



FREEDOM IN THE USA

The contested histories of the battle for freedom in the USA





America's birth liberated the people from British imperial tyranny

Source 1: The US Declaration of Independence, July 4th 1776

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, -- That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.--Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.



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Source 2: Engraving by Paul Revere titled “The Bloody Massacre Perpetrated in King Street, Boston on March 5, 1770.”





Slavery denied freedom to African Americans

Source 3: A white man is hitting a black slave with a paddle. The slave is tied by his wrists to the branch of a tree. Two other white men are attacking slaves with whips.

Engraving from the anti-slavery book “The suppressed book about slavery!” by Van Ingen Snyder, 1864

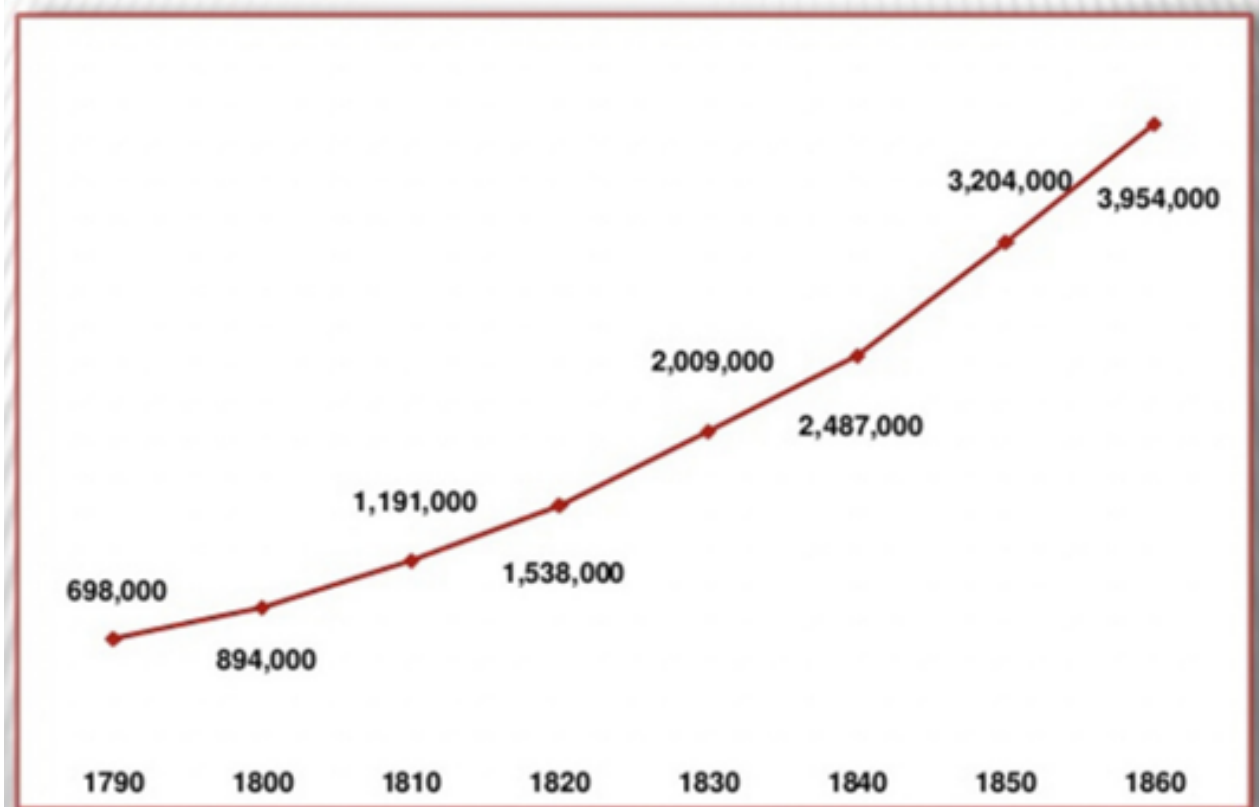




Slavery denied freedom to African Americans

Source 4: Trajectory of the Slave Population in the U.S. from 1790 until 1860. Data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970, 1975

U.S. Slave Population





The Civil War was formative for freedom in the US

Source 5: President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, Nov. 19th 1863

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. "Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. "But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion, that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.



