

# **Democrats and Republicans: In Their Own Words**

**A 124 Year History of Major Civil Rights Efforts  
Based on a Side-by-Side Comparison  
of the Early Platforms of the  
Two Major Political Parties**

## Introduction:

# What is a Party Platform?

A party platform is a document produced by a political party every four years (prior to each presidential election) that sets forth that party's beliefs and values as well as its policy positions on important issues of the day. While a platform addresses dozens of issues and sets forth that party's vision for America, this booklet has compiled the position of the two major parties only on civil rights and racial justice issues – a subject at the forefront of American policy debates for decades.

The Democrats and Republicans platform declarations on this subject that appear in this booklet commence with the year 1840 and continue until the 1964 platform immediately preceding the creation and passage of the three major landmark civil rights measures in 1964 and 1965: the 24<sup>th</sup> amendment abolishing the poll tax, the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and the 1965 Voting Rights Act. These civil rights declarations reveal how, or whether, the parties embraced the belief set forth in the Declaration of Independence that “all men are created equal, and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights.”

The following excerpts have been taken directly from the platforms and have not been altered. Annotations have been added to chronicle the history of specific civil rights events and issues mentioned by the platforms across the years.

<i>THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM</i>	<i>THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM</i>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>1840, 1844, 1848</u></b></p> <p>All efforts by abolitionists . . . to interfere with questions of slavery . . . are calculated to lead to the most alarming and dangerous consequences and . . . have an inevitable tendency to diminish the happiness of the people and endanger the stability and permanency of the union. †</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>1840, 1844, 1848</u></b></p> <p>[Republican Party not yet formed.]</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>1852</u></b></p> <p>The Democratic Party will resist all attempts at renewing – in Congress or out of it – the agitation of the slavery question [i.e., will oppose all efforts to abolish slavery].</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>1852</u></b></p> <p>[Republican Party not yet formed.]</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>1856</u></b></p> <p>The Democratic Party . . . will abide by and adhere to a faithful execution of the acts . . . settled by the Congress of</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>1856</u></b> †</p> <p>As our Republican fathers, when they had abolished slavery in all our national territory, ordained that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property</p>
<hr/> <p>† In the years preceding this platform, numerous occasions had arisen in Congress in which pro-slavery forces sought to extend slavery and anti-slavery forces sought to prohibit it. For example, in 1820, the Democratic Congress passed the Missouri Compromise. That law first repealed the provisions of the original 1789 anti-slavery law forbidding the extension of slavery into any federal territory, and then authorized the extension of slavery into new federal territories. Founding Fathers still alive at that time – including John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Rufus King – loudly denounced the Missouri Compromise and the expansion of slavery. Subsequently, John Quincy Adams and Daniel Webster became congressional leaders in opposing slavery while those such as John C. Calhoun fought aggressively to strengthen and expand it. This plank in the Democratic platform condemned the efforts of abolitionists such as John Quincy Adams (a member of Congress at that time, and titled the hell-hound of abolition for his efforts against slavery), asserting that the end of slavery would not only reduce the happiness of America but would also lead to its destruction.</p> <hr/> <p>† This was the first Republican platform, and it contained only nine planks; however, six of the nine set forth bold declarations of equality and civil rights for African-Americans, based on the principles enshrined in the Declaration of Independence. This emphasis on racial justice was the primary reason that the Republican Party was formed.</p> <p>In May 1854, the Democratic-controlled Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act, extending slavery into federal territories where it had previously been forbidden, thus increasing the national area in which slavery would be permitted. This law led to what was called “bleeding Kansas,” where pro-slavery forces came pouring into the territory and fought violent battles against the anti-slavery inhabitants of that territory. Following the passage of this pro-slavery law, a number of the anti-slavery Democrats in Congress – along with anti-slavery members from other political parties, including the Whigs, Free-Soilers,</p>	

*THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM*

1850: “the act for reclaiming fugitives from service or labor.” † . . . [We support] non-interference by Congress with slavery in state and territory, or in the District of Columbia [i.e., we oppose all congressional attempts to abolish slavery in any area of the nation].

