

1960s Civil Rights Legislation

The constant efforts of the Civil Rights Movement slowly but surely influenced the legislative and executive branches of the government to take actions on their behalf. The actions of the Civil Rights Movement in the Eisenhower years were directed at racial segregation by law – also known as **de jure segregation**. In the 1960s, it was evident that racial discrimination throughout the nation had established **de facto segregation** – where all African-American and all-white neighborhoods were served by local schools which were racially segregated.

Local officials harassed civil rights demonstrators. Violence occurred, especially on the **Selma to Montgomery March** in 1963. However, these acts of violence were filmed and brought the problem to the attention of the nation. President Lyndon Johnson passed the **Voting Rights Acts of 1965** which resulted in the majority of African-American citizens being registered to vote by the mid-1970s.

Law	Description
<i>Civil Rights Acts of 1964</i>	Criminal penalties for discrimination in voting and employment, ends segregation in most public facilities, withholds federal funds from school districts and communities practicing discrimination
<i>Civil Rights Act (1968)</i>	Bans discrimination in rental units and real estate transactions, gives broader federal-protection rights to civil rights workers; prohibits the hiring and classification of employees; makes it illegal for unions to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, and national origin in their membership practices
<i>Voting Rights Act of 1965</i>	Suspends literacy tests in counties where more than half the population cannot vote; provides federal help to register new voters; begins the action to end the use of poll-taxes*
<i>Voting Rights Act of 1970</i>	Ends all literacy tests and establishes 30-day residency requirements.

*In 1964 the states ratified the 24th Amendment which prohibited poll-taxes in federal elections. Then the Supreme Court ruled that the use of poll-taxes was unconstitutional, because it denied citizens equal protection of the law.

By the mid-1970s, the majority of African-Americans were registered to vote, the number of African-American officeholders increased dramatically.

Additional legislation in 1975 required **bilingual ballots** in certain districts.

In 1982, federal protection continued in areas of the country that had a history of discrimination toward minority voters.