The Civil War was formative for freedom in the US

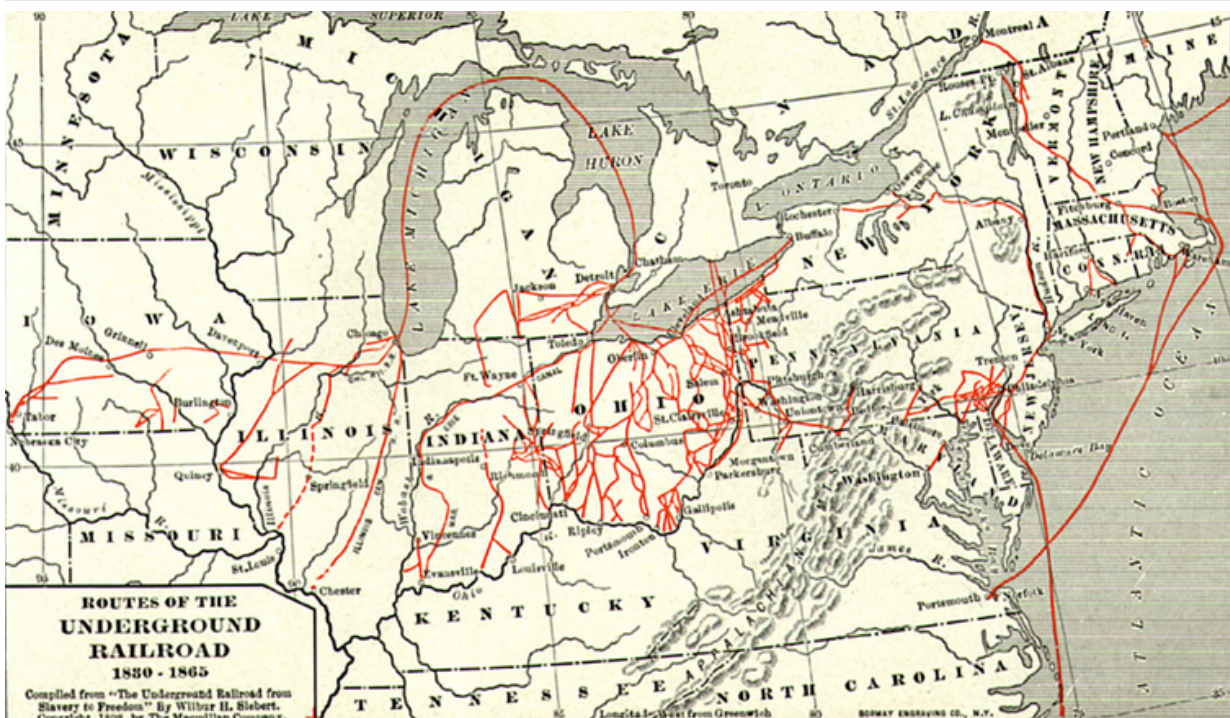
Source 6: Party representation in the House of Representatives in 1863-5. Note that the 1862-3 election to the House of Representatives was held during the war among only the Northern states. Despite this, Abraham Lincoln (Republican) still struggled to pass laws due to his party's small majority in the House

| | Party | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| | Democratic (D) | Republican (R) | Independent Republican (IR) | Unionist (U) | Unconditional Unionist (UU) |
| Final voting share | 39.3% | 45.9% | 1.1% | 4.9% | 8.7% |



African Americans led the movement against slavery before and after the Civil War

Source 7: "Routes of the Underground Railroad." Whole map of the underground railroad used by free Africans such as Harriet Tubman. The Underground Railroad was not an actual railroad, but a network of secret routes and safe houses used by black slaves in the United States to escape to free states and Canada, published in 1898





African Americans led the movement against slavery before and after the Civil War

