



PRESS RELEASE
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**District of Columbia Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
Announces Forthcoming Report on Access to Special Education and Transportation
Services for Students with Disabilities in D.C. Public Schools**

The District of Columbia Advisory Committee (Committee) to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (Commission) took up a study on May 18, 2023 regarding access to special education and transportation services in D.C. for students with disabilities. It had been reported that the Office of the State Superintendent of Education may overly rely on administrative complaints and lawsuits when apportioning such services in D.C. public schools. Through its study, the Committee has examined if policies, practices, and procedures limit access to these services on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin, or in the administration of justice.

The Committee conducted a series of briefings to take testimony to inform their report, inviting a broad range of subject-matter experts including individuals and their families who have direct experience with this issue; academics and researchers; advocates representing civil rights and community-based organizations; and Federal and D.C. government officials. The Committee voted to approve their draft report on this topic on November 21, 2024, and the report is currently being reviewed prior to publication.

The Committee's report will advise the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights about an important civil rights issue in support of the Commission's mission to inform the development of national civil rights policy and enhance enforcement of federal civil rights laws. Once published, the report will be shared with those who participated in the study, entities to whom recommendations are directed, and other interested parties.

Chair Wayne Heard said, "We are appreciative of the parents, caregivers, teachers, and professionals who provided insightful testimony for this study. There is a duty and privilege to exhaust measures in support of parents and teachers by providing critical education services and resources to all students. The Committee intends that the recommendations put forth in our report be considered by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Congress, and relevant stakeholders in fulfilling the purpose of existing laws."

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, established by the 1957 Civil Rights Act, is the only independent, bipartisan federal entity charged with advising the President and the Congress on civil rights and reporting annually on federal civil rights enforcement. Its 56 advisory committees offer broad perspectives on civil rights concerns in their jurisdictions. For more information, please visit www.usccr.gov.