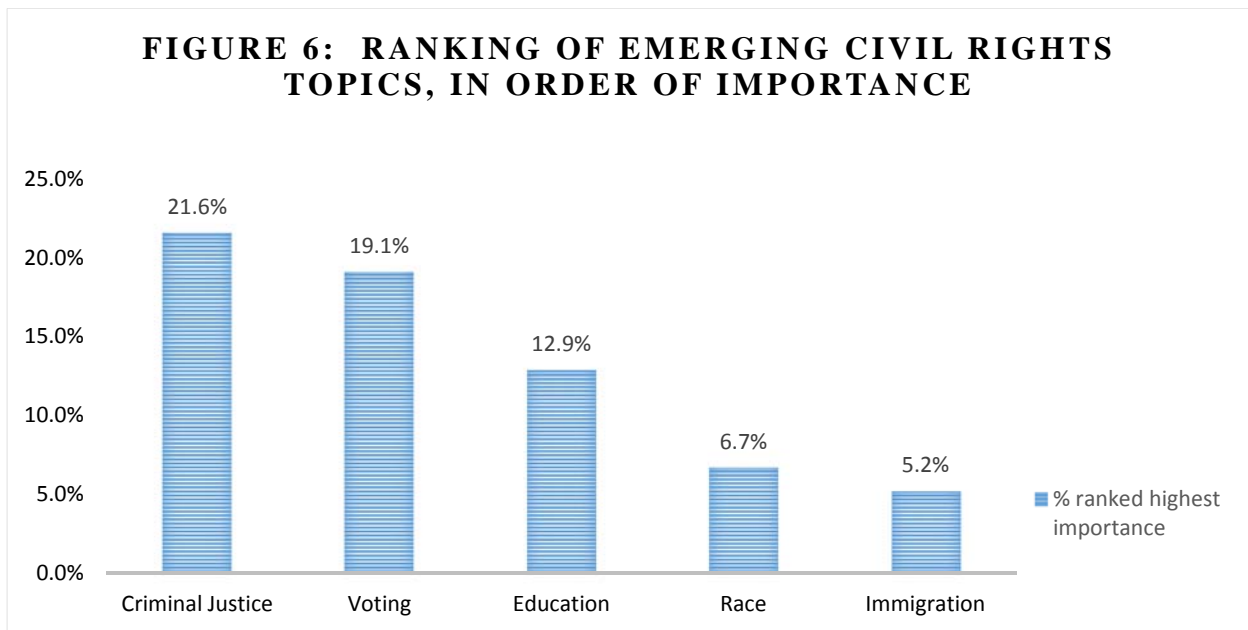
Respondents from Alaska indicated that domestic abuse/violence is the civil rights topic of highest importance in their state; those from Oklahoma indicated that data security/ privacy rights is the civil rights topic of highest importance in their state; those from Oregon indicated that reverse racial discrimination is the civil rights topic of highest importance in their state; and those from West Virginia indicated that health care is the civil rights topic of highest importance in their state.

In 15 states, there was no single area of civil rights that stood out as being of highest importance in that particular state. Rather, respondents indicated that multiple areas of civil rights are of highest importance in their state, including:

- Arizona—employment, freedom of expression, public accommodations, hate crimes, federal contracting, LGBT rights, voting rights, and reverse racial discrimination
- Arkansas—criminal justice, civil rights enforcement, and data security/privacy rights
- California—immigration, hate crimes, LGBT rights, civil rights, reverse racial discrimination, and national security
- Colorado—immigration and national security
- Florida—voting rights and reverse racial discrimination
- Idaho—immigration, freedom of expression, criminal justice, government services/benefits/funding, LGBT rights
- Indiana—employment and freedom of expression
- Iowa—health care and civil rights enforcement
- Michigan—education and freedom of expression
- Nebraska—education, immigration, freedom of expression, criminal justice, health care, voting rights, reverse racial discrimination, and data security/privacy rights
- Rhode Island—education, immigration, and criminal justice
- South Dakota—Issues facing Native Americans/Alaska Natives/Native Hawaiians and voting rights
- Tennessee—education, employment, voting rights, and civil rights enforcement
- Texas—immigration, voting rights, and national security
- Vermont—freedom of expression and civil rights enforcement

## LOOKING AHEAD TO THE FUTURE

Surveyed SAC members were asked to identify the top five emerging civil rights topics that the Commission should be focused on within the next five years. Twenty-one percent of survey respondents indicated that criminal justice topics are the issues of highest importance, to which the Commission should draw their focus in the next five years. Following in rank order were the topics of voting, education, race, and immigration, having been ranked highest by 19.1 percent, 12.9 percent, 6.7 percent, and 5.2 percent of respondents, respectively. See Figure 6.