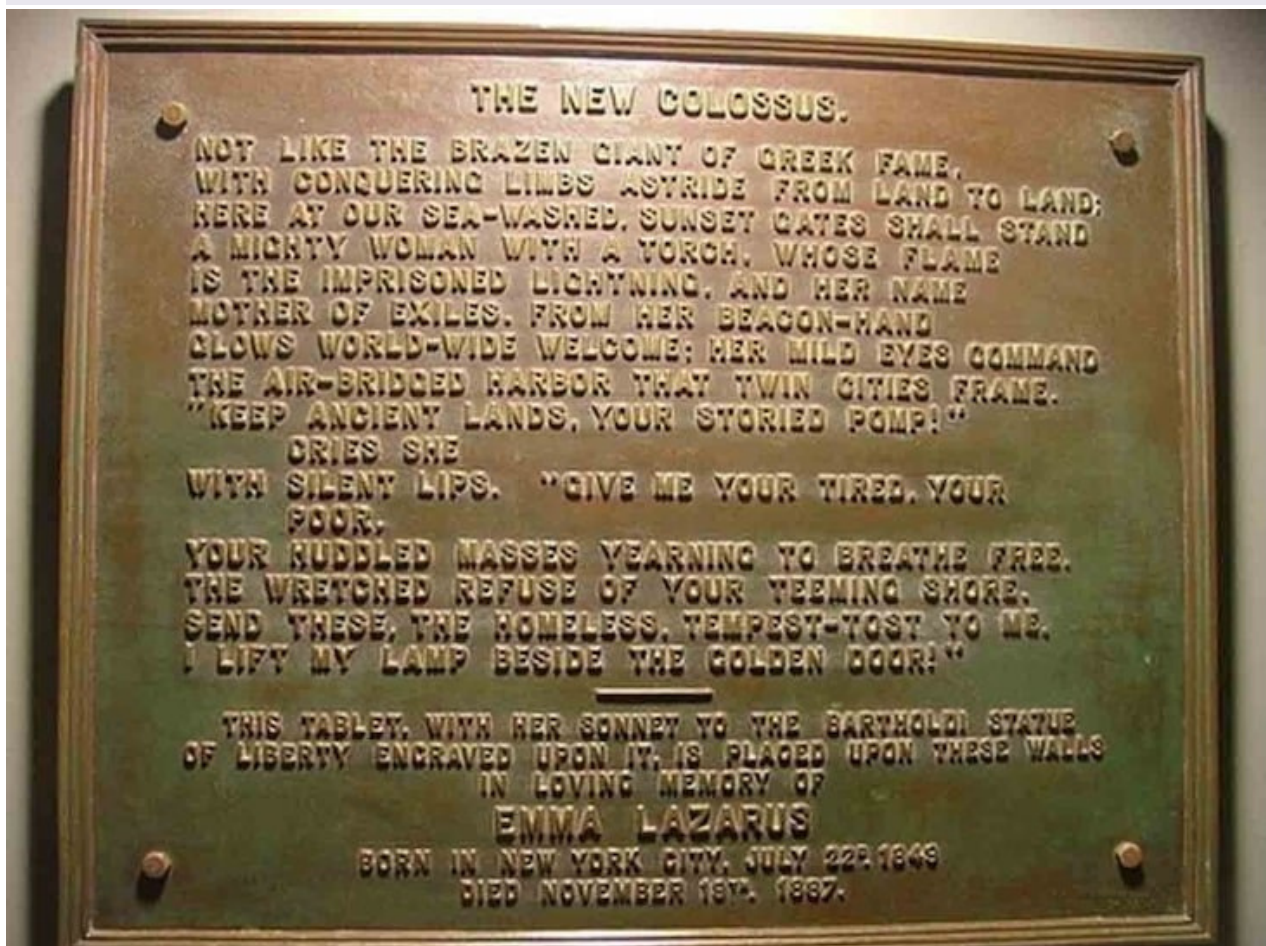
Source 8: Discovery of Nat Turner: wood engraving illustrating Benjamin Phipps's capture of slave rebellion leader Nat Turner on October 30, 1831





The US protected freedom at home and abroad

Source 9: Plaque inside the base of the Statue of Liberty with the sonnet "The New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus. 1 January 1903





The US protected freedom at home and abroad

Source 10: Promotion for Liberty Bonds, by the Liberty Loan Committee, titled “Europe’s Future Map,” 1917

AS THE GERMAN AND AUSTRIAN ARMIES PLAN THE MAP OF EUROPE.
(Translation)

LIKE a greedy tongue the “Deutsches Kaiserreich”, the “German Empire”, has licked up the entire continent of Europe.

