

THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

PRESS RELEASE

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U.S. Commission on Civil Rights to Hold Briefing on the Civil Rights Implications of Eminent Domain Abuse

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights will hold a public briefing on Friday, August 12, 2011 at Commission headquarters, 624 9th St., NW, Washington, DC, 20425. The public briefing will start at 9:30 am EDT and no advance reservation is necessary unless special services are requested.*

The briefing will include scholars and civil rights advocates who will discuss the history of eminent domain abuse, its impact on poor and minority communities, and efforts by federal or state legislatures to curb abuses. Some civil rights advocates argue that urban renewal condemnations permitted by the Supreme Court's decision in *Berman v. Parker* have historically been used to target racial and ethnic minorities, using the term "blight" as a facially neutral word that masked discriminatory motives behind takings. Many states have enacted laws attempting to limit the scope of eminent domain power further sanctioned by the Court's subsequent decision in *Kelo v. City of New London*, a decision that upheld its use for private economic redevelopment, but some legislative attempts to reform abusive practices have been criticized as ineffective.

Speakers before the Commission will include David T. Beito, Chair of the Alabama State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights; J. Peter Byrne, Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Center; Hilary O. Shelton, Senior Vice-President for Advocacy, NAACP; and Ilya Somin, Associate Professor of Law, George Mason Law School.

The public will have 30 days after the briefing to send comments to the Commission.

* Hearing-impaired persons who require the services of a sign language interpreter should contact Pamela Dunston at (202) 376-8105 or signlanguage@usccr.gov at least three business days before the scheduled date of the briefing. Broadcast media should contact Lenore Ostrowsky at (202) 376-8591.

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with monitoring federal civil rights enforcement. Members include Chairman Martin Castro and Commissioners Roberta Achtenberg, Todd Gaziano, Gail Heriot, Peter Kirsanow, David Kladney, Abigail Thernstrom, and Michael Yaki. Commission meetings and briefings are open to the general public. The Commission's website is <http://www.usccr.gov>.