As related to criminal justice, the emerging topics that survey respondents identified, include:

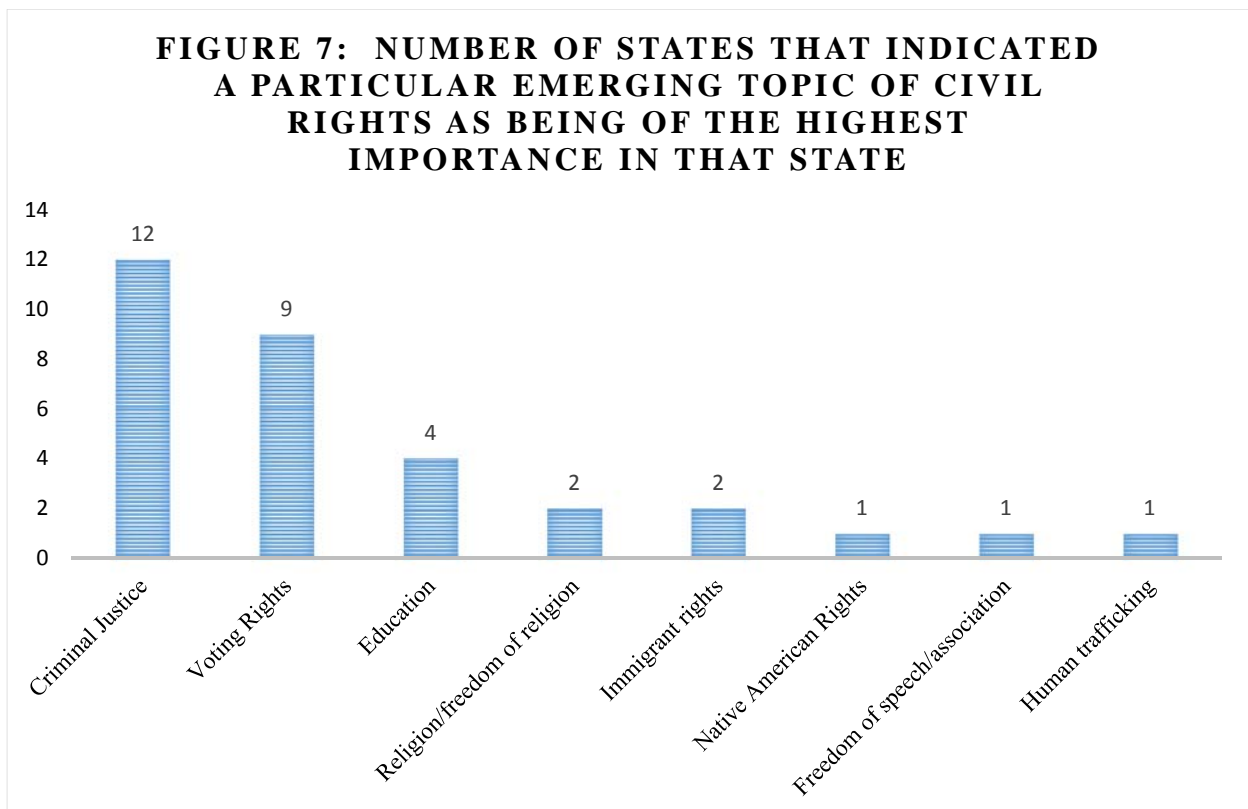
- Disparities in sentencing and/or incarceration rates among vulnerable populations
- Mass incarceration (of all populations, with a focus on racial/ethnic disparities)
- Racial disparities and/or racism in policing and the criminal justice system at large
- Police use of force (on all populations, with a focus on racial/ethnic disparities)
- Asset forfeiture
- Unreasonable fines and fees (for all populations, with a focus on racial/ethnic disparities)
- Police bias against/profiling of racial/ethnic minorities
- Collateral consequences/restoration of rights for formerly incarcerated individuals
- Mental health and incarceration

- Jail/prison conditions
- School-to-prison pipeline
- Police and neighborhood community relations

Respondents from 12 states identified emerging topics related to criminal justice as the issues of highest importance in their state. These states are Arkansas, Idaho, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New York, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. See Figure 7.