Would Germany be satisfied with this?

Not at all.

The Kaiser has planned just such a map of the United States. He has frequently boasted that the United States would pay the expenses of the European War. He believes himself the destined successor to Caesar and Napoleon. His mania is for “the earth with a gold fence around it”, and the inscription “German Empire” on the entrance gate.

The Kaiser’s dream must not come true. An American army and navy, American ships, guns, shells, and aeroplanes will teach Germany to deal fairly with the world.

Words will not cure the Kaiser. Action is called for—all the action we can muster as a united nation.

Wie die deutsch-österreichischen Heere dieselben gestalten werden!

(This is a photographic reproduction of a map recently published in Berlin and for sale there for 20 pfennig. The translation appears in the larger picture above.)

LIBERTY LOAN COMMITTEE
Second Federal Reserve District
PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT



African Americans fought institutions dominated by White Supremacists

FOR THE GOOD OF AMERICA

Do you know that the United States is
the Only Land on Earth where human
beings are BURNED AT THE STAKE?

In Four Years, 1918-1921, Twenty-Eight People were publicly
BURNED BY AMERICAN MOBS

3436 People Lynched, 1889 to 1922

For What Crimes Have Mobs Nullified Government and Inflicted the Death Penalty?

| The Alleged Crimes | The Victims | Why Some Mob Victims Died: |
|---------------------------------|-------------|---|
| Murder | 1288 | Not turning out of road for white boy in auto |
| Rape | 571 | Being a relative of a person who was lynched |
| Crimes against the Person | 615 | Jumping a labor contract |
| Crimes against Property | 333 | Being a member of the Non-Partisan League |
| Miscellaneous Crimes | 453 | "Talking back" to a white man |
| Absence of Crime | 176 | "Insulting" white man |
| | 3436 | |

Is Rape the "Cause" of Lynching?

Of 3436 people murdered by mobs in our country, only 571, or less than 17 per cent, were even *accused* of the crime of rape.

83 WOMEN HAVE BEEN LYNCHED IN THE UNITED STATES

Do lynchers maintain that they were lynched for "the usual crime?"

AND THE LYNCHERS GO UNPUNISHED

There were four lynchings in eight days after the failure to pass the Dyer Anti-Lynching bill. One of the victims being publicly burned at the stake.

TO MAINTAIN CIVILIZATION IN AMERICA

AND FOR THE GOOD NAME OF THE NATION
BEFORE THE WORLD

YOU

CANNOT ESCAPE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Will You Not at Least Aid the Organization Which Has
Been Fighting for Ten Years to Wipe Out Our Shame?

Send your check to J. E. SPINGARN, Treasurer of the
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
TO FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

THIS ADVERTISEMENT IS PAID FOR IN PART BY THE ANTI-LYNCHING CRUSADERS.

Source 11: An anti-lynching poster by the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), 1 January 1926



African Americans fought institutions dominated by White Supremacists

Source 12: Speech by African American Civil Rights activist and one of the founders of the NAACP, Ida Wells, entitled “Lynching, Our National Crime”, 1909

The only certain remedy is an appeal to law. Lawbreakers must be made to know that human life is sacred and that every citizen of this country is first a citizen of the United States and secondly a citizen of the state in which he belongs. This nation must assert itself and protect its federal citizenship at home as well as abroad. The strong arm of the government must reach across state lines whenever unbridled lawlessness defies state laws. It must give to the individual under the Stars and Stripes the same measure of protection it gives to him when he travels in foreign lands. Federal protection of American citizenship is the remedy for lynching. Foreigners are rarely lynched in America. If, by mistake, one is lynched, the national government quickly pays the damages. The recent agitation in California against the Japanese compelled this nation to recognize that federal power must yet assert itself to protect the nation from the treason of sovereign states. Thousands of American citizens have been put to death and no president has yet raised his hand in effective protest. In contrast, a simple insult to a native of Japan was quite sufficient to stir the government at Washington to prevent the threatened wrong. If the government has power to protect a foreigner from insult, certainly it has power to save a citizen's life.



