

OUR STRUGGLE, OUR VOTE

TIMELINE REPRODUCED FROM:
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CITIZENSHIP PROJECT, MOBILIZE THE IMMIGRANT VOTE 2004

1776 ONLY PEOPLE WHO OWN LAND CAN VOTE

The Declaration of Independence is signed. The Right to vote during the Colonial and Revolutionary periods is restricted to property owners—most of whom are white male Protestants over the age of 21.

1787 NO FEDERAL VOTING STANDARDS—STATES DECIDE WHO CAN VOTE

The U.S. Constitution is adopted. Since there is no agreement on a national standard for voting rights, states are given the power to regulate their own voting laws. In most cases, voting remains in the hands of white male landowners.

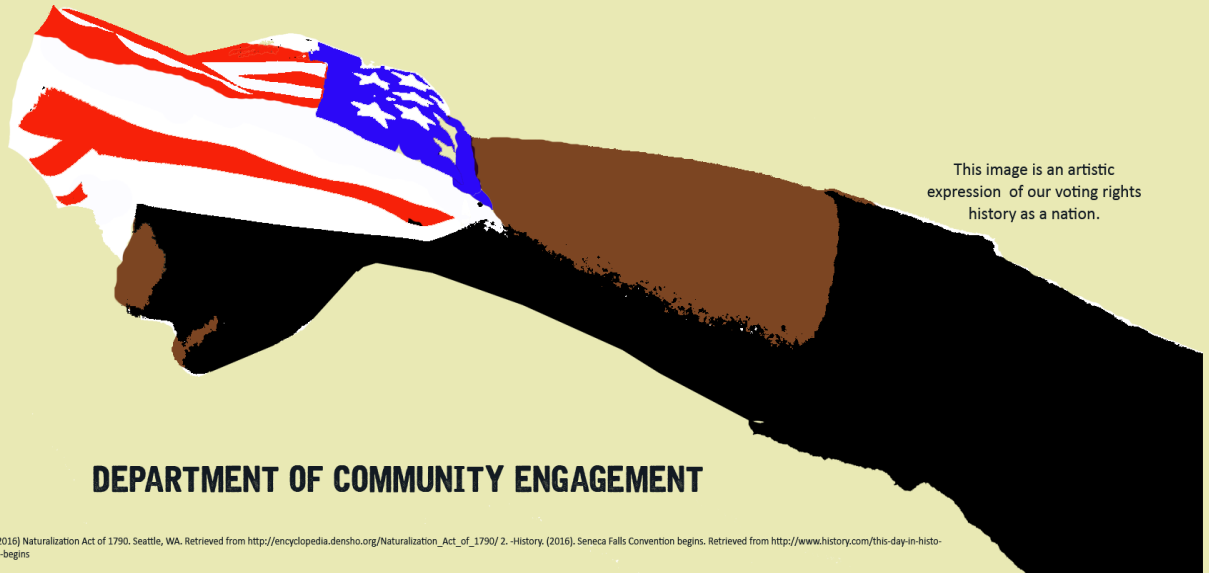
1790 NATURALIZATION LAW PASSED

The Nationality Act restricted citizenship to “any alien, being a free white person” who had been in the U.S. for two years. In effect, it left out indentured servants, slaves, and most women. This implied that black and, later, Asian immigrants were not eligible to be naturalized, but it said nothing about the citizenship status of non-white persons born on American soil.¹

1848 FIRST WOMEN'S RIGHT CONVENTION HELD IN SENECA FALLS, NY

The first ever women’s rights convention was led by Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. The convention was held in Seneca Falls, N.Y. and was organized to discuss the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of women. On the second day, men were invited to attend and some 40 did, including Frederick Douglass.²

Frederick Douglass, an editor of *The North Star* and former slave, attends the event and gives a speech supporting universal voting rights. His speech helps convince the attendees to adopt a resolution calling for voting rights for women.



This image is an artistic expression of our voting rights history as a nation.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. Denzho Encyclopedia. (2016) Naturalization Act of 1790. Seattle, WA. Retrieved from http://encyclopedia.denzho.org/Naturalization_Act_of_1790/ 2. -History. (2016). Seneca Falls Convention begins. Retrieved from <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/seneca-falls-convention-begins>

1848 TREATY OF GUADALUPE-HIDALGO ENDS MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR

The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo ends the Mexican-American War and guarantees U.S. citizenship to Mexicans living in the territories conquered by the U.S. However, English language requirements and violent intimidation limit access to voting rights.

