

## Study calls civil rights commission ineffective

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WASHINGTON-America's Wire released a story last week discussing the ineffectiveness of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, with some critics contending that the once influential commission needs significant structural changes to regain its past glory.

Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter Kenneth J. Cooper reports that the commission has been largely ineffective in addressing civil rights issues, even with the recent addition of three Democratic members. Appointees of former President George W. Bush serve as the panel's chairman and staff director and Bush or Republican congressional leaders chose a majority of its members.

With critics pressing for adjustments, Wade Henderson, president and chief executive officer of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and the Leadership Conference Fund, says, "The commission of the 21st century can't be the commission we had 50 years ago." And, Mary Frances Berry, a former chair of the commission, says the advisory panel is not worth preserving in its current form. "It is sort of useless, to tell you the truth. What is it good for?" asks Berry, a history professor at the University of Pennsylvania. "I don't see any change occurring until the statute is changed."