



NEWS RELEASE
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**Texas Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights
Announces Public Meeting on Voting Rights**

Houston, TX – **On March 13, in Houston**, the Texas Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights will hold a public briefing to discuss potential barriers to voting that may have a discriminatory impact based on race, color, disability status, national origin, and/or the administration of justice. The Committee will hear from testimony from academics, advocacy groups, election officials, lawmakers, and voters. Members of the public will be invited to speak during two open comment sessions.

The briefing will take place on **Tuesday, March 13, 2018, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. CST, at the University of Houston Law Center, 4604 Calhoun Road, Houston, TX 77204**. This meeting is free and open to the public and will also [live-stream](#). Members of the public will be invited to speak during two open forum sessions. The Committee will accept written testimony submitted to afortes@usccr.gov by April 13, 2018.

This study is in support of the Commission’s 2018 Statutory Enforcement Report on voting rights in the United States. The Texas Committee will issue findings and recommendations in a report to the Commission after all testimony has been received.

Committee Chair Mimi Marziani stated: “Our Committee is united in our belief that the democratic process in Texas must be secure, fair and equally open to all of the eligible voters in our great state. We welcome this opportunity to work together and with stakeholders and community members from across the state to identify commonsense reforms that policy-makers can adopt to strengthen our elections.”

**Voting Rights in Texas
March 13, 2018 - Houston
Agenda**

- I. Opening Remarks and Introductions: 9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.**
- II. Academic: 9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.**
 - **Rogelio Saenz**, Dean, College of Public Policy, University of Texas at San Antonio
 - **Teddy Rave**, Assistant Professor of Law, University of Houston Law Center

III. Advocacy Groups: 10:25 a.m. – 11:40 a.m.

- **Frank Jackson**, Former Mayor of Prairie View
- **Aaron Harris**, Founder, Direct Action Texas
- **Ernest Herrera**, Staff Attorney, Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund
- **Gary Bledsoe**, President, Texas National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- **Jerry Vattamala**, Director of the Democracy Program, Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund

IV. Open Public Comment Period: 11:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

V. Break: 12:15 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

VI. Election Officials & Lawmakers: 1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

- **Rodney Ellis**, Commissioner, Harris County, Precinct 1
- **Sefronia Thompson**, Representative

VII. Voters: 3:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m. (Organization representatives to be confirmed)

- MOVE San Antonio
- AAPI Voter
- Texas Organizing Project
- League of Women Voters
- Collin County Democrats Voter

VIII. Open Public Comment Period: 4:15 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.

IX. Closing Remarks: 4:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

The event will [live-stream](#).

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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. For information about the reports and meetings of the Commission and its Advisory Committees, please visit <http://www.usccr.gov> and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).