

An overview of the structure of the United States government and a brief history of voting rights.



CALIFORNIA
STUDENTS PROJECT



VOTING RIGHTS TIMELINE



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VOTING RIGHTS TIMELINE (CONT'D)

SELMA TO MONTGOMERY MARCH (1965)

In 1965, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and former U.S. Representative John Lewis, along with other peaceful civil rights advocates, were violently attacked by Alabama state police in what became known as "Bloody Sunday."

Shortly thereafter, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which increased the number of people registered to vote in areas where records of discrimination existed. This Act shifted the power to register voters from state and local levels to the federal level.

(1971) 26TH AMENDMENT IS RATIFIED

In 1971, the youth voting rights movement argued that if you are old enough to be drafted into the military, you are old enough to vote. The 26th Amendment lowered the voting age, to at least eighteen years of age.

NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION ACT (1993)

In 1993, the National Voter Registration Act requires state to permit mail-in registration, and to make registration services available at Department of Motor Vehicles, public libraries, and other public locations.

(2002) HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT

In 2002, the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) was passed by the United States Congress to make sweeping reforms to the nation's voting process. HAVA addresses improvements to voting systems and voter access that were needed for the 2002 General Election.



"How to Vote on the Vote Recorder," doorhanger produced by the Robert F. Kennedy Democratic Club, 1968, Bill Mashburn Political Ephemera Collection, California State Archives

STUDENT CIVIC AND VOTER EMPOWERMENT ACT (2019)

In 2019, the California Students Vote Project (CSVP) was created. The Student Civic and Voter Empowerment Act allows the Secretary of State to continue the mission of engaging students in the democratic process.

(2020) HISTORICAL VOTER REGISTRATION RATES

In September 2020, the Secretary of State released an updated statewide Report of Registration, showing over 21 million registered voters ahead of the November 3, 2020 General Election.

As of September 4, 2020, 84.68% of eligible voters were registered to vote, the highest percentage heading into a General Election in the past 68 years.

