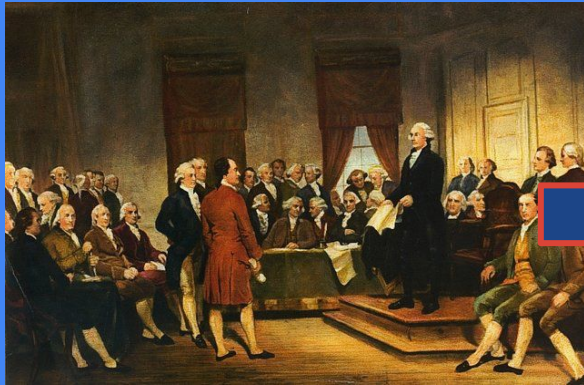


History of **Voting** in the USA

What changes have been made from the 18th to the 21st century?



The US Constitution

- written in 1787 and put into effect in 1789. The Constitution did not establish national voting rights but the states were given the power to determine their own voting laws.

Article One - Legislative Branch

Section 2: The House of Representatives

The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

Voting Restrictions:

- Most states allowed only white men over the age of 21 who owned property to vote
- At the federal level, citizens did not directly vote for president (chosen by state electors in the electoral college)
- At the federal level, citizens did not vote for U.S. Senators (elected by state legislatures)

Early 1800s - the end of property qualifications for voting and officeholding



1800

Total number of US states = **16**

ONLY three states (Kentucky, New Hampshire, and Vermont) allowed suffrage to all **adult white males**. The other 13 states required property ownership in order to vote.

1830

Total number of US states = **24**

TEN states (less than half) allowed suffrage to all **adult white males**. Property ownership was a requirement to vote in the other states.

1860

Total number of US states = **33**

ALL states allowed suffrage to all **adult white males** except these five states required voters to be taxpayers: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and North Carolina.

1828 - End of Religious Requirements for Voting



In 1828, the Maryland legislature passed a law allowing suffrage to Jews. In doing so, Maryland became the **LAST** state to remove the requirement of being a Christian in order to vote.

Adult white men living in the United States were no longer denied the right to vote based on their religious beliefs.



1870 - the 15th Amendment prohibited the federal government and each state from denying people the right to vote based on race



The 15th Amendment to the United States Constitution:

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.





1913 - Direct Election of U.S. Senators

The 17th Amendment to the United States Constitution gave people the right to directly vote for their U.S. Senators. This replaced senators being elected by the state legislatures. The 17th Amendment expanded democracy by letting the people decide who will represent them in the U.S. Senate.





1920 - Women's Suffrage

The 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution prohibited the states and the federal government from denying the right to vote to citizens of the United States on the basis of sex. Women could finally cast their ballots.





1965 - Voting Rights Act

Despite the 15th Amendment, many African Americans and other minority groups were kept from voting, especially in the southern states. Poll taxes, literacy tests, and white supremacist groups like the KKK made voting nearly impossible for nonwhites.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 used the federal government and its courts to keep citizens from being denied the right to vote due to their race.





1971 - Voting Age Lowered to 18

The 26th Amendment to the United States Constitution granted voting rights to 18-year olds.



This was the era of the Vietnam War. Protesters argued that if you could be a soldier at age 18, you should also be allowed to vote.

Resources:

<https://www.archives.gov>

<https://constitutioncenter.org>

<https://www.gilderlehrman.org>