

## Voting Timeline

1776-1783	<p><b>Colonial Period and Revolutionary War:</b></p> <p>Voting is limited to white men of property.</p>
1788-1790	<p><b>U.S Constitution is Ratified:</b></p> <p>Individual states define who can vote. Most states continue to limit the vote to white men of property.</p> <p>In 1790, white men born outside the United States (immigrants), are allowed to become citizens and vote.</p>
1845-1848	<p><b>Mexican-American War:</b></p> <p>Citizenship is granted to Mexicans living in Southwestern US territories, however, voting by Mexican Americans is prevented by language literacy tests, property requirements, violence and intimidation.</p>
1856	<p><b>Property Restrictions for Voting are Removed in all States</b></p> <p>North Carolina is the last state to eliminate the rule that citizens must own property to vote, extending the right to vote to all white men, except those convicted of certain crimes.</p>
1861-1865	<p><b>Civil War Ends Slavery and The Reconstruction Period Begins</b></p>
1868	<p><b>Watsonville is Incorporated</b></p>
1870	<p><b>15th Amendment - African Americans granted the Right to Vote</b></p> <p>During reconstruction, African American voting rights are protected by federal troops. In some states, more African Americans are registered to vote than whites.</p>
1876-1887	<p><b>Native Americans are denied Citizenship:</b></p> <p>U.S Supreme Court rules that Native Americans are not citizens and cannot vote.</p> <p>In 1887 Native Americans can become citizens if they complete the naturalization process and disassociate from their tribe.</p>
1877	<p><b>Reconstruction Ends-Jim Crow Era Begins</b></p> <p>Federal Troops are withdrawn and states begin to limit and restrict African American voting rights with measures such as poll taxes and literacy tests.</p> <p>Violence and intimidation are also commonly used to prevent African Americans from voting.</p>

1870-1923	<p><b>Asian Immigrants are Denied Citizenship:</b></p> <p>Various immigration acts and Supreme Court ruling prevent Asian immigrants from becoming citizens.</p> <p>Asian immigration is severely restricted.</p>
1909	<p><b>National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is Founded.</b></p> <p>NAACP is founded due to ongoing violence against African Americans around the country.</p> <p>Their Mission is to ensure political, social and economic equality and eliminate race-based discrimination.</p>
1914-1918	<p><b>World War I</b></p>
1920	<p><b>19th Amendment -Women's Suffrage:</b></p> <p>After over 50 years of protest and struggle, women are given the right to vote in all state and federal elections.</p>
1924	<p><b>Indian Citizenship Act of 1924</b></p> <p>The Act declares all Native Americans born within the U.S are citizens.</p> <p>Naturalization and disassociation from their tribe is no longer required.</p> <p>Native Americans continue to be restricted from voting by state laws and discriminatory election practices.</p>
1929	<p><b>League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)</b></p> <p>LULAC is founded to advance the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, housing, health and civil rights of Latino/as</p>
1943	<p><b>Chinese Exclusion Act is Repealed</b></p> <p>Chinese immigrants may become naturalized citizens and vote.</p>
1941-1946	<p><b>World War II and the Return of the GIs</b></p> <p>Black, Latino, and Native American GI's returning from WWII demand civil rights at the local, state and federal level.</p> <p>A Native American Veteran sues to demand his right to vote. New Mexico and Arizona are required to remove legal restrictions that prevent Native Americans from voting</p>
1952	<p><b>Asian Immigrants are Allowed to become Citizens</b></p> <p>McCarran-Walter Act is signed into law.</p>