The treaty added Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming & Texas to the United States. Thousands of Mexicans living in newly acquired territory were displaced from their homes and denied citizenship.¹

1866 TWO POWERFUL ACTIVISTS SPLIT

Two women's rights activists, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, form an organization for white and black women and men dedicated to the goal of universal voting rights. The organization divides over disagreements and later regroups and strategizes to gain the vote for women and African Americans.

1868 14TH AMENDMENT GRANTS CITIZENSHIP TO FORMER SLAVES

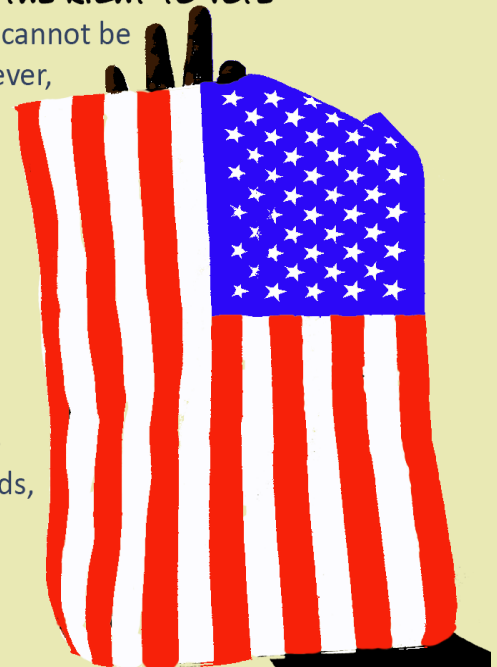
Former slaves were granted citizenship through the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution passed. Voters, however, are explicitly defined as male. Although the U.S. amendment forbids states from denying any rights of citizenship, voting regulation is still left in the hands of the states.

1869- 15TH AMENDMENT GRANTS AFRICAN-AMERICAN MEN THE RIGHT TO VOTE

The 15th Amendment is passed and states that the right to vote cannot be denied by the federal or state governments based on race. However, soon after, some states begin to enact measures such as voting taxes and literacy tests that restrict the actual ability of African Americans to register to vote. Violence and other intimidation tactics are also used.

1872 WOMEN GET ARRESTED TRYING TO VOTE

Susan B. Anthony is arrested and brought to trial in Rochester, New York, for attempting to vote in the presidential election. At the same time, Sojourner Truth, a former slave and advocate for justice and equality, appears at a polling booth in Grand Rapids, Michigan, demanding a ballot but she is turned away.



This image is an artistic expression of our voting rights history as a nation.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. Wheeler, M. S. (1995). Votes for Women! The woman suffrage movement in Tennessee, the South, and the Nation. Knoxville, TN.

1876 NATIVE AMERICANS ARE NOT CITIZENS

The Supreme Court rules that Native Americans are not citizens as defined by the 14th Amendment and, thus, cannot vote.

1882 CHINESE EXCLUSION ACT

The Chinese Exclusion Act bars people of Chinese ancestry from naturalizing to become U.S. citizens. This act provided an absolute 10-year moratorium on Chinese labor immigration. The exclusion act also placed new requirements on Chinese immigrants who had already entered the country. If they left the U.S., they had to obtain certifications to re-enter.¹

1887 ASSIMILATION REQUIRED TO VOTE

The Dawes Act is passed, which grants citizenship to Native Americans who give up their tribal affiliations.

1890 THE INDIAN NATURALIZATION ACT

The Indian Naturalization Act grants citizenship to Native Americans whose applications are approved—similar to the process of immigrant naturalization.

1912-13 WOMAN SUFFRAGE + ALIENS INELIGIBLE FOR CITIZENSHIP

Women lead voting rights marches through New York and Washington, D.C. and gain major political support for the first time at a national level by Theodore Roosevelt's Bull Moose Party. On March 3, 1913, the day before Woodrow Wilson's inauguration to the presidency; Inez Milholland led an eight thousand strong march for women's suffrage.²

1919 MILITARY PEOPLE ARE GRANTED WITH CITIZENSHIP

Native Americans who served in the military during World War I are granted U.S. citizenship.

