



Republican History, Part 1:

Founded as anti-slavery party, fights for Americans' civil rights today

Here is a short history of the Republican Party and its importance in the enactment and enforcement of Civil Rights freedoms in America:

- Founded in the 1850s in opposition to slavery. Abraham Lincoln was the first Republican president.
- After Civil War, Republicans controlled the government and were instrumental in passing these key Reconstruction amendments to the Constitution:
 - 13th Amendment (1865) Abolished slavery
 - 14th Amendment (1866): Granted citizenship and equal protection under the law to all persons born or naturalized in the U.S. and subject to the jurisdiction thereof.
 - 15th Amendment (1870): Granted African American men the right to vote.
 - During this period, African Americans overwhelmingly voted Republican, and many Black politicians were elected to office in the South as Republicans.
- Republicans played a key role in early 20th-century anti-lynching efforts – especially by the Klu Klux Klan, a Democrat-founded organization.
- President Dwight D. Eisenhower sent federal troops to enforce school desegregation (1957)
- Republicans supported and helped pass the Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1960.
- The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were both passed with a significantly higher percentage of Republicans than Democrats in Congress voting for it.
- President Richard Nixon enforced desegregation and expanded minority business opportunities.
- President Reagan signed **Martin Luther King Jr. Day** into law and approved reparations for Japanese American internees.
- George H. W. Bush signed the **Americans with Disabilities Act**, the **Civil Rights Act of 1991**, the **Voting Rights Act** and expanded minority opportunity initiatives.

In the 21st century, the Republican approach to civil rights emphasizes equal citizenship, individual liberties and color blindness under the law. For these reasons, Republicans often oppose policies like affirmative action and DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) because they are discriminatory.