



# United States Commission on Civil Rights Regional Programs Coordination Unit

Kayla Fajota, Designated Federal Officer (DFO)  
Contact: (434) 515-2395 or kfajota@USCCR.gov

## A Guide to Commenting at Advisory Committee Forums

The [United States Commission on Civil Rights](#) is an independent, bipartisan agency of the Federal government charged with studying discrimination or denial of equal protection of the laws because of race, color, religion, sex, age, disability or national origin, or in the administration of justice.

The Commission has established advisory committees in each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the 5 U.S. territories and commonwealths. Each Advisory Committee is made up of responsible persons, from diverse professional and political backgrounds, who serve without compensation to advise the Commission on relevant information concerning their respective states.

The work-product of the Committees are primarily reports or memoranda, which informs the Commission of the Committee's chosen civil rights topic, identifies findings and conclusions based on testimony and evidence collected during a series of briefings, and provides recommendations to the Commission and local policy makers.

The Hawai'i Advisory Committee voted to investigate its child welfare system, and more specifically, the over-representation of Native Hawaiian children and families within it. Information related to the Committee's project can be obtained by contacting the DFO.

As part of their investigation, the Committee is tasked with collecting testimony from various stakeholders (including advocates, policy makers, impacted individuals, etc.) via panel briefings and public forums. This qualitative study relies on the testimony of these stakeholders, as well as impacted individuals, so that an informed consensus can be reached regarding findings and recommendations.

The Hawai'i Advisory Committee greatly appreciates your participation.

### Key Reminders:

- **Do not defame or degrade any individual or organization.**
- The US Commission on Civil Rights is advisory in nature and is not an enforcement agency. Therefore, the Commission does not accept or investigate individual complaints.
- The goal of a public forum is to hear from impacted individuals as it relates to the Committee's chosen topic. The Committee is interested in hearing about your personal experiences.
- Limit your comments to 3-5 minutes.
- Please notify the DFO as soon as possible if you plan to provide a comment. Time is limited and this ensures you have time to speak.
- Keep your comments on point and related to the Committee's project topic.
- You are welcome to follow up with written comment if you are unable to finish your comment.
- The Chair reserves the right to reclaim the floor if your comment exceeds the allotted time or defames or degrades an individual or organization.