1954-1965	<p><b>The African American Civil Rights Movement</b></p> <p>Protests and Bus Boycotts raise awareness about discriminatory practices in the south.</p> <p>Martin Luther King becomes a nationally recognized Civil Rights leader, focusing on ending segregation and passing an effective of the Voting Rights Act.</p> <p>The Birmingham Church bombing kills 4 children and brings national attention to the issue of violence against African Americans and their struggle for civil rights.</p> <p>Freedom Summer; students who launched a voter registration, face violence and intimidation as they challenge discriminatory voter registration practices.</p> <p>After being deterred by local law enforcement in earlier attempts, 25,000 protesters are given federal protection and successfully walk from Selma to the Montgomery to protest violence and intimidation, demand the right to vote and end racial segregation.</p>
1964	<p><b>25th Amendment-Poll Taxes are Prohibited</b></p> <p>Congress outlaws poll taxes in federal elections which is a common discriminatory practice used by southern states to suppress the minority vote.</p>
1965	<p><b>The Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA) Becomes Law</b></p> <p>The VRA of 1965 proves to be the most effective civil rights law in U.S history by preventing voter discrimination it occurs.</p> <p>States with a history of discrimination are required to get <i>pre-approval</i> (pre-clearance) from the federal government before making changes to the election process.</p>
1965-1974	<p><b>26th Amendment lowers the Voting Age to 18.</b></p> <p>This Constitutional change is largely due to the anti-Vietnam war movement and pressure from returning GI's, many of whom were drafted into the military before they were old enough to vote.</p>
1965-1980	<p><b>The Latino/a Political Power Movement</b></p> <p>Organizations thought the southwest work to increase Latino/a political power. Efforts include labor organizing and voter registration drives.</p> <p>Caesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta organize field workers in California bringing national attention to Latino/a labor rights as well as Latino/a political empowerment issues.</p> <p>Chicano/a student activists align with labor and other community organizations to demand political empowerment and improved educational opportunities.</p> <p>Latino/as become recognized as a powerful voting-block.</p>

1968	<p><b>Mexican American Legal Defense Fund (MALDEF) is Founded</b></p> <p>Their mission is to implement programs that bring Latinos into the mainstream of American political and socio-economic life.</p>
1975	<p><b>Voting Rights Act of 1964 is Amended to require bilingual election materials for language minorities.</b></p> <p>State and federal ballots and supporting informational materials become available in Spanish.</p> <p>MALDEF and other organizations such as LULAC use the amended VRA to seek political empowerment for Latino/as.</p>
1976-1988	<p><b>Grass Roots Political Activism takes Root in Watsonville</b></p> <p>Activists organize to improve education, health care, and housing services for local Latino/as.</p> <p>The Watsonville cannery strike, primarily lead by Latina women, attracts national attention, and further inspires the local Latino/as to seek political office.</p>
1988	<p><b>Gomez v. City of Watsonville.</b></p> <p>Latino/a candidates have difficulty winning local elections despite being in the majority, seek legal help from MALDEF to challenge local <i>at large</i> election practices.</p> <p>Joaquin Avila and MALDEF attorneys, successfully argue in federal court that <i>at large</i> elections in Watsonville deny Latino/Latina residents political representation as defined by the VRA.</p> <p>Latino/as in Salinas quickly follow Watsonville's lead and moves from at large to district elections in the city of Salinas.</p> <p>This landmark case sparks one of the most significant political overhauls in the state and throughout the country. As a result, many other cities in the state change their election process granting Latino/as increased political power.</p>
2002	<p><b>California Voting Rights Act</b></p> <p>In conjunction with the VRA of 1965, the California VRA strengthens and protects the rights of minority voters to prevent and correct voter discrimination.</p> <p>The California VRA was crafted by Joaquin Avila, while he was president and general counsel at MALDEF.</p>

2013	<p><b>The Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 is significantly weakened by the Supreme Court</b></p> <p>In <i>Shelby County v. Holder</i>, the Supreme Court rules that the VRA <i>pre-clearance</i> clause is outdated and must be updated with new federal legislation.</p> <p>Congress has not yet taken action to update the VRA, and currently it is difficult to prevent voter discrimination</p> <p>Since the weakening of the VRA, several states have taken steps to suppress the voting strength of minorities. These practices include targeted voter registration purges, imposing restrictive voter ID requirements, closing polling places and drawing heavily <i>gerrymandered</i> districts.</p>
2019 and Beyond	<p><b>Next Steps</b></p> <p>Advocate to restore and reform the Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965.</p> <p>Advocate for laws that support consistent and fair voting standards, for all eligible citizens, in all states.</p> <p>Advocate to end to the practice of political gerrymandering and other practices that dilute the minority vote.</p> <p>Advocate reform measures that make it easier for all citizens to vote such as automatic registration, extended voting periods, and accessible polling locations.</p> <p>Vote! <i>Your Vote is Your Voice!</i> Increasing the number of citizens who vote strengthens our democracy.</p>