**1860**

The Democrat Party will abide by the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States upon these questions of constitutional law. †† . . . [T]he en-

† The 1850 act mentioned here (the Fugitive Slave Law) was passed by the Democratically-controlled Congress. That law required Northerners to return escaped slaves back into slavery or else pay severe and repressive fines. In many instances, the law became little more than an excuse for southern slavehunters to kidnap Free Blacks in the North and force them into slavery in the South. If a black was simply accused of being a slave – regardless of whether he actually was or not – under the Fugitive Slave Law he was denied the benefit of both a jury trial and the right of *habeas corpus*, despite the fact that those rights were explicitly guaranteed by the Constitution. The Fugitive Slave Law was disastrous for blacks in the North, and as a consequence of the atrocious provisions of this law, some 20,000 blacks in the North fled the United States to Canada. In fact, the Underground Railroad reached the height of its activity during this period, helping thousands of slaves escape from slavery in the South all the way into Canada simply to escape the reach of the Fugitive Slave Law that the Democrats passed and were affirming in this plank.

†† This plank affirms the support of the Democrat Party for the recently delivered 1857 *Dred Scott* decision declaring that blacks were not persons but instead were property and therefore

*THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM*

without due process of law, it becomes our duty to maintain this provision of the Constitution against all attempts to violate it for the purpose of establishing slavery in the territories of the United States. . . . [W]e deny the authority of Congress, of a territorial legislation, [or] of any individual or association of individuals, to give legal existence to slavery in any territory of the United States. †

**1860**

[W]e brand the recent reopening of the African slave trade – under the cover of our national flag, aided by perversions of judicial power †† – as a crime against

and Emancipationists – formed the Republican Party to fight slavery and secure equal civil rights for black Americans. The name of the new party reflected its commitment to the principles of freedom and equality first set forth in the governing documents of the “Republic” (hence “Republican”) before pro-slavery members of Congress had perverted those original principles.

† This plank reiterates Republican support for the original anti-slavery acts of the early federal government. Specifically, this plank affirms Republican support for the principles expressed in the original 1789 federal anti-slavery law (the Northwest Ordinance), in which the Founding Fathers (“our Republican fathers”) forbade slavery in any of the federal territories then held. As a result, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and other states entered the nation as free states.

†† When the Constitution was written in 1787, the overwhelming majority of states wanted to ban the slave trade but strenuous objections from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia prevented that ban from being included in the Constitution. However, a clause was successfully inserted in the Constitution allowing Congress to ban the slave trade in twenty years. In 1794, Congress banned the exportation of slaves

## THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM

actments of the state legislatures to defeat the faithful execution of the Fugitive Slave Law † are hostile in character, subversive of the Constitution, and revolutionary in their effect.

had no rights. That infamous decision by the Court announced that African Americans “had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the Negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit.” Not only did Democrats affirm their support for this decision with this plank in their platform but they even distributed copies of the *Dred Scott* decision along with their platform to affirm their belief that it was proper to have slavery and to hold African Americans in bondage.

† The attempts by the “state legislatures to defeat the faithful execution of the Fugitive Slave Law” (refer to the note about this law on previous page) refer to what were called “Personal Liberty Laws” passed by Northern anti-slavery states. These laws provided that if an individual was accused of being a slave, he could have the benefit of an attorney, the right of *habeas corpus*, and a jury. They also prohibited state officials from assisting in the return of any fugitive slave. Each of these legal protections were direct affronts to the atrocious federal law.

The Fugitive Slave Law, passed by the Democratic Congress, had been designed to assist slave owners. For example, under that law a \$10 fee was paid to a federal official who ruled that a black was a runaway slave but only \$5 was paid if he ruled that the black was free. Not surprisingly in the decade following the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, 332 individuals were ruled to be runaway slaves but only 11 free. Furthermore, under the Fugitive Slave Law, federal marshals were authorized to impress *any* citizen into hunting for a slave, thereby making every citizen – even anti-slavery citizens – assist in sending escaped slaves back into slavery. The “Personal Liberty Laws” about which the Democratic platform here complains were an attempt by Northern states to protect the constitutional rights of African Americans.

## THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM

humanity and a burning shame to our country and age; and we call upon Congress to take prompt and efficient measures for the total and final suppression of that execrable traffic. ††

out of any state, and on January 1, 1808 – in accordance with the constitutional provision – Congress completely banned the slave trade. In the 1857 *Dred Scott* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court – disregarding the constitutionally-authorized ban – declared that Congress could *not* interfere with slavery or prohibit it in *any* territory, thereby “reopening the African slave trade [through] perversions of judicial power.”

†† Republicans won the election of 1860 and, in accordance with this plank in their platform, they begin to take action to end slavery. For example, in 1862, they passed a federal law prohibiting slavery in the federal territories – a direct affront to the 1857 *Dred Scott* decision in which the U.S. Supreme Court had forbidden Congress from ending slavery in any territory. In 1863, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation – another act directly refuting the Supreme Court decision. The Republican Congress had indeed begun pursuing measures for the “total and final suppression of that execrable traffic.”

## THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM

1864

The direct interference of the military authorities of the United States in the recent elections held in Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, and Delaware † was a shameful violation of the Constitution; and a repetition of such acts in the approaching election will be held as revolutionary, and resisted with all the means and power under our control.

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† At the outbreak of the Civil War, the eleven pro-slavery states that seceded from the Union to form the slave-holding Confederate States of America were almost completely Democratic; in fact, every southern Democratic member of the U. S. Congress gave up his seat and joined the Confederacy. However, the states of Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, and Delaware (called "border states" because they were the buffer states caught between the Union States and the Confederate States) did not secede, even though they were pro-slavery and largely Democratic. When the election of 1864 occurred, the pro-slavery forces in those border states used violence to keep anti-slavery Republicans from voting. Federal troops were therefore sent in to protect the ballot boxes and ensure that all citizens could vote. It was this protection of voting rights through the use of federal troops that the Democrats here denounce.

## THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM

1864

As slavery was the cause and now constitutes the strength of [the Civil War], † and as [slavery] must be always and everywhere hostile to the principles of every-republican government, justice and the national safety demand its utter and complete [elimination] from the soil of the Republic; and while we uphold and maintain the acts and proclamations by which the government in its own defense has aimed a deathblow at this gigantic evil, we are in favor, furthermore, of such an amendment to the Constitution . . . as shall terminate and forever prohibit the existence of slavery within the limits of the jurisdiction of the United States. ††

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† Many today assert that the Civil War was *not* over slavery, but historical records prove otherwise. The secession documents of the Southern states that left the Union, as well as the official documents of the Confederate States of America, describe that Southern nation as a confederation of "slave-holding" states. According to historical records, slavery *was* the primary distinction between the North and the South, and Rebels were therefore fighting for the existence of a slave-holding nation.

†† In 1860, the Republicans – for the first time in history – had won the national elections and in 1861 therefore took control of the Presidency, House, and Senate. They promptly passed a number of civil rights laws, including laws abolishing slavery in all U. S. territories and in Washington, D.C. They also passed laws that began to open courts of justice to allow African American participation.

Even though they had already "aimed a deathblow at this gigantic evil," they realized that progress through such laws was too slow. They therefore called for a constitutional amendment to give them a single means to finally and totally end the evil. This platform plank was the first official call by a political party for what became the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution abolishing slavery.

