

# *Brown v. Board of Education* **TIMELINE**

## Early Civil Rights Law

→ 1866

The Civil Rights Act of 1866 takes a first step toward protecting the civil rights of black citizens by guaranteeing them basic economic rights to sue, contract for work, and own property.

## 14th Amendment Is Ratified

→ 1868

The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is ratified, affirming that states cannot abridge the privileges or immunities of its citizens; cannot deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; and cannot deny any person the equal protection of the law.

## Court Upholds Separate But Equal

→ 1896

In *Plessy v. Ferguson*, a case challenging segregated rail cars in Louisiana, the Supreme Court rules that “separate but equal” facilities for black and white travelers do not violate the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. This becomes the constitutional basis for segregation.



“Colored” drinking fountain in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

## NAACP Is Established

→ 1909

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is founded with the intent of eliminating lynching and fighting racial segregation and injustice through legal action.



W.E.B. Du Bois, co-founder of the NAACP

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

## Segregation Battle Strategy

→ 1948

The NAACP board of directors endorses special counsel Thurgood Marshall’s view on how to fight segregation, focusing all its efforts on attacking segregation in education.

## School Segregation Cases Combined

→ 1952

School segregation cases from Delaware, Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia and the District of Columbia are bundled together under *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Kansas case, filed in federal district court the previous year. This indicates the Supreme Court views the issue as a matter of national importance.



Protest march against the segregation of schools

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

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## Segregation Ruled Unconstitutional

1954

The Supreme Court's unanimous ruling in *Brown* overturns *Plessy v. Ferguson*, declaring that racial segregation in public schools is a violation of the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause.

## 'With All Deliberate Speed'

1955

State legislatures resist enforcing the *Brown* decision, declaring it "null, void and no effect" and implementing laws to challenge it. The Supreme Court issues the second ruling in the case, known as *Brown II*. It orders that desegregation must proceed "with all deliberate speed."

## 'Brown' Is Binding on States

1958

The governor and state lawmakers in Arkansas refuse to obey federal court orders to implement desegregation. In *Cooper v. Aaron*, the Supreme Court reaffirms its commitment to *Brown*, saying states are required to comply with its rulings and court orders based on the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Constitution.