1920 WOMEN WIN THE RIGHT TO VOTE

August 26, 1920, the Secretary of State of the United States proclaimed the 19th Amendment to the Constitution to be the law of the land. In November, for the first time all women in the U.S. were permitted to vote.³



This image is an artistic expression of our voting rights history as a nation.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. Our Documents [n.d.] Chinese Exclusion Act [1882] Retrieved from <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=47.2> Stevens, D. & O'Hare, C. (1996) Jailed for Freedom. American Women Win the Vote.

3. Stevens, D. & O'Hare, C. (1996) Jailed for Freedom. American Women Win the Vote.

1922 ASIANS ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR CITIZENSHIP

The Supreme Court rules that people of Japanese heritage are ineligible to become naturalized citizens. In the next year, the Supreme Court finds that Asian Indians are also not eligible to naturalize.

Justice George Sutherland declared Asians racially “ineligible for citizenship.” The Supreme court declared that the word “white” was synonymous with “what is popularly known as the Caucasian race.” The rulings gave anti-Japanese advocates the justification for their exclusionist cause, culminating in the Immigration Act of 1924.¹

1924 CITIZENSHIP GRANTED FOR SOME BUT MANY ARE DENIED THE RIGHT TO VOTE

The Indian Citizenship Act grants citizenship to Native Americans, but many states nonetheless make laws and policies which prohibit Native Americans from voting.

The Immigration Act of 1924, also known as the **Johnson-Reid Act**, ended further immigration from Japan, while restricting the number of immigrants to the U.S. from southern and eastern Europe.² The Oriental Exclusion Act prohibits most immigration from Asia, including foreign-born wives and children of U.S. citizens of Chinese ancestry.³

1925 MILITARY SERVICE IN EXCHANGE FOR CITIZENSHIP

Congress bars Filipinos from U.S. citizenship unless they have served three years in the Navy.

1926 VIOLENCE AGAINST AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN

State violence is used to prevent people from exercising their right to vote. While attempting to register to vote in Birmingham, Alabama, a group of African American women are beaten by election officials.

1947 LEGAL BARRIERS TO NATIVE AMERICAN VOTING REMOVED

Miguel Trujillo, a Native American and former Marine, sues New Mexico for not allowing him to vote. He wins and New Mexico and Arizona are required to give the vote to all Native Americans.

1952 ASIANS HAVE THE RIGHT TO BECOME CITIZENS

McCarran-Walter Act grants all people of Asian ancestry the right to become citizens.



This image is an artistic expression of our voting rights history as a nation.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. Denso Encyclopedia. (2016) Ozawa v. United States. Retrieved http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Ozawa_v._United_States/ 2. Denso Encyclopedia. (2016). Immigration Act of 1924. Retrieved from http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Immigration_Act_of_1924/ 3. Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest. (n.d.) Citizen Timeline. Retrieved from <http://www.washington.edu/uwire/oureach/cspn/Website/Classroom%20Materials/Curriculum%20Packets/Homesteading/Citizen%20Timeline.html>

1963-64 VOTING RIGHTS AS CIVIL RIGHTS

Large-scale efforts in the South to register African Americans to vote are intensified. However, state officials refuse to allow African Americans to register by using voting taxes, literacy tests and violent intimidation. Among the efforts launched is **Freedom Summer**, where close to a thousand civil rights workers of all races and backgrounds converge on the South to support voting rights.

1964 - NO MORE POLL TAX FOR VOTING

The 24th Amendment is passed. It guarantees that the right to vote in federal elections will not be denied for failure to pay any tax.

