

Civil Rights Legislation (1963-1968)



Watch this [PBS video clip](#) on the achievements of the civil rights movement to get started.



March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom

August 28, 1963



Dr. King was one of the lead organizers for the historic March on Washington. An estimated 250,000 people gathered for the protest and to hear King deliver his “I Have a Dream” speech. National attention of this march forced lawmakers to see the need for the Civil Rights Act of 1964.



Sixteenth Street Baptist Church Bombing



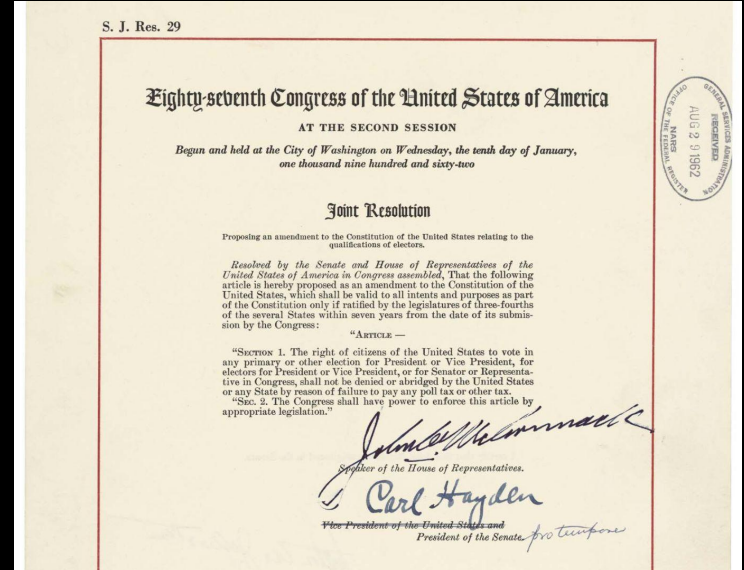
On Sunday, September 15, 1963, a bomb ripped into Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, killing four Black girls in Birmingham, Alabama. Members of the Ku Klux Klan were arrested. Dr. King had preached at this church during the Birmingham Campaign, and it was at the heart of the Black community. The bombing occurred just two weeks after the March on Washington.

Images from the bombing were broadcast around the world, putting pressure on American lawmakers to bring about civil rights legislation.

End the Poll Tax via 24th Amendment



What is a poll tax? Many Southern states charged a fee to Black citizens who wanted to vote. With unequal pay and unfair hiring practices, most Black citizens did not have money to spare and therefore were kept out of the democratic process. The protests and voter registration drives in the South, led by Dr. King and others, helped to usher in this Amendment.



STATE OF TENNESSEE
vs. Robert S. Anderson
Memphis, Tenn. April 25 1940
3930 Central Ave.
District Ward 45 Precinct 2

Receipt No. 25609

TO STATE AND COUNTY POLL TAXES FOR 1939
(Delinquent After February 28, 1940)

State Tax	\$1.00
County Tax	1.00
Interest and Penalty	
Commission	
Receipt	

RECEIVED PAYMENT.
C. A. GATES, County Trustee
By [Signature]

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote in any primary or other election for President or Vice President, for electors for President or Vice President, or for Senator or Representative in Congress, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax.

What was the Civil Rights Act of 1964?

Visit the [Civil Rights Act of 1964: A Long Struggle for Freedom](#) video exhibit from the Library of Congress to learn more about this historic piece of legislation.



Civil Rights Act of 1964

Eighty-eighth Congress of the United States of America
AT THE SECOND SESSION

Began and held at the City of Washington on Tuesday, the seventh day of January,
one thousand nine hundred and sixty-four

An Act

To enforce the constitutional right to vote, to confer jurisdiction upon the district courts of the Federal States to provide injunctive relief against discrimination in public accommodations, to authorize the Attorney General to institute actions to enforce constitutional rights in public facilities and public accommodations, to enforce the Constitution in civil rights, to prevent discrimination in federally assisted programs, to establish a Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act may be cited as the "Civil Rights Act of 1964".

