



TEACHING TOLERANCE

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VOTING RIGHTS TIMELINE

<p>1776-1789 The Articles of Confederation and the Constitution leave to the states the power to decide who gets to vote.</p>	<p>In the early years of the new Republic, states develop their own constitutions outlining who has citizenship—and, by extension, who has the right to vote.</p> <p>After 1789, the U.S. Constitution leaves to the states the power decide who can vote for Congressional representatives. States set laws that generally favor Protestant Christian men over the age of 21 who meet property requirements.</p>
<p>1790 Enslaved men and women are denied the right to vote in all 13 states.</p> <p>Free women are denied the right to vote in 12 of 13 states.</p> <p>Free men of color are denied the right to vote in 3 of 13 states.</p>	<p>Women have the right to vote in New Jersey.</p> <p>Free men of color have the right to vote in Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island.</p>
<p>1790-1820 Four states change their laws, taking the right to vote away from men of color.</p> <p>Massachusetts changes its laws, taking the right to vote away from most Native American men.</p> <p>New Jersey changes its laws, taking the right to vote away from women.</p>	<p>Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts and New Jersey deny some people the vote based on race, sex and/or place of residence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most Native American men are now denied the right to vote in all five of these states.• Free Black men are now denied the right to vote in Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland and New Jersey.• Women are now denied the right to vote in New Jersey and, by extension, throughout the U.S.

<p>1821-1830 States change their laws, expanding the right to vote for white men.</p>	<p>In 1828, Maryland is the last state to stop denying white men the right to vote based on their religion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White, male citizens can vote in every state if they meet property requirements and haven't been convicted of certain crimes.
<p>1831-1844 Three more states change their laws, taking the right to vote away from Black and Native American men.</p>	<p>North Carolina and Pennsylvania enact new requirements to vote based on race.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free Black men are now denied the right to vote in North Carolina and Pennsylvania. <p>Rhode Island enacts new voting requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the Narragansett Tribe are now denied the right to vote.
<p>1845-1864 States expand voting rights for white men. The last property requirement for white men is lifted.</p> <p>New York votes to keep property restrictions in place for Black voters.</p>	<p>North Carolina is the last state to change its laws, lifting its property requirements for white men in 1856.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White men can now vote across the U.S. unless they've been convicted of a crime or they are classified as "paupers." <p>Free Black men can vote in five states: Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont (though New York maintains a property requirement for Black voters).</p> <p>In 1860, New Yorkers vote deny the right to vote to Black men who don't meet the property requirement.</p>
<p>1848 The federal government expands voting rights for some Mexican Americans living in some Southwestern states and territories.</p>	<p>The treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo ends the Mexican War. Mexican Americans living in the state of Texas and the territories of Arizona, California, New Mexico and Nevada are granted citizenship. Mexican Americans in the state of Texas can vote in federal elections.</p> <p>Despite the treaty, the right to vote is still based on race. The California Constitution of 1849, for example, gives the right to vote to "every white male citizen of the United States and every white male citizen of Mexico who shall have elected to become a citizen of the United States under the treaty."</p>

<p>1870 The 15th Amendment is ratified: Black men gain the right to vote throughout the United States.</p>	<p>The United States changes its Constitution. It is now illegal to restrict voting based on race.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black men now have the right to vote in every state. • Between 1865 and 1877, Black men serve in capitols across the South, and in the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives. More than 600 Black men serve in state legislatures. • Mexican American men now have the right to vote in every state. • Because Native Americans and Asian Americans don't have citizenship, they are still denied the right to vote in most states. • Women are still denied the right to vote in every state.
<p>1865-1874 States in the South find ways to deny the right to vote to Black men.</p>	<p>In 1871, Georgia introduces the first poll tax, requiring citizens to pay to vote. These laws are eventually passed throughout the former Confederacy. Poll taxes target Black voters by including a "grandfather clause" excusing those from the tax whose grandfathers voted. Because only white men could vote in the South prior to 1870, these clauses essentially limit the poll tax to Black men.</p>
<p>1875-1885 Congress denies voting rights to Chinese-American men.</p> <p>The Supreme Court upholds the denial of voting rights to Native American men.</p>	<p>The Chinese Exclusion Act and its amendments refuse citizenship—and through it, the vote—to all Chinese Americans, no matter their country of origin.</p> <p>John Elk, a Winnebago man who moved to Omaha, Nebraska, sues the state for his right to vote. The Supreme Court rules against him.</p>
<p>1886-1900 Former Confederate states continue to deny the vote to Black men.</p> <p>States deny voting rights to more people convicted of crimes.</p>	<p>Louisiana revises its constitution to include poll taxes and a literacy test, which requires citizens to take a test to vote. The state also implements a grandfather clause to ensure white men aren't excluded from voting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effect of the new constitution on Black voters is clear: In 1896, 130,000 Black people were registered to vote in Louisiana. In 1904, that number was 1,342. <p>In the 35 years after the Civil War, 13 states (of 38) pass laws taking the vote away from people convicted of felonies.</p>