The US responded to economic turmoil with aid, to ensure freedom from want

Source 13: Camps for Unemployed Women set up by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, Maine, July 1934





The US responded to economic turmoil with aid, to ensure freedom from want

Source 14: The Four Freedoms Speech given by President Roosevelt, January 6, 1941

In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.

'The first is freedom of speech, and expression—everywhere in the world.

The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world.

The third is freedom from want—which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants—everywhere in the world.

The fourth is freedom from fear—which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor—anywhere in the world.

That is no vision of a distant millennium.

It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation.

That kind of world is the very antithesis of the so-called new order of tyranny which the dictators seek to create with the crash of a bomb.



African Americans fought for the US in WWII, but were still denied basic freedoms

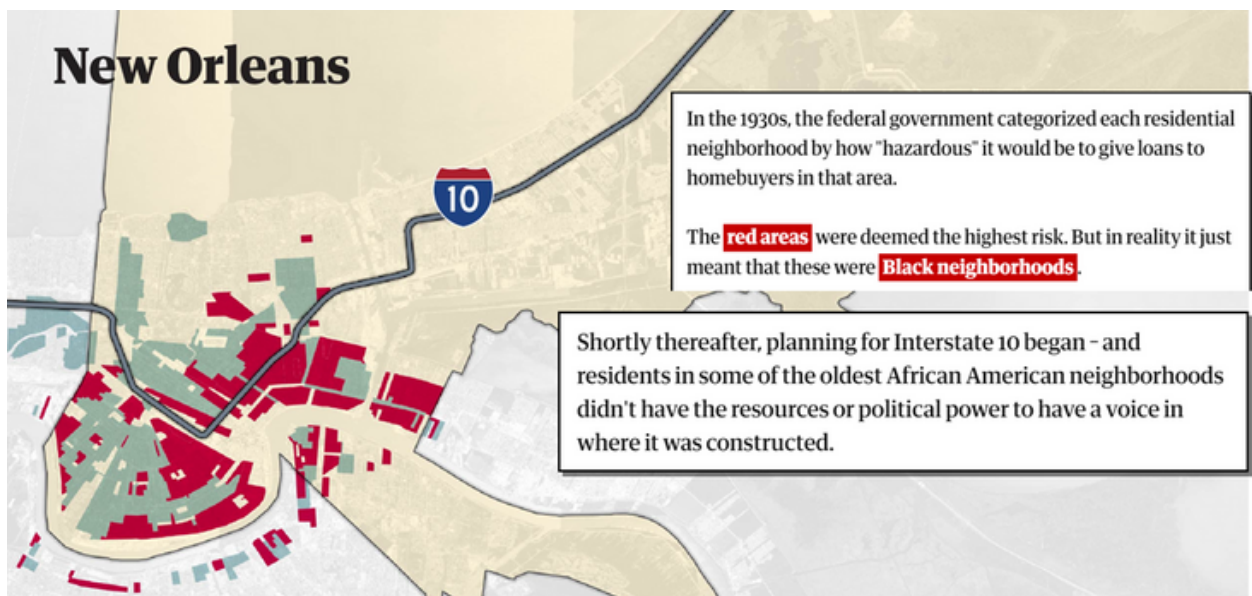
Source 15: Photograph circulated by the NAACP after three of their youth members beaten by Detroit police officers, 1960





African Americans fought for the US in WWII, but were still denied basic freedoms

Source 16: Example of the Highways developed by the New Deal, which lasted from 1933 to 1938





The US protected freedom from the ideological threat of Communism

Source 17: Worker in West Germany in front of a billboard about the Marshall Plan, 1949





The US protected freedom from the ideological threat of Communism

Source 18: Political cartoon about Stalin's failure to stop the Berlin Airlift, by British cartoonist Ernest Howard Shepard, 14 July 1948



THE BIRD WATCHER



African Americans generated the momentum for reform through peaceful means



Source 19:

Photograph showing the estimated 250,000 people during the March on Washington where Martin Luther King delivered his famous 'I Have a Dream' speech, 1963



African Americans generated the momentum for reform through peaceful means

1, 2, 4 & 10

BROWN v. BOARD OF EDUCATION. 11

guage in *Plessy v. Ferguson* contrary to this finding is rejected.

