

## 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

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\* 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."