

Freedom from Discrimination TIMELINE

First Women's Rights Convention Held

1848

About 300 activists gather in Seneca Falls, N.Y., to strategize on how to achieve women's suffrage nationwide. Participants, including Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, sign the Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, modeled on the Declaration of Independence, which calls for equal treatment of women and men under the law and voting rights for women.



Mass. School Segregation Challenged

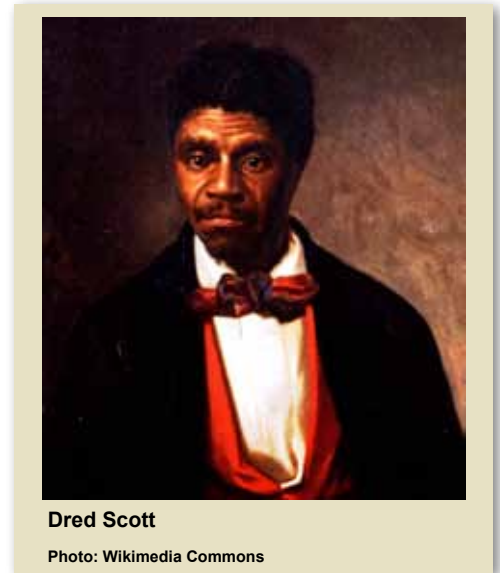
1849

In *Roberts v. Boston*, African American parents challenge Massachusetts laws that mandate separate schools for children based solely on race. After a court loss, they begin a fight for legislation to end public school segregation, succeeding in 1855.

Court Holds Blacks Cannot Be Citizens

1857

In *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, the Supreme Court decides that African Americans cannot be considered citizens under the Constitution. Dred Scott, born into slavery, argued that he should be granted freedom because he had lived in free states with his owner.



Black Codes Limit Freedom of Ex-Slaves

1865

After the Civil War, white Southerners institute restrictions on former slaves. These laws regulate marriage, property ownership, voting, and the right to live in certain areas. Typically, the laws required African Americans to work; anyone found not working could be arrested for vagrancy. The Civil Rights Act of 1866 outlaws some of the laws.

Fourteenth Amendment Ratified

1868

The 14th Amendment says that anyone born or naturalized in the United States is a citizen and prevents states from denying "any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." The amendment also requires states to provide all citizens with "equal protection of the laws."

Equal Pay for Equal Work

1872

A federal law that grants female federal employees equal pay for equal work is enacted. This right was not extended to the majority of female employees who work for private companies or state and local governments until the Equal Pay Act is adopted in 1963.



Freedom from Discrimination TIMELINE

Jim Crow Laws Enforce Segregation

1875

In the South, Jim Crow laws segregate African Americans and whites. Signs indicate separate drinking fountains, restrooms, and dining areas as “Colored” or “Whites Only.” Some laws prevent whites and African Americans from working in the same rooms.



“Colored” drinking fountain, 1939.

Photo: Library of Congress

Women Win Right to Vote

1920

Seventy-two years after the Seneca Falls Convention, the 19th Amendment, which gives women the right to vote, is ratified. Only one person who had signed the convention’s Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, Charlotte Woodward, is alive and able to exercise her right to vote.



Mrs. Charlotte Woodward Pierce

Photo: Library of Congress

Desegregation of Armed Forces Ordered

1948

President Harry S. Truman signs Executive Order 9811, requiring “equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin.”



Segregated room for African American sailors during World War I.

Photo: National Archives and Records Administration

School Segregation Struck Down

1954

In *Brown v. Board of Education*, the U.S. Supreme Court rules that local, state, and federal laws that racially segregate students are unconstitutional. Writing the opinion for a unanimous court, Chief Justice Earl Warren states that “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.” The ruling overturns *Plessy v. Ferguson*, in which the Supreme Court endorsed the concept of “separate but equal” in 1896.

Federal Troops Sent to Little Rock, Ark.

1957

In response to a federal court order to integrate schools, Gov. Orval Faubus stations the Arkansas National Guard outside Central High School in Little Rock to prevent nine African American students from entering. The students are taken through a side door, angering protesters. Fearing an out-of-control mob, authorities remove the students. Two days later, the students enter the school under the protection of the 101st Airborne Division, ordered there by President Dwight Eisenhower.



Members of the 101st Airborne Division protect African American students

Photo: Library of Congress

Civil Rights Bill Passed

1957

The first civil rights law enacted since 1875, the Civil Rights Act of 1957 authorizes creation of a Civil Rights Division and a Civil Rights Commission to enforce all federal civil rights laws, to coordinate the enforcement of civil rights, and to investigate complaints of civil rights violations. In 1960, the Civil Rights Act penalizes any person who prevents another individual from registering to vote or voting.

Freedom from Discrimination TIMELINE

Johnson Signs Civil Rights Act

→ 1964 →

President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964, after 534 hours of congressional debate and consideration of 500 amendments. The law bans discrimination in a variety of settings, including public accommodations, education and government services. Title VII of the law prohibits private employers, labor unions, and employment agencies from discriminating in employment on the basis of race, sex, color, religion and national origin. In 1967, Johnson expands the law to cover sex discrimination.



Lyndon B. Johnson signs Civil Rights Act of 1964

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Women-Only Branches in Military Eliminated

→ 1973 →

The male-only draft during the Vietnam War ends, and women are integrated into all branches of the U.S. military as they become all-volunteer forces. In 1976, U.S. military academies will be required to admit women. Over the years, military policy that prevented women from combat assignments will ease. In the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, women will become more fully involved on the battlefield.

Employment Discrimination Against Pregnant Women Banned

→ 1978 →

The Pregnancy Discrimination Act ensures that employment discrimination on account of pregnancy is treated as unlawful sex-based discrimination. As a result, employers cannot question potential hires about their plans to have children and have to extend benefits equally.



The passage of the Pregnancy Discrimination Act in 1978 made it illegal for employers to discriminate against women based on their plans to have children.

Photo: istockphoto/kirza

University's Minority Quotas Struck Down

→ 1978 →

In *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, the U.S. Supreme Court rules that it is unconstitutional for the University of California, a public university, to impose a quota for minority applicants, meaning that a certain number of admission slots were reserved for minorities. At the same time, the court says it is constitutional for the university to consider race or ethnicity as one of many factors in deciding whom to admit.

Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act Signed

→ 2009 →

The federal law expands workers' right to sue for pay discrimination. Lilly Ledbetter had sued her employer when she learned that she was paid much less than her male colleagues. The Supreme Court threw out her case, saying the statute of limitations had expired. The new law amends the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which said discrimination complaints must be brought within 180 days of the alleged act.



President Obama signs Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act

Photo: Wikimedia Commons