<i>THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM</i>	<i>THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM</i>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1868</b></p> <p>The Democratic party . . . demand[s] . . . the abolition of the Freedmen's Bureau and all political instrumentalities designed to secure Negro supremacy. † . . . Instead of restoring the Union, it [the Republican Party] has – so far as in its power – dissolved it, and subjected ten states, in time of profound peace, to military despotism and Negro supremacy. ††</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1868</b></p> <p>This Convention declares its sympathy with all the oppressed people which are struggling for their rights.</p>

† The “political instrumentalities” that the Democrats believed were “designed to secure Negro supremacy” included not only the Freedman’s Bureau but also the various civil rights laws that had been passed by Republicans. By 1868, Republicans had not only abolished slavery but also passed civil rights laws repealing the Fugitive Slave Act, removing color restrictions, and opening juries, marriage, voting, employment, education and military service to African Americans. Democrats vehemently opposed each of those civil rights laws, and Democratic President Andrew Johnson even vetoed several of the bills, but Republicans had overridden each of his vetoes. So opposed were Democrats to equality for African Americans that at the passage of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution abolishing slavery, only 19 of the 82 Democrats (23%) voted to end slavery while 100 percent of Republicans – 118 of 118 – voted for the Amendment. Democrats were so accustomed to the suppression of black Americans that simply to give them equality – to make blacks and whites equal under the law – meant “Negro supremacy” to the Democrats, which they condemn in this platform.

†† The years from 1865-1868 were marked *not* by profound peace – as Democrats here claim – but rather by profound *violence*, with numerous deadly mob attacks against African Americans. The ten states that were “subjected to military despotism and Negro supremacy” were ten of the Democratic states that had seceded from the Union during the Civil War to form the slave-holding nation of the Confederate States of America. The “despotism” to which those states were subjected included the federal requirement that the southern states rewrite their state constitutions, and have citizens in those states ratify those new constitutions, to recognize the civil rights of African Americans.

Since the newly enfranchised black voters outnumbered white voters in many Democratic southern states, only if blacks were prevented from voting could the civil rights provisions in the state constitutions be defeated. Therefore, massive riots erupted in many southern Democratic states, with Democrats attacking black voters on their way to the polls and causing the deaths of thousands. Federal troops were eventually sent in to quell the violence and allow voting to proceed. With federal protection of black voters, those constitutions eventually did pass, thus providing civil rights for African Americans. (Unfortunately, however, within ten years, those states were released from Reconstruction and federal troops were withdrawn. Democrats regained control of those states and revised their constitutions to *exclude* civil rights for blacks.)

Therefore, this platform statement is patently false: there was *not* profound peace, and the “military despotism” about which Democrats here complain was simply the use of federal troops to protect ballot boxes and allow African Americans to vote.

*THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM***1872**

We pledge ourselves to maintain the union of these states, emancipation, and enfranchisement, and to oppose any re-opening of the questions settled by the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments of the Constitution. † We demand the immediate and absolute removal of all disabilities imposed on account of the rebellion [Civil War] †† which was finally subdued seven years ago, believing that universal amnesty will result in complete pacification in all sections of the country.

† This is a false and misleading promise, for Democrats had relentlessly opposed those Amendments – and the civil rights laws based on them. Not only had Democrats stridently opposed the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment (see note on p. 7 about this Amendment), but not a single Democrat in Congress voted either for the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment (declaring that former slaves were full citizens and therefore entitled to all the rights and privileges of any other citizen in the state in which they lived) or the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment (granting explicit voting rights to black Americans). In fact, in the civil rights bill of 1871 to punish Klan violence, not one Democrat in Congress voted for that bill. The same was true with other major civil rights laws. Therefore, voting records prove this platform declaration by Democrats to be patently false.

†† The “disabilities” about which Democrats here complain were restrictions that Congress had placed upon the most strident racist individuals and states after the War. For example, Congress required that before the former Confederate States could be readmitted, they must first ratify both the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Amendments (and the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment forbid former Rebels from holding office), and then create new state constitutions that guaranteed equal civil rights for black Americans. These “disabilities” – necessary to ensure that progress was made in civil rights – had a direct negative impact upon Democrats since virtually every Confederate was also a Democrat.

*THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM***1872**

During eleven years of [congressional] supremacy, it [the Republican Party] has . . . suppressed a gigantic rebellion, emancipated four millions of slaves, decreed the equal citizenship of all, and established universal suffrage [voting]. Complete liberty and exact equality in the enjoyment of all civil, political, and public rights should be established and effectually maintained throughout the Union by efficient and appropriate state and federal legislation. † Neither the law nor its administration should admit any discrimination in respect of citizens by reason of African Americans, creed, color, or previous condition of servitude.

† Republicans were first elected as the majority party in 1861. Over the next eleven years, they passed almost two dozen civil right laws – and three constitutional amendments – to reverse the barriers of discrimination, segregation, and institutional racism.

## THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM

1876

The Democratic Party of the United States . . . reaffirm[s] our faith in the permanence of the federal union, our devotion to the Constitution of the United States, with its amendments universally accepted † as a final settlement of the controversies that engendered civil war; and do here record our steadfast confidence in the perpetuity of Republican self-government, in absolute acquiescence in the will of the majority, †† - the vital principle of republics - . . . [and] in the equality of all

† This statement is completely false. Just as the Democrats had fought every civil rights bill and amendment to the Constitution (see note on p. 7 about opposition to the Amendments), they were still doing so at the time this platform declaration was written. For example, in the 1875 civil rights bill to prohibit segregation and racial discrimination, not one Democrat in Congress voted for that bill. Significantly, Republicans did pass that bill over the strident and virtually unanimous opposition of Democrats, but following its passage, it would be another 69 years before the next civil rights law was passed. Why? Because in 1876, Democrats gained control of the U.S. House, and with a divided Congress, Democrats successfully blocked any further progress in the civil rights arena until the mid 1960s.

†† Democrats said they were willing to abide by the will of the majority but they used several means to keep blacks from being part of that majority. After regaining control of the south in 1876, Democratic state legislatures enacted poll taxes, literacy tests, "grandfather" clauses, multiple ballots, hide-and-seek polling places, Black Codes (Jim Crow laws), forced segregation, white-only primaries, property ownership requirements, and annual voter registration fees to prevent blacks from having any voice and to exclude them from being part of any majority. Therefore, the clause in this platform affirming the "will of the majority" actually means only the *white* majority.

## THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM

1876

When, in the economy of Providence, this land was to be purged of human slavery, and when the strength of government of the people by the people and for the people was to be demonstrated, the Republican Party came into power. . . . The Republican Party has preserved . . . the great truth spoken at its cradle, that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, that for the attainment of these ends, governments have been instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." Until these truths are cheerfully obeyed - and if need be vigorously enforced - the work of the Republican party is unfinished. The permanent pacification of the Southern section of the Union, and the complete protection of all its citizens in the free enjoyment of all their rights, are duties to which the Republican Party is sacredly pledged.

## THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM

citizens before just laws of their own enactment, . . . [as well as] in the faithful education of the rising generation †

1880

The existing administration is the representative of conspiracy only, †† and

† Democratic support for the “faithful education of the rising generation” did not include education for African Americans. In fact, 87 percent of the Democrats in Congress voted against the 1872 education bill to help African Americans. Segregated, inferior, and dilapidated schools for blacks became the norm in the southern states under Democratic control.

The Democrats were outspoken in their attempts to segregate African Americans from public schools. For example, in 1872 Democratic U.S. Representative James Harper of North Carolina widely distributed a piece called: “Separate Schools for Whites and Colored with Equal Advantages; Mixed Schools Never!” And in 1875, the Democratic Executive Committee of Ohio issued a piece on public education to “expose” what they called the dirty “tricks” of the Republicans, complaining: “The Only Positive Action of the Republican Party on the School Question in Ohio, is to Destroy the System by Requiring that Whites and Blacks be Educated Together.”