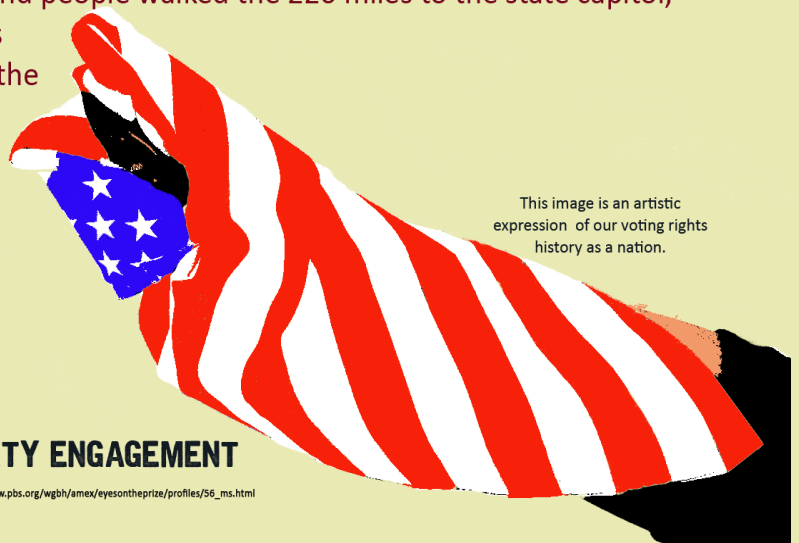
1965 VOTING RIGHTS ACT PASSED

Grassroots movement forces change in legislature and the Voting Rights Act is passed. It forbids states from imposing discriminatory restrictions on who can vote, and provides mechanisms for the federal government to enforce its provisions. The legislation is passed largely under pressure from protests and marches led by the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)** earlier that year challenging Alabama officials who injured and killed people during African American voter registration efforts, widely known as **Bloody Sunday**.

1966 MEREDITH JAMES IS SHOT

Civil rights activist James Meredith is wounded by a sniper during a solo “Walk Against Fear” voter registration march between Tennessee and Mississippi. The next day, nearly 4,000 African Americans register to vote. And other civil rights leaders such as **Martin Luther King, Jr.** and **Stokely Carmichael** continue the march while Meredith heals. Meredith rejoins the March at its conclusion in Mississippi.

Meredith had been the first black student admitted to the University of Mississippi in 1962. For almost three weeks, a couple thousand people walked the 220 miles to the state capitol, camping out at night under rented circus tents. Local people fed the marchers on the way.¹



This image is an artistic expression of our voting rights history as a nation.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. -American Experience. (2006) The March Against Fear. Retrieved from http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize/profiles/56_ms.html

1971 VOTING AGE LOWERED TO 18

The 26th Amendment passed, granting voting rights to 18-year-olds. The amendment is largely a result of **Vietnam War protests** demanding a lowering of the voting age on the premise that people who are old enough to fight for their country are old enough to vote.

It took 82 years for African American slaves to gain a constitutional right to vote, 132 years for women's suffrage and 183 years for those 18 to 21 years old to join the voting population. The impetus for this change was the passage of amendments to the Voting Rights Act in 1970 that set 18 as the minimum voting age for both federal and state elections.¹

1975 VOTING MATERIALS ARE MADE AVAILABLE IN VARIOUS LANGUAGES

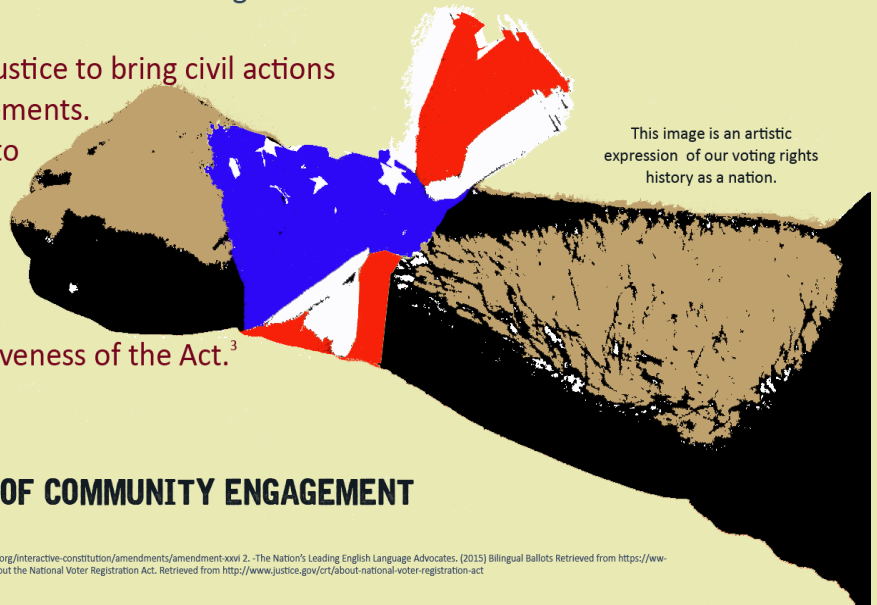
Amendments to Voting Rights Act (VRA) require that certain voting materials be printed in languages besides English so that people who do not read English can participate in the voting process.