We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the plaintiffs and others similarly situated for whom the actions have been brought are, by reason of the segregation complained of, deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. This disposition makes unnecessary any discussion whether such segregation also violates the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.¹²

Because these are class actions, because of the wide applicability of this decision, and because of the great variety of local conditions, the formulation of decrees in these cases presents problems of considerable complexity. On reargument, the consideration of appropriate relief was necessarily subordinated to the primary question—the constitutionality of segregation in public education. We have now announced that such segregation is a denial of the equal protection of the laws. In order that we may have the full assistance of the parties in formulating decrees, the cases will be restored to the docket, and the parties are requested to present further argument on Questions 4 and 5 previously propounded by the Court for the reargument this Term.¹³ The Attorney General

¹² See *Bolling v. Sharpe*, *infra*, concerning the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment.

¹³ "4. Assuming it is decided that segregation in public schools violates the Fourteenth Amendment

"(a) would a decree necessarily follow providing that, within the limits set by normal geographic school districting, Negro children should forthwith be admitted to schools of their choice, or

"(b) may this Court, in the exercise of its equity powers, permit an effective gradual adjustment to be brought about from existing segregated systems to a system not based on color distinctions?

"5. On the assumption on which questions 4 (a) and (b) are

Source 20: Page 11 of the landmark Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, which states that the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place in public education



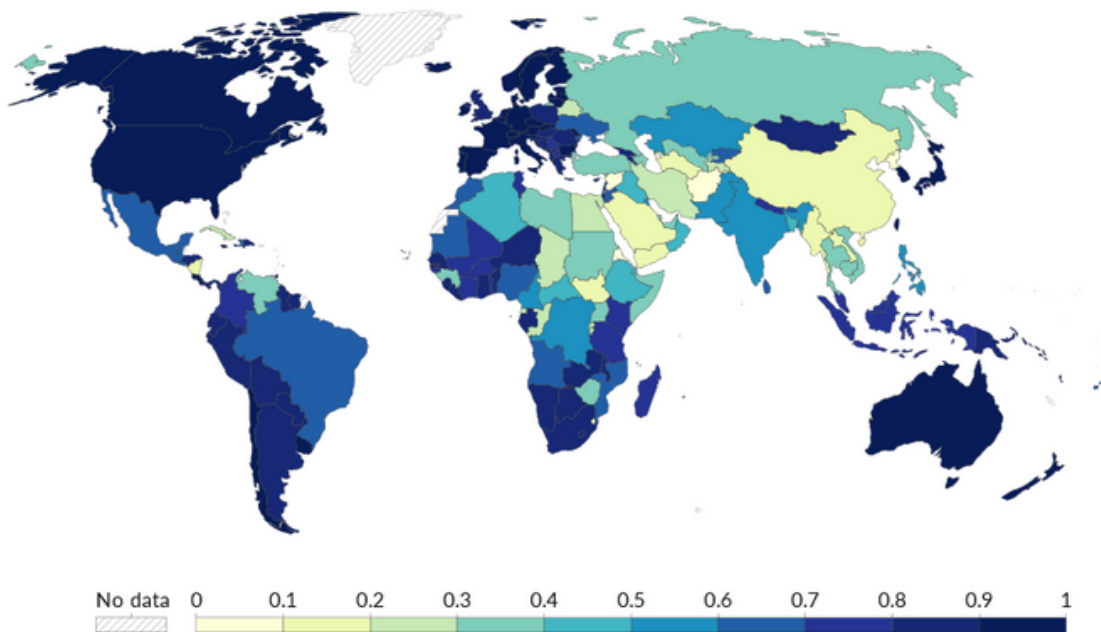
Today, the US continues to fight for freedom at home and abroad

Source 21: Map of World Human Rights rankings taken from across freedom measures. 1 is the highest level of freedom and is represented by the darkest blue

Human rights index, 2022



Based on the expert assessments and index by V-Dem¹. It captures the extent to which people are free from government torture, political killings, and forced labor; they have property rights; and enjoy the freedoms of movement, religion, expression, and association. The variable ranges from 0 to 1 (most rights).



