



NEWS RELEASE
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Contact: Melissa Wojnaroski
mwojnaroski@usccr.gov
(312) 353-8311

**Wisconsin Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights
Releases Report: *Hate Crime and Civil Rights in Wisconsin***

Washington, DC – The Wisconsin Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released a [report](#) examining the formation and activity of hate groups, and the effectiveness of hate crime laws in the state. In a series of public panels before issuance of the report, the Committee heard testimony from community members, advocates, academics, legal professionals, individuals, and families directly impacted. The Committee identified a number of concerns regarding the incidence of and response to hate crime in the state. Primary among them: victim underreporting; a lack of trust and collaboration between communities and law enforcement which may result in unequal protection of the law; respect for First Amendment rights to free speech; and the high burden of proof necessary to successfully prosecute bias-motivated crimes. The Committee also identified a number of recommendations for the Commission’s consideration, with the goal of remedying these concerns.

Committee Chair Naheed Bleecker said, “The Committee appreciates the time and energy of the panelists and members of the community who shared their experiences on this important topic. As I was able to present the report directly to the Commission in Washington, I was fortunate to hear first-hand its reaction to the report. The issues were acknowledged as serious and we hope the report will help to address them going forward. I would also like to thank the efforts of the Advisory Committee members for their work on 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 matters and reporting annually on civil rights. Our 51 state Advisory Committees offer a broad perspective on civil rights concerns at state and local levels. The Commission: Entering our 7th decade, a continuing legacy of influence in civil rights. For more information, please visit <http://www.usccr.gov> and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).