Congress expanded the VRA's original intent by inserting special protections for "language minorities." For the first time in history, states and counties with substantial populations of these protected language minorities were required to provide ballot and election materials in languages other than English. The bilingual ballot was originally intended to be temporary, but they were renewed in 1982, 1992, and again in 2006 for another 25 years.²

1993 NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION ACT PASSED

The National Voter Registration Act (NVR) is passed. It intends to increase the number of eligible citizens who register to vote by making registration available at the Department of Motor Vehicles, and public assistance and disabilities agencies.

The NVR allows the Department of Justice to bring civil actions in federal court to enforce its requirements. The Act also gives the responsibility to the Federal Election Commission (FEC) to provide States with guidance on the Act, to develop a national mail voter registration form, and to compile reports on the effectiveness of the Act.³



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. -National Constitution Center. (n.d.) Right to vote at age 18. Retrieved from <http://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/amendments/amendment-xxvi-2>. -The Nation's Leading English Language Advocates. (2015) Bilingual Ballots Retrieved from <https://www.proenglish.org/projects/bilingual-ballots.html> 3. -The United States Department of Justice. (2015) About the National Voter Registration Act. Retrieved from <http://www.justice.gov/crt/about-national-voter-registration-act>

2000 PUERTO RICANS CANNOT VOTE FOR U.S. PRESIDENT

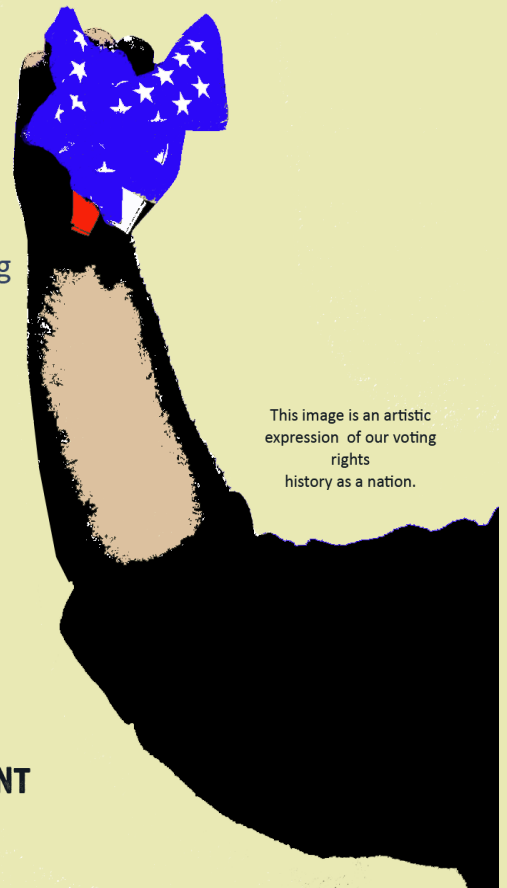
Residents of U.S. colonies are citizens, but cannot vote. A month prior to the presidential election, a federal court decides that Puerto Ricans living in Puerto Rico, though U.S. citizens, cannot vote for U.S. president. Residents of U.S. territories including Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa and the U.S. Virgin Islands—nearly 4.1 million people total—cannot vote in presidential elections and do not have voting representation in the U.S Congress.

2001 DEBATE—SHOULD VOTING RIGHTS BE TAKEN AWAY FROM FELONS?

The National Commission on Federal Election Reform recommends that all states allow felons to regain their right to vote after completing their criminal sentences. Nearly 4 million US citizens cannot vote because of past felony convictions. In California, felons are prohibited from voting while they are in prison or on parole. But, in other states, especially in the South, a person with a felony conviction is forever prohibited from voting in that state. These laws are a legacy of post-Civil War attempts to prevent African Americans from voting. Ex-felons are largely poor and of color.

2002 FEDERAL VOTING STANDARDS ADVANCED

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) passed in response to the disputed 2000 presidential election. Massive voting reform efforts require states to comply with federal mandates for provisional ballots, disability access, centralized and computerized voting lists, electronic voting and a requirement that first-time voters present identification before voting.



This image is an artistic expression of our voting rights history as a nation.