



PRESS RELEASE
January 3, 2023

Contact: David Harris, chair

Massachusetts State Advisory Committee to U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Calls on Commonwealth to Abolish Civil Asset Forfeiture

The Massachusetts State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights (SAC) released its report, "[Seize the Day: Eliminate Civil Forfeiture in Massachusetts](#)," which calls on the Massachusetts' Legislature to abolish the predatory practice of civil asset forfeiture.

Last year, the Committee issued an [interim memorandum](#) drawing attention to and supporting proposed legislation to address civil asset forfeiture. The Committee called the proposed legislation "a constructive step toward reforming civil asset forfeiture and creating transparency, oversight, and accountability" but only a first step to remedy the injustices of civil asset forfeiture.

The Committee now issues its full report and finds that **to truly protect civil rights in the Commonwealth, the use of civil asset forfeiture must be abolished.** The Committee reports that civil asset forfeiture does not further the goal of disrupting criminal enterprises and instead contributes to systematic violations of the civil rights of citizens of the Commonwealth.

David Harris, chair of the Massachusetts SAC said, "Sadly, the practice of civil asset forfeiture, like so many of the policies associated with the 'war on drugs,' has failed on all fronts. Instead the practice targets those least able to pay, exacerbating racial inequalities in our legal system. Furthermore, our report shows the practice has done so with virtually no oversight or accountability."

Chair Harris emphasized the findings of the report, stressing: **"These failures are so severe, that anything less than eliminating civil asset forfeiture is both futile and unconscionable."**

For more information, contact: David Harris, Chair, Massachusetts Advisory Committee (dharris51@outlook.com).

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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](#).