



NEWS RELEASE
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**The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights to Hold Public Briefing:
*Collateral Consequences: The Crossroads of Punishment, Redemption and
the Effects on Communities***

On May 19, in Washington, DC, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights will hold a public briefing: *Collateral Consequences: The Crossroads of Punishment, Redemption and the Effects on Communities*.

Over the past 40 years, the population of American jails increased six-fold to 2.2 million people. Close to 5 million ex-offenders are under some form of non-custodial supervision; an additional 13 million are no longer supervised. The total: some 20 million confront significant hurdles to reentering society and pursuing a law-abiding life.

Ex-offenders are denied, among other things: the right to vote and to sit on a jury – rights imbedded in our Constitution. They are also deprived of many forms of governmental assistance designed to assist with finding employment, along with other barriers upon reentry. These collateral consequences also affect ex-offenders' families in a multitude of ways. For decades, communities of color have been disproportionately represented in the rates of felony convictions, and therefore are hardest hit.

The Committee will hear presentations from diverse stakeholders, including affected individuals, community and advocacy groups, government officials, and academics. Members of the public are encouraged to provide public comments about their experience with this topic via email to: reentry@usccr.gov. The Commission will announce the agenda and scheduled panelists before the May 19th event.

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights matters and issuing an annual federal civil rights enforcement report. For information about the Commission, please visit <http://www.usccr.gov> and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).