As related to voting rights, the emerging topics that survey respondents identified include:

- Voter access/suppression based on race
- Vote integrity/vote dilution (due to ineligible voters)/voter fraud
- Native American voting rights/disenfranchisement
- Voter access based on disability
- Felon disenfranchisement
- Voter access—language access/assistance



Respondents from nine states identified emerging topics related to voting rights as the issues of highest importance in their state. These states are Alaska, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Montana, North Carolina, and Texas.

As related to education, the emerging topics that survey respondents identified include:

1. Education equity/education finance equity/educational resource equity
2. Racial disparities in school discipline/school-to-prison pipeline
3. Reverse discrimination in higher education
4. Teacher shortages, and special licensing requirements

Respondents from four states identified emerging topics related to education as the issues of highest importance in their state. These states are Connecticut, Kansas, Minnesota, and South Carolina.

As related to race, the emerging topics that survey respondents identified include:

- Racial discrimination/race relations/racial education
- Racial discrimination against Native Americans
- Reverse racial discrimination

While emerging topics related to race were identified by respondents in many states, no state identified emerging topics related to race alone as their topic of highest importance. Many identified topics were classified under other general categories and indicated a focus on racial disparities or the specific treatment of a racial group (e.g., voting rights/access for racial minorities, or racial bias in police use of force, etc.).

As related to immigration, the emerging topics that survey respondents identified include:

- Illegal immigration; sanctuary states, counties, and cities
- ICE raids
- National origin discrimination based on perceptions about immigration status
- Immigration reform

Respondents from two states identified emerging topics related to immigration as the issues of highest importance in their state. These states are Georgia and Rhode Island.

There were 22 states in which no single emerging civil rights issue stood out as being the issue of highest importance in the state. Instead, there were multiple emerging topics identified as being of highest importance in each of these states. These states and issues are identified and summarized below:

- Alabama—voting rights and abuse of redistricting
- Arizona—voting rights, abortion, and religious liberty
- California—Illegal immigration and female circumcision
- Colorado—immigration/ICE raids and equal protection
- Hawaii—gender, education, ageism, and the nexus between civil rights/human rights and civil norms
- Indiana—racial equality/racism and abortion
- Kentucky—LGBTQ rights and racial disparities in mass incarceration
- Massachusetts—education equity and 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment rights/freedom of speech
- Michigan—wealth inequality, freedom of speech on campus, and voting rights/access
- Mississippi—education funding equity, voter registration/protection, and religious freedom
- Nebraska—racial bias, economic discrimination, national origin discrimination, and discrimination against white and Asian males in employment
- New Hampshire—race, voting rights, and diversity
- New Jersey—education equity, asset forfeiture, and fair housing for people with disabilities
- New Mexico—elder abuse and criminal justice reform with a focus on racial disparities
- Oklahoma—mass incarceration, Islamophobia, education equity, and voting access
- Oregon—human trafficking and police militarization
- Pennsylvania—mass incarceration, housing rights, disability rights, education, and race disparity in union representation
- South Dakota—education equity, race relations, and voter suppression
- Utah—education equity, immigration, and privacy
- Vermont—access to safe and affordable housing, and fair policing
- Washington—municipal fines and fees, freedom of speech, race-based discrimination against Asians in higher education admissions



- Wisconsin—racial discrimination, free speech on campus, concern about the use of disparate impact theory, and hate crimes against Muslims

## **CONCLUSION**

State Advisory Committee members' views as represented in these survey results provide an important window into status of civil rights in this country in 2018 and into members' expert views regarding pressing civil rights concerns in and among states. The input of SAC members across the country is crucial for the Commission to stay abreast of important civil rights topics and trends in the U.S. These views help shape and foster national attention to civil rights concerns. The survey results' clear emphasis on a broad range of issues within the Commission's statutory jurisdiction support ongoing Commission work across that range while also highlighting key areas for national focus, both within the Commission and for the nation.

