

THE COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS



What It Is

How It Operates

What It Must Do

What It Can Do

What You Can Do

"We must do something about the Constitutional rights of the individual. To my mind, every American whatever his religion, his color, his race or anything else, should have exactly the same concern for these matters as does any individual who may have felt embarrassment or resentment because those rights have not been properly observed."

*President Dwight D. Eisenhower,
May 12, 1958.*

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

JOHN A. HANNAH, Chairman, President of Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

ROBERT G. STOREY, Vice Chairman, Dean of Southern Methodist University Law School, Dallas, Texas.

JOHN S. BATTLE, former Governor of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia.

DOYLE E. CARLTON, former Governor of Florida, Tampa, Florida.

REV. THEODORE M. HESBURGH, C. S. C., President of the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

J. ERNEST WILKINS, Assistant Secretary of Labor for International Affairs, Chicago, Illinois.

STAFF DIRECTOR

GORDON M. TIFFANY, former Attorney General of New Hampshire, Concord, New Hampshire.

CREATION OF THE COMMISSION

Title I of the Civil Rights Act of 1957, which was signed into law by President Eisenhower on September 9, 1957, established the bipartisan Commission on Civil Rights.

In November and December, 1957, the President sent to the Senate the nominations of six citizens to serve as Members of the Commission. Their approval was voted by the Senate on March 4, 1958. Three are Democrats; two are Republicans; one is an Independent.

The nomination of the Staff Director, made in February, 1958, was approved by the Senate on May 14, 1958.

HOW THE COMMISSION OPERATES

The Commission operates as an independent, fact-gathering government study group to advise the President and the Congress on conditions which deprive U. S. citizens of equal justice because of their color, race, religion or national origin.

The Commission names in each state an Advisory Committee, which serves without compensation to help in this job.

The Commission may receive help in its fact-gathering duties from other Government agencies.

Congress also gave the Commission the power to hold hearings in carrying out its functions and carefully indicated the rights of any individuals appearing before a Commission hearing.

WHAT THE COMMISSION MUST DO

The Commission is directed by the Act to investigate denials of voting rights based upon color, race, religion or national origin.*

The Commission studies and collects information on other legal developments "constituting a denial of equal protection of the laws under the Constitution" because of color, race, religion or national origin.

The Commission is also directed to see how federal laws and policies are carried out in this regard.

While the Commission has no power to enforce a law or act as a police agency, it must report its findings to the President and Congress and make recommendations for governmental action.

WHAT THE COMMISSION CAN DO

The Commission can choose particular areas of study. In addition to voting, the fields of housing and education have already been selected. Other fields where equal

* In regard to voting complaints, the Act states that the Commission shall "investigate allegations in writing under oath or affirmation that certain citizens of the United States are being deprived of their right to vote and have that vote counted by reason of their color, race, religion or national origin; which writing, under oath or affirmation, shall set forth the facts upon which such belief or beliefs are based."

justice is being denied because of race, color, religion or national origin may be selected in the future.

Similarly, the State Advisory Committees may select areas of study which are of particular concern to their States.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

You can write to the Commission stating the facts which you believe show that certain citizens are being denied their right to vote or their right to equal protection under the law because of race, color, religion or national origin. This will help the Commission collect information about such legal developments.

If you file a voting complaint, please do it in the way required by the Act, as stated in the footnote on page 5.

HOW IT AFFECTS EVERY AMERICAN

For the first time in history, Congress has set up a Commission to study the application of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, adopted almost 100 years ago.

The solid collection of facts which the Commission gathers, studies, appraises and reports to the President and the Congress paves the way for future laws and governmental action in the broad field of civil rights.

Members of the Commission and enlightened citizens throughout the country regard its work as a major step toward bringing true equality to every American.

FURTHER INFORMATION

In addition to contacting the appropriate State Advisory Committee, those wishing further information about the Commission may write:

Commission on Civil Rights
726 Jackson Place, N. W.
Washington 25, D. C.