



# SNAPSHOT OF VOTING RIGHTS IN THE US



**1776**

Only white, land-owning men age 21 and older could vote.

**1856**



Vote granted to all white men.



**1870**

The 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibits federal or state governments from denying the right to vote to citizens based on race. Non-white men and freed male slaves are given the right to vote. Disenfranchisement after Reconstruction Era began. Southern states suppressed the voting rights of blacks and poor voters through Jim Crow Laws, including poll taxes and literacy tests. Native Americans are still not permitted to vote.

**1890**



Wyoming becomes the first U.S. state to grant women the right to vote.



**1917**

New York grants women the right to vote, nearly seventy years after women organized to demand the right to vote at the first convention in Seneca Falls, N.Y. in 1848.

**1924**



Indian Citizenship Act is passed giving Native Americans full citizenship and the right to vote regardless of tribal affiliation.



**1952**

The federal McCarran-Walter Act grants all Asian-Americans the right to become citizens and to vote.

**1964**



The federal Civil Rights Act is enacted to ensure that all men and women age 21 and older, regardless of race, religion or education, have the right to vote. Poll tax payment for federal elections was prohibited both by Congress and the states with the ratification of the 24th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.



**1966**

The United States Supreme Court ruled in *Harper vs. Virginia Board of Elections* that poll taxes for any level of elections were unconstitutional, violating the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

**1975**



The federal Voting Rights Act is reauthorized, permanently banning voting literacy tests nationwide and requiring voting materials to be translated for language-minority citizens.



**1993**

The National Voter Registration Act is passed, making it easier to register at DMVs and public assistance centers.

**2002**



The federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) passes in response to the disputed 2000 presidential election. States must meet federal mandates for provisional ballots, disability access, centralized voting lists, electronic voting and requirements for first-time voters to present identification before voting.



**1848**

Abolitionists and pro-women's suffrage groups first meet and organize in Seneca Falls, New York.

**1868**



The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution grants citizenship to all persons born or naturalized in the United States, which included former slaves recently freed. It also forbids states from denying any person "life, liberty or property, without due process of law" or to "deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." African-Americans were granted citizenship, but not the right to vote.



**1872**

Activist Susan B. Anthony was arrested for voting in her hometown of Rochester, New York and convicted in a publicized trial. Sojourner Truth, a former slave appears at a polling booth in Grand Rapids, Michigan, trying to vote and is turned away. In 1878, Anthony and other suffragists arranged for Congress to be presented with an amendment giving women the right to vote.

**1913**



Direct election of U.S. Senators was established by the 17th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Voters, not state legislatures, were given the right to elect senators.



**1920**

The 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution grants suffrage to women. New York and 36 other states ratified the amendment giving women the right to vote nationwide.

**1937**



The use of poll taxes by states was held to be constitutional by the Supreme Court of the United States in the 1937 decision *Breedlove V. Suttles*.



**1961**

The 23rd Amendment to the Constitution gives DC residents the right to vote for U.S. presidents, but not congressional representation.

**1965**



Congress passes the federal Voting Rights Act, removing discriminatory barriers that kept many people of color from voting. It prohibited states from using literacy tests and other means to exclude African Americans from voting.



**1971**

The voting age is lowered from 21 to 18 in light of the Vietnam War with the ratification of the 26th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

**1984**



The federal Voting Accessibility for Elderly and Handicapped Act mandates that polling places be accessible for people with disabilities.

**2000**



A federal court ruled that citizens of U.S. territories like Puerto Rico and Guam cannot vote in federal elections.