## APPENDIX A

### **Civil Rights Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A View from the States 2018 Survey of the State Advisory Committees**

#### **Mission of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights:**

*Established as an independent, bipartisan, fact-finding federal agency, our mission is to inform the development of national civil rights policy and enhance enforcement of federal civil rights laws. We pursue this mission by studying alleged deprivations of voting rights and alleged discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin, or in the administration of justice. We play a vital role in advancing civil rights through objective and comprehensive investigation, research, and analysis on issues of fundamental concern to the federal government and the public.*

#### **About this survey and subsequent report:**

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights' unique statutory mandate affords it the opportunity to continue to enhance enforcement of civil rights laws and to appraise laws and policies of the federal government with respect to the civil rights challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As the “eyes and ears” of the Commission on the ground, the State Advisory Committees (SACs) offer the Commission the unique ability to assess the state of civil rights across the country.

In 2010, the Commission conducted a survey of all 51 SACs to determine which civil rights issues the SAC members considered most pressing and significant in their respective states, and issued a subsequent report entitled *Civil Rights Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A View from the States*. This current survey is an initiative meant to gather information from SAC members across the country on what issues or civil rights challenges are most pressing in 2018, as an update to the 2010 survey and report. The data you provide will help the Commission identify the top civil rights priorities across the country identified by its various SAC members, which will in turn help shape a national conversation on current and future civil rights issues, and identify civil rights priorities for policymakers.

The Commission will perform an analysis of the data collected in this survey and will produce a brief report to document the current civil rights priorities of the SACs for 2018. This report may

also be used by the Commission as a planning tool to help focus on the most pressing civil rights issues, based on input from the SACs.

**Survey respondents will not be asked to identify their names, but will be asked to identify which SAC they are a member of, and in which city they currently reside.**

**Voluntary Information:** There are a series of demographic and informational questions in Section 1 of this survey that are completely voluntary. These questions are being asked for research purposes, to help Commission Social Scientists and Analysts understand the demographics of the respondents and assess how the overall survey response data may break down into meaningful groups. Your answers may help the Commission understand the relationship between your personal factors as asked in the survey questions and your views on the most important civil rights issues in your State. Submission of this information is voluntary and declining to provide it will not subject you to any adverse consequences under the control of the Commission related to your SAC work or potential reappointment on the SAC. Your responses will be kept confidential, will not be disclosed to any member of the Commission's SACs, and will only be used, if at all, in accordance with the provisions of applicable federal laws, executive orders, and regulations. Your individual responses will be available to Commission staff but not subject to individual disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) because of FOIA exemptions allowing the withholding of personally identifiable information. Demographic data may be reported in statistical form, but if reported, data will not identify any specific individuals.

### Section 1: Geographic Information and SAC Affiliation

1. Of which State Advisory Committee are you a member?  
 All state options listed
2. In what town/city do you currently reside? \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 2: Information about Civil Rights Issues/Priorities

3. If you could choose five specific civil rights topics that you believe are emerging, growing, or continuing issues of importance in your state in the next five years (i.e. 2018–2022), what would those specific topics be? Please list each below in rank order (1 being the topic of highest importance) and provide a detailed description and explanation for each, including your reasoning for why these topics are of importance to you and/or your state in the next five years (i.e. 2018–2022).

- [1] \_\_\_\_\_  
 [2] \_\_\_\_\_  
 [3] \_\_\_\_\_  
 [4] \_\_\_\_\_  
 [5] \_\_\_\_\_

4. In line with the Commission’s statutory mandate,<sup>1</sup> please rank the following areas of civil rights in order of importance (1 being the area of highest importance) to you and/or your state at present (in the next 12 months):

- Race/color  
 National origin  
 Religion  
 Sex/Gender<sup>2</sup>  
 Age  
 Disability  
 Voting Rights  
 Administration of Justice<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> As per 42 U.S.C. § 1975a(1) and 42 U.S.C. § 1975a (2) et seq., “investigate allegations in writing under oath or affirmation that citizens of the United States are being deprived of their right to vote and have that vote counted by reason of color, race, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin,” and “(A) study and collect information relating to; (B) make appraisals of the laws and policies of the Federal government with respect to; (C) serve as a national clearinghouse for information relating to; and (D) prepare public service announcements and advertising campaigns to discourage discrimination or denials of equal protection of the laws under the Constitution of the United States because of color, race, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin, or in the administration of justice.”

<sup>2</sup> “Sex” may be interpreted to include sexual orientation and gender identity.