<p>1901–1919 Every former Confederate state now denies Black men their right to vote through a poll tax.</p> <p>Western territories and states deny voting rights to people who don't speak English.</p> <p>Western states and territories (along with Michigan and New York) expand voting rights for women.</p>	<p>By 1904, every former Confederate state has also passed a poll tax to deny Black men the right to vote. While some of these laws are repealed over time, poll taxes remained legal—and in effect—in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, Texas and Virginia until the passage of the 24th Amendment in 1964.</p> <p>Laws in Arizona, California, Wyoming, Washington, Arizona and Oklahoma require voters to prove they can read in English.</p> <p>Women gain the right to vote in 11 states and territories.</p>
<p>1920 The 19th Amendment is ratified.</p>	<p>The United States changes its Constitution. It is now illegal to restrict voting based on sex.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White women now have the right to vote in every state. • Black and Mexican American women now have the right to vote in every state, but Jim Crow laws requiring poll taxes or literacy tests prevent them from exercising that right in many states. • Because Native Americans and Asian Americans don't have citizenship, they are still denied the right to vote in most states.
<p>1921–1940 Jim Crow laws continue to deny Black men the right to vote throughout the South.</p> <p>Court cases and some state laws continue to refuse the right to vote to Native Americans.</p>	<p>Jim Crow laws, reinforced with violence against registering voters or encouraging voting, severely limit African American voter registration. In the South, 97% of eligible Black voters are not registered to vote in 1940.</p> <p>The 1924 Indian Citizenship Act grants citizenship to Native Americans born in the United States, but many states continue to deny Native Americans the right to vote.</p>
<p>1941–1960 New federal laws open citizenship to Asian Americans.</p> <p>States throughout the country restrict voting rights with literacy tests; The Supreme Court rules that this is constitutional.</p>	<p>Between 1943 and 1952, a series of laws opens pathways for Asian Americans to become citizens.</p> <p>In 1959, in <i>Lassiter v. Northampton County Board</i>, The Supreme Court upholds the constitutionality of literacy tests.</p>

<p>1961 The 23rd Amendment is ratified.</p>	<p>The United States changes its Constitution. Residents of Washington, D.C. can now vote in federal elections.</p> <p>Residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and Guam are still denied the vote in federal elections unless they move to the mainland.</p>
<p>1964 The 24th Amendment is ratified.</p>	<p>The United States changes its Constitution. States can't require citizens to pay a tax to vote.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The last states with poll taxes—Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, Texas and Virginia—abolish them. <p>This makes voting easier for men and women of color throughout the South, but literacy tests and other voter suppression tactics are still common.</p>
<p>1965 The Voting Rights Act Passes: Black men and women can exercise their right to vote throughout the South for the first time.</p>	<p>Federal law makes it illegal for states to discriminate against groups of voters. States and localities with histories of “denying or abridging the right to vote on account of race or color” must have any future changes to voting laws approved by the federal government.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black women in the South can freely exercise their right to vote for the first time. • Black men in the South can freely exercise their right to vote for the first time since the 1870s. <p>The law has an immediate impact. In Alabama, for example, more than 250,000 new Black voters are registered by the end of 1965.</p>
<p>1971 The 26th Amendment is ratified.</p>	<p>Men and women age 18 and older can now vote in every state and Washington, D.C.</p>
<p>1970–1975 The Voting Rights Act is expanded: People who don't speak English have their right to vote protected.</p>	<p>The Voting Rights Act is expanded to prevent discrimination based on language.</p> <p>Native Americans, Asian Americans, Hawaiians and Latinx people can exercise their right to vote in every state.</p>
<p>1984 Federal law expands voting rights for people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Precincts are required to provide accessible polling places or provide accommodations for voters with disabilities to ensure they can exercise their right to vote on election day.</p>

<p>2000 The Supreme Court rules against allowing Puerto Ricans to vote for President.</p>	<p>Gregorio Igartúa sues for the right for Puerto Ricans to vote for President, and loses. The First Circuit Court of Appeals rules against Igartúa. Residents of U.S. territories are denied the right to vote for President and Vice President.</p>
<p>2002 The U.S. Senate votes not to expand the right to vote to those convicted of felonies.</p>	<p>The Senate votes down an amendment to the Voting Rights Act of 2001 that would have restored voting rights to people convicted of felonies, leaving that power to the states. While criminal convictions have been used to justify the denial of the vote since colonial times, the disenfranchisement of everyone convicted of a felony only became common after the Civil War, when Black men were granted the right to vote.</p> <p>Today, state laws fall on a spectrum—in two states (Maine and Vermont), voting rights are independent of conviction history. In most states (21), voting rights are restored only at the end of probation. And in two states (Iowa and Kentucky), people convicted of felonies are automatically denied their right to vote for life.</p>
<p>2000–present Voter ID requirements expand across the U.S.</p>	<p>The first voter ID law was passed in 1950, and in the 50 years following, 14 states adopted laws requesting ID to vote. Since 2000, 20 additional states have passed voter ID laws, and 10 states have revised or passed new laws requiring—not requesting—ID to vote.</p>
<p>2013 The Supreme Court overturns some parts of the Voting Rights Act.</p>	<p>The Supreme Court rules in favor of Shelby County in <i>Shelby v. Holder</i>. The ruling allows states restricted by the 1965 Voting Rights Act to change their laws without federal approval.</p>
<p>2014–present States formerly restricted by the Voting Rights Act pass laws restricting voting.</p>	<p>Almost immediately following the Supreme Court ruling in 2013, states began passing laws restricting voting: closing polling places, purging voter rolls, strengthening ID laws and limiting or ending early voting.</p>
<p>2015–present States allow automatic voter registration, registering voters when they interact with government agencies like public assistance programs or the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).</p>	<p>These policies expand registration, ensuring that more Americans are prepared to vote. Since 2015, Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) has been adopted in 13 states and the District of Columbia.</p>