



PRESS RELEASE
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Massachusetts State Advisory Committee Releases Policy Brief on Water Access Equity and Utility Reporting Requirements in Massachusetts

The Massachusetts State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights (SAC) released its report, "[Turning Off the Tap: Massachusetts' Looming Water Affordability Crisis](#)," two years ago today encouraging the state to declare that access to clean, affordable water is a basic human right. In its report, the Massachusetts SAC warns that lack of access to affordable water has created life threatening inequalities.

Today, the Committee releases a [policy brief](#) encouraging the State legislature to create robust water data reporting requirements in Massachusetts, as it recommended in its report, and are now introduced in SD1543/HD3494. The legislation, introduced in January 2023, is sponsored by State Senator Rebecca Rausch in the Massachusetts Senate and by Rep. Tommy Vitolo in the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

David Harris, chair of the Massachusetts Advisory Committee, states: "Our committee focused on unequal access to affordable water across the Commonwealth, affecting communities of color, immigrant communities, renters, the elderly, and lower income people. Without data on the implementation and impacts of shut off policies, as well as local utility data on the use of liens, payment plans, and other policy tools, utilities cannot assess whether their policies are effective or whether they are being implemented in ways that disparately affect some communities. This legislation will ultimately help utilities to better assist their water customers."

For more information, contact: David Harris, Chair, Massachusetts State Advisory Committee (dharris@law.harvard.edu); or members of the Project Team: Martha Davis, (m.davis@northeastern.edu); Neenah Estrella-Luna (neenah@starluna.net); Wendy Kaminer (wendy@wendykaminer.com). The report is posted on the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights: <https://www.usccr.gov/files/2021-01-27-MA-SAC-Water-Affordability-Report.pdf>.

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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. The Commission, by Congressional mandate, establishes Advisory Committees in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Committee members conduct reviews and produce reports and recommendations concerning local civil rights issues, including justice, voting, discrimination, housing, education, and other important themes. For information, please visit <http://www.usccr.gov> and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).