

Voting Rights in the United States

1870

Over 100 Years Ago

The 15th Amendment said citizens cannot be denied the right to vote because of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude," but...

Many people, especially minorities, could not vote because...



Literacy Tests:

Election Officials could use a "test" as an excuse to deny registrations for Blacks.



Voter Intimidation:

People could be beaten, fired, or evicted just for trying to register to vote.



Poll Taxes:

Meant people had to pay to vote!



Grandfather Clause:

Whites didn't have to pay poll taxes or take the literacy tests.

1965

The Voting Rights Act

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 allows all voters, regardless of color, to vote without fear and discrimination.

Some things that the Voting Rights Act changed were:



Changes in voting laws by states need review by the Dept. of Justice



Discriminatory voting laws banned across the U.S.



Literacy Tests are banned.



Voting must be accessible even to English language learners.

Asian American Voters Were Protected by the Voting Rights Act.

1994

Board of Elections, New York City

In 1994, NYC's Board of Elections was made to fully translate candidate names into Chinese on ballots.

2004

Bayou La Batre, Alabama

In 2004, an entire election was redone after an initial election was marred by anti-Asian harassment by local election officials.

2013

Board of Elections, New York City

In 2013, NYC's Board of Elections was made to provide Bengali Language assistance in Queens, NY.

The Voting Rights Act Needs to Be Restored!



In 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the formula that determined which states must obtain approval first before making voting changes and asked Congress to devise a new formula to respond to realities of voting discrimination today. Until this happens, no states or counties need review by the Dept. of Justice.

Now only Congress can restore the protections of the VRA.

Here's what we can do!

Do you agree that Congress needs to act NOW to restore and strengthen the Voting Rights Act so that all votes will be protected in the 2016 Presidential Election?

- Call your congress member and senators and ask them to be a leader on restoring voting rights!
- Take to social media by filling out the poster "I am ____ and I believe every vote counts because..." and share with your friends.
- Come out to Foley Square on August 6 at 12:00PM to demand that Congress act.

