



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**District of Columbia Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights  
Announces Report:  
Accessing Services for Students with Disabilities in DC 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. 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.

During this study, the Committee heard testimony and received written statements from individuals with knowledge of D.C.'s special education services, researchers, academics, advocates, legal scholars, and government officials.

In their report, the Committee detailed 16 findings that highlight the severe impacts on protected classes of students when special education needs are not found and addressed on-time, persistent funding challenges that limit the ability of D.C. schools to appropriately provide special education services, and ongoing transportation challenges that fail to meet the needs of students entitled to these services that collectively result in immediate and substantial long-term harms for students and their families.

Testimonials from D.C. parents highlighting these challenges are included in the Committee's report.

Based on these findings, the Committee produced recommendations for the Commission's consideration, including fully funding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and enforcing civil rights protections to ensure students with disabilities receive the special education and related transportation services they are entitled to.

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](http://www.usccr.gov).