TITLE I—VOTING RIGHTS

Sec. 101. Section 2003 of the Revised Statutes (42 U.S.C. 1971), as amended by section 111 of the Civil Rights Act of 1957 (74 Stat. 687), and as further amended by section 601 of the Civil Rights Act of 1960 (74 Stat. 60), is further amended as follows:

(a) Insert "I" after "(a)" in subsection (a) and add at the end of subsection (a) the following new paragraph:

"(1) No person acting under color of law shall—
"(A) in determining whether any individual is qualified under State law or laws to vote in any Federal election, apply any standards, practices, or procedures different from the standards, practices, or procedures applied under such law or laws to other individuals within the same county, parish, or similar political subdivision who have been found by State officials to be qualified to vote;

"(B) deny the right of any individual to vote in any Federal election, because of an error or omission on any record or paper relating to any application, registration, or other act requisite to voting, if such error or omission is not material in determining whether such individual is qualified under State law to vote in such election; or

"(C) require any literacy test as a qualification for voting in any Federal election when (1) such test is administered to such individual and is conducted wholly in writing, and (2) a certified copy of the test and of the answers given by the individual is furnished to him within twenty-five days of the submission of his request made within the period of time during which records and papers are required to be retained and preserved pursuant to title III of the Civil Rights Act of 1960 (42 U.S.C. 1974-74-74 Stat. 60) (Provided, however, That the Attorney General may enter into agreements with appropriate State or local authorities that preparation, conduct, and maintenance of such tests in accordance with the provisions of applicable State or local law, including such special provisions as are necessary in the preparation, conduct, and maintenance of such tests for persons who are blind or otherwise physically handicapped, meet the purposes of this subparagraph and constitute compliance therewith.

"(3) For purposes of this subsection—
"(A) the term "vote" shall have the same meaning as in subsection (a) of this section; and
"(B) the phrase "in or out of the hearing of the public" shall be construed to read, "in, out of, or over the hearing of the public."

(b) Insert immediately following section 101 at the end of the first sentence of subsection (c) the following new sentence: "If in any such proceeding literacy is a relevant fact there shall be a rebuttable

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Provisions of this civil rights act also forbade discrimination on the basis of sex or race in hiring, promoting, and firing.



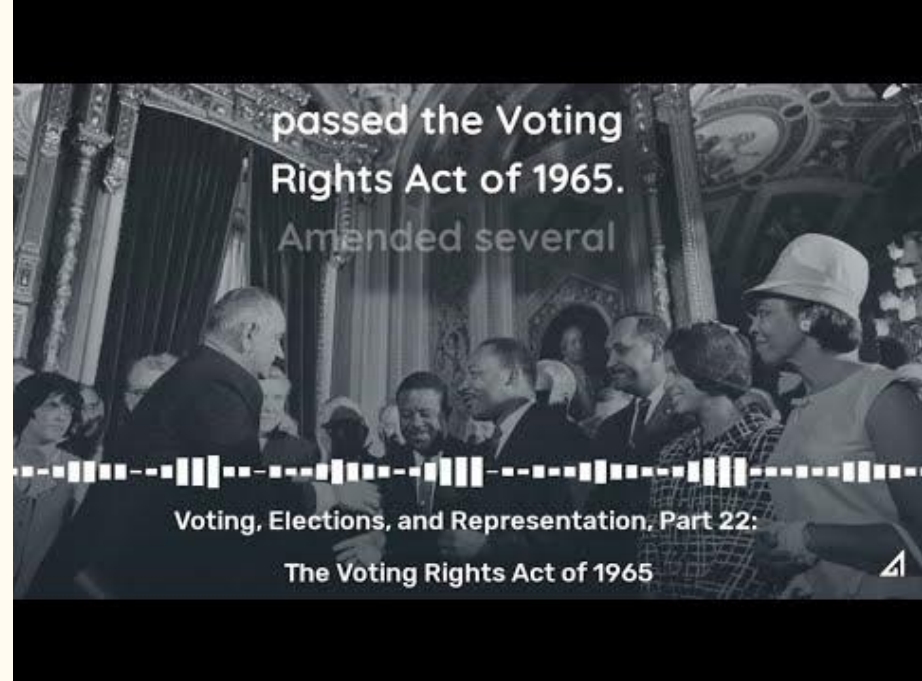
Listen to [President Johnson's remarks](#) when signing the Civil Rights Act of 1964 on July 2, 1964.



Voting Rights Act of 1965



This act was signed into law on August 6, 1965, by President Lyndon Johnson. It outlawed the discriminatory voting practices adopted in many southern states after the Civil War, including literacy tests as a prerequisite to voting.



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated April 4, 1968.

At 6:05 p.m. on Thursday, April 4, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King was shot dead while standing on a balcony outside his second-floor room at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. News of King's assassination prompted major outbreaks of racial violence, resulting in more than 40 deaths nationwide and extensive property damage in over 100 American cities. King was in Memphis to support the majority Black sanitation workers who were on strike demanding better working conditions.

On the previous night, Dr. King delivered his, "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech, where he told the audience:

"I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land!"