<sup>3</sup> The Commission’s administration of justice jurisdiction extends to all issues of equal protection involving the courts (including both civil and criminal matters), law enforcement agencies, and correctional institutions. It

5. Please provide a brief explanation of your rankings.
- 

6. Are there other areas of civil rights (outside of the areas specified in question 4, which fall outside of the Commission's statutory mandate) that you consider to be of particular importance, and/or believe are priorities for you and/or your state at present (in the next 12 months)?

Yes

No

7. If yes, please list these other areas of civil rights (outside of the Commission's statutory mandate) that you consider to be of particular importance, and/or believe are priorities for you and/or your state at present (in the next 12 months).
- 

8. The following topics were identified in 2010 as being important civil rights issues that the Commission should potentially consider and address, which have been generalized and fall under the various civil rights areas within (and a few outside of) the Commission's statutory mandate. From the list below, please choose the five most important civil rights topics to you and/or your state below and rank them in order of importance (1 being the topic of highest importance) at present (in the next 12 months):

Education

Employment

Housing

Immigration/

Immigrant rights

Freedom of expression

Criminal justice

Health care

Government services,  
benefits and/or funding

Public accommodations

Hate crimes and/or hate  
speech

Federal contracting

Domestic abuse/violence

LGBT rights

Issues facing Native

Americans/Alaska

Natives/Native Hawaiians

Voting Rights

Accessibility

Civil rights enforcement

Reverse racial discrimination

National security

Language access

Data security and  
privacy rights

Technology

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includes all stages of the judicial and enforcement process, including arrest, bail, trial, imprisonment, probation and parole.

9. Please provide an explanation of your topic rankings, and provide an explanation of why these topics are of importance to you or your state.
- 

10. Are there other civil rights topics on which the Commission should be focused at present (in the next 12 months), which have not been mentioned in questions 8 or 9?

Yes

No

11. If yes, please list these civil rights topics and provide a detailed description and explanation for each, including your reasoning for why these topics are of importance to you and/or your SAC in the next 12 months.
- 

12. Questions 8–11 asked about your rankings of general civil rights topics that were either previously identified by SAC members in 2010 or identified by you as topics of importance. If you could choose five specific civil rights topics for the Commission to focus on in the next 12 months that expand on the general civil rights topics you found most important and/or fall into the topical groupings above, what would those specific topics be? Please list each below in rank order (1 being the topic of highest importance) and provide a detailed description and explanation for each, including your reasoning for why these topics are of importance to you and/or your state in the next 12 months.

[1] \_\_\_\_\_

[2] \_\_\_\_\_

[3] \_\_\_\_\_

[4] \_\_\_\_\_

[5] \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 3: Demographic Information (optional)**

13. What is your age range?
- 18–24
  - 25–34
  - 35–44
  - 45–54
  - 55–64
  - 65 and over
14. What is your race?
- White
  - Black or African American
  - American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Asian
  - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
  - Two or more races (please specify)
- 
- Other (please specify)
- 
15. Are you Hispanic or Latino/Latina/Latinx?
- Yes
  - No
16. What is your primary religious affiliation (if any)?
- Christianity
  - Judaism
  - Islam
  - Hinduism
  - Buddhism
  - Sikh
  - Baha'i
  - Atheist/Agnostic
  - None
  - Other (please specify)
-

17. What is your gender?

- Female
  - Male
  - Transgender male
  - Transgender female
  - Non-binary/more than one gender/no gender
  - Other (please specify)
- 

18. What is your sexual orientation?

- Heterosexual
  - Gay
  - Lesbian
  - Bisexual
  - Other (please specify)
- 

19. Is English your native language?

- Yes
- No

20. If English is not your native language, what language is your native language?

- Spanish
  - Chinese (including Mandarin, Cantonese, and other Chinese languages)
  - French and French Creole (including Patois and Cajun)
  - Tagalog (including Filipino)
  - Vietnamese
  - Arabic
  - Korean
  - Russian
  - German
  - Other (please specify)
-



22. Do you identify as a person with a disability (including disabilities that are physical, mental, developmental, behavioral, etc.)?

Yes

No

23. What is your political affiliation?

Republican

Democrat

Independent

Libertarian

No affiliation

Other (please specify)

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24. What is your highest level of education?

High school diploma or equivalent  
(e.g. GED)

Some college/university, no degree

Associate degree (e.g. AA, AS)

Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, BS)

Master's degree (e.g. MA, MS, MEd)

Professional degree (e.g. JD, MD, DDS)

Doctorate (e.g. PhD, EdD)