Data source: V-Dem (2023)

OurWorldInData.org/human-rights | CC BY

1. V-Dem: The Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project publishes data and research on democracy and human rights. It relies on evaluations by around 3,500 country experts and supplementary work by its own researchers to assess political institutions and the protection of rights. The project is managed by the V-Dem Institute, based at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden. Learn more: Democracy data: how do researchers measure democracy? The 'Varieties of Democracy' data: how do researchers measure human rights?



Today, the US continues to fight for freedom at home and abroad

Source 22: Extract from the Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act 2006, passed under Republican President George W. Bush

For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
July 27, 2006

Today, The President Signed Into Law The Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, And Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization And Amendments Act Of 2006. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA) was designed to restore the birthright of every American - the right to choose our leaders. It has been vital to guaranteeing the right to vote for generations of Americans and has helped millions of our citizens enjoy the full promise of freedom.

In Signing This Bill, President Bush Honored The Memory Of Three Women Who Devoted Their Lives To The Struggle For Civil Rights - Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, And Coretta Scott King. The Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006 was named in honor of these three American heroes.

The Voting Rights Act Reauthorization And Amendments Act Of 2006 Reaffirms A Commitment To Enforce The Right To Vote For All Americans

The Voting Rights Act Reauthorization And Amendments Act Of 2006 Extends The VRA For 25 Years, Extending:

The prohibition against the use of tests or devices to deny the right to vote in any Federal, State, or local election; and
The requirement for certain States and local governments to provide voting materials in multiple languages.

The New Law Also Amends The VRA With Regard To:

The use of election examiners and observers;

Voting qualifications or standards intended to diminish, or with the effect of diminishing, the ability of U.S. citizens on account of race or color to elect preferred candidates; and

Award of attorney fees in enforcement proceedings to include expert fees and other reasonable costs of litigation.

The President Has Committed His Administration To Vigorously Enforce The Provisions Of This Law And To Defend It In Court. The President will also continue to work with Congress to ensure that our country lives up to our guiding principle that all men and women are created equal.

The Administration Will Continue To Build On The Legacy Of The Civil Rights Movement To Help Ensure That Every Child Enjoys The Opportunities America Offers. These opportunities include the right to a decent education in a good school, the chance to own a home or small business, and the hope that comes from knowing you can rise in our society through hard work and using your talents.



African Americans have won many freedoms, but more needs to be done

Source 23: Obama takes the oath of office at the Capitol, January 20, 2009



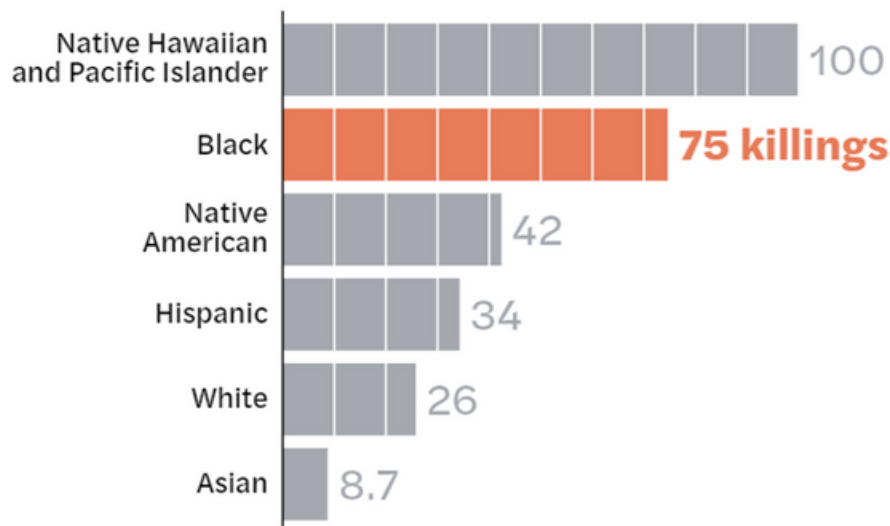


African Americans generated the momentum for reform through peaceful means

Source 24: Amnesty International statistics on police killings in the US, based on the 2020 US census

Black people are **2.9x** more likely to be killed by police than white people in the U.S. √.

Police killings per 1 million people in the U.S., 2013–2023



Race and ethnicity population data from the 2020 Decennial Census