



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Arkansas Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights Releases Report: *Mas Incarceration and Civil Rights in Arkansas***

The Arkansas Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released a [report](#) following a series of panel discussions on mass incarceration in the state. The report examines the state's growing prison population, identified as one of the fastest growing in the country, and the disproportionately high incarceration rate of people of color relative to their representation in the general population.

In this study, the Committee heard testimony from community members, including formerly incarcerated individuals; advocates; legal professionals; and government officials. Through this testimony, the Committee identified a number of concerns regarding: (1) prison overcrowding, (2) the lack of correlation between incarceration and reduced crime rates, (3) financial inequities in access to public defense and bail, (4) racial disparities in both incarceration rates and the length of prison terms, and (5) juvenile incarceration. The report includes a review of current criminal justice reform efforts. It concludes with a series of recommendations regarding actions that can be taken to understand and address the identified civil rights issues moving forward.

Committee Chair Robert Steinbuch said, “It has been a distinct honor and humbling privilege to serve along with the thoughtful members of the Arkansas Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights as we discussed and debated one of the most solemn acts exclusive to government: sanctioned imprisonment. The Committee recognizes that we must be vigilant in analyzing how government employs this important tool. The questions raised in Committee’s report, which is presented here, are worthy of further analysis and investigation.”

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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. The Commission: in our 7th decade, a continuing legacy of influence in civil rights. For information about the Commission, please visit <http://www.usccr.gov> and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).