ANNOUNCEMENT
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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Announces COVID-19 Updates to Prior Reports on Voting Rights and Native American Needs

On June 5, 2020, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights voted to take up two short-term projects, focused on studying the particular civil rights implications of the coronavirus pandemic. Several of the Commission's Advisory Committees have also voted to look at civil rights implications of the coronavirus pandemic.

We invite you to follow further project updates at our website, https://www.usccr.gov/, or on social media on *Twitter* and *Facebook.*

Voting Rights

In 2018, the Commission issued a comprehensive report examining the landscape of voting rights and access to voting in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's decision in Shelby County v. Holder. Building on that examination, the Commission will now revisit those barriers and how jurisdictions' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic are impacting them.

The project will consider how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted voters of color, voters with disabilities, and limited English proficient voters including with respect to:

1. Access to early voting;
2. Jurisdictions' plans for access to safe, accessible in-person polling locations without unreasonable wait times, and with resources for those who require assistance voting;
3. Access to mail-in-voting options and barriers to its use;

The project will also examine whether adequate notice is being provided to all voters about any changes made to the process or requirements of voting as states rapidly change how they plan to administer this election in light of the pandemic.

The Missouri Advisory Committee to the Commission will also be examining voter access during the pandemic, with a series of web briefings to take place in the coming months.

Broken Promises

The Commission recently [reiterated](#) concern with the impact of the current pandemic on Native American communities. In 2018, the Commission issued a [comprehensive report](#) examining the status of federal funding to meet the federal government's trust obligations to Native American communities, including in the areas of supporting Native American interconnected infrastructure, self-governance, housing, education, health, and economic development.

The Commission's current project will focus on updating these components of our 2018 evaluation in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. This project will specifically look at how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted Native American communities with respect to healthcare, housing, and infrastructure components such as access to water and broadband, and whether the federal government is meeting its longstanding trust obligation to Native American people in the current crisis.

This evaluation will include an assessment of the COVID-19 relief packages and the extent to which they have taken into account the particular needs of the Native American people, as the Commission detailed in our 2018 report. This evaluation will also aim to address the questions raised by Senator Warren and Representative Haaland in their [letter](#) of May 26, 2020.

Other Advisory Committee Studies

The Ohio and Maryland Advisory Committees to the Commission voted to examine civil rights and equity in the delivery of medical and public services during the COVID-19 pandemic in their state.

Several other Advisory Committees will incorporate COVID-specific implications of their ongoing studies into issues like digital equity and water access.

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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. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).