



Voting Rights: Timeline of Voting Rights in the U.S.

- **1776** Only male land owners can vote, primarily white men over the age of 21.
- **1787** There is no federally mandated right to vote. States decide who can vote.
- **1790** The Naturalization Act of 1790 is passed, declaring that only "free white men" can become citizens.
- **1848** Citizenship is granted to Mexicans living on lands conquered by the United States at the end of the Mexican-American War. English language tests and threats of violence still restrict Mexican Americans from voting.
- **1848** Abolitionists and women's suffrage groups meet for the first time in Seneca Falls to strategize getting the vote.
- **1856** The right to vote is extended to all white male citizens, regardless of whether they own land.
- **1868** The 14th Amendment is passed, granting citizenship to former male slaves.
- **1870** The 15th Amendment is passed: the "right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Most people of color were still prevented from voting by voting taxes, discriminatory "literacy" tests, violence, and intimidation.
- **1872** Susan B. Anthony is arrested and put on trial for attempting to vote. Sojourner Truth shows up at a polling booth demanding a ballot, but is turned away and arrested.
- **1876** The Supreme Court declares that Native Americans do not count as citizens under the 14th Amendment and cannot vote.
- **1882** The Chinese Exclusion Act bars Chinese immigrants from becoming citizens; they cannot vote.
- **1887** The Dawes Act is passed, allowing Native Americans to become citizens only if they agree to give up their tribal affiliation.
- **1890** Wyoming is the first state to add the vote for women to its legislature.
- **1890** The Indian Naturalization Act allows Native Americans to apply for citizenship in a similar process to those immigrating.
- **1919** Native Americans serving in World War I are granted citizenship.
- **1920** The 19th Amendment is passed. Women can vote in state and federal elections.
- **1922** The Supreme Court declares that Japanese born Americans are not eligible to become U.S. citizens and may not vote.
- **1924** The Indian Citizenship Act gives Native Americans the right to vote nationwide, but states are still permitted to create their own laws limiting Native Americans voting.
- **1925** Americans of Filipino descent are declared ineligible to vote or become citizens except those who have served three years or more in the Navy.
- **1926** African American women attempting to register to vote in Birmingham, Alabama, are beaten by election officials.
- **1952** The McCarran-Walter Act gives all people of Asian ancestry the right to become American citizens.



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- **1961** The 23rd Amendment gives citizens in Washington, D.C. the right to vote for president. Citizens of Washington, D.C. do not get representation in Congress.
- **1964** The 24th Amendment is passed, barring any tax on voting.
- **1965** The Voting Rights Act is passed, barring discriminatory restrictions of states to prevent citizens from voting. Marches and protests occurred after African Americans were beaten or killed trying to register to vote, pressuring officials to pass the Act.
- **1966** Civil Rights leader James Meredith is wounded by a sniper during the "Walk Against Fear" voter registration march. Dr. Martin Luther King and other leaders finish the march. 4000 African Americans register to vote the next day.
- **1971** The voting age is lowered to 18 so that those old enough to fight in the Vietnam War were also old enough to vote.
- **1975** Voting materials are printed in languages other than English.
- **1990** The Americans with Disabilities Act requires polling officials to provide services that allow those with disabilities to vote.
- **1993** The National Voter Registration Act makes voting materials available at Department of Motor Vehicles and agencies that assist with disabilities.
- **2000** Citizens of U.S. colonies are declared to be U.S. citizens but are restricted from voting in presidential elections, including Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, and the Virgin Islands. These territories also have no representation in Congress.
- **2002** Help America Vote Act passed in response to the 2000 presidential election. The voting reform requires states to comply with federal mandate for provisional ballots, disability access, computerized voting lists, electronic voting, and requirement that first-time voters present identification before voting.
- **2009** The Military and Overseas Empowerment Act establishes more efficient means for troops stationed overseas and expatriates to request and receive absentee ballots through the mail or electronically.
- **2016** Oregon is the first state to implement automatic voter registration, in which eligible voters are automatically registered unless they request otherwise.

"15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Primary Documents in American History". Library of Congress, 2017, Web. 1 Oct. 2019. <https://guides.loc.gov/15th-amendment>

"U.S. Voting Rights Timeline". North California Citizenship Project, 2004, Web. 1 October. 2019. <https://a.s.kqed.net/pdf/education/digitalmedia/us-voting-rights-timeline.pdf>

"Voting Rights Timeline". iVote Civic Education Fund, 2019, Web. 1 October. 2019. <https://www.ivotecef.org/timeline>