The Democratic opposition to open education for black youth sometimes went beyond words to acts of violence – as when Democrats burned eight schools in Memphis in which black youth were being taught. Additionally, since churches in the South frequently provided education for youth, such churches were also regularly burned. Therefore – contrary to the Democrats’ claim in this platform – the evidences of the widespread Democratic opposition to equal education for black youth in those years are numerous and abundant, their support for “the furthered education of the rising generations” meant only for white students.

†† The Democrats are here complaining about the manner in which Republican Rutherford B. Hayes (the President at that time) had

## THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM

1880

It [the Republican Party] suppressed a rebellion which had armed nearly a million men to subvert the national authority. It reconstructed the Union of the States, with freedom instead of slavery as its cornerstone. † It transformed 4,000,000 human beings from the likeness of things to the rank of citizens. It relieved Congress from the infamous work of hunting fugitive slaves, †† and charged it to see that slavery does not exist.

† This reference to a nation with “slavery as its cornerstone” refers to a famous speech by the same title given by Democrat Rep. Alexander Stephens of Georgia, who left Congress to become the Vice President of the Confederacy. In his speech (“African Slavery: The Corner-Stone of the Southern Confederacy”), Stephens first correctly acknowledged that the Founding Fathers had *never* intended for slavery to remain in America because their ideas “rested upon the assumption of the equality of races.” But Stephens then declared: “This was an error. . . . Our new government [the Confederate States of America] is founded upon exactly the opposite idea; its foundations are laid – its cornerstone rests – upon the great truth that the Negro is *not* equal to the white man. That slavery – subordination to the superior race – is [the] natural and moral condition [of the Negro]. This – our new government – is the first in the history of the world based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth.” Thus, by defeating the Confederacy, Republicans had defeated the nation with “slavery as its cornerstone.”

†† See the notes about the Fugitive Slave Law and its repeal on pp. 4-5.

<i>THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM</i>	<i>THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM</i>
<p>its claim of right to surround the ballot-boxes with troops and deputy marshals, to intimidate and obstruct the election, and the unprecedented use of the veto to maintain its corrupt and despotic powers, insult the people and imperil their institutions.</p>	

won the presidency, claiming that the outcome of the 1876 election was the result of a “conspiracy.”

The 1876 election had been between Republican Rutherford B. Hayes and Democrat Samuel Tilden, and 185 electoral votes were needed for either to win the presidency. When the votes were counted, Democrat Tilden had received 184 electoral votes and Republican Hayes had received 165. Neither had received the necessary votes, but there was a total of 20 disputed electoral votes that had not been counted. If Republican Hayes received all 20 of those votes, he would become President; if Democrat Tilden received even one of those votes, he would become President.

The uncounted votes came primarily from the disputed southern states of Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina. In those three states, dual election results had been reported – one tally in each state showed Republicans had won, the other tally showed Democrats had won. In each of those three states, Democrats had been extremely active both in suppressing the black vote through violence and in altering the counts at the ballot box. Democrats therefore claimed that they had won those three states. However, Republicans counted the suppressed African American votes and ignored the fraudulent votes. They therefore claimed that they had won those three states.

Since the Electoral College did not count the disputed votes, and since neither presidential candidate could win without them, Congress was required to determine who would become President. A commission of 15 members was convened to hear the issue. The commission investigated and determined that there had been voter suppression through the killing, injuring, and intimidation of black Americans by Democrats. The commission therefore awarded the election to Republican Rutherford B. Hayes. The Democratic House, however, refused to ratify the findings of the commission and threatened a filibuster. The result was that America remained without a President.

This situation continued for four months until a solution, known as “The Great Compromise,” was proposed. Democrats offered to ratify the commission’s report – but only if the last federal troops were withdrawn from Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina, thereby officially ending Reconstruction in the South. If Republicans did not agree to the Democratic proposal, America would have no President. The proposal was finally agreed to, and federal troops departed from the three remaining states in which they had been stationed. (Following the withdrawal of those last federal troops, from that point forward the South became known as the “solid Democratic South.”) As a result of this agreement, Rep. Rutherford B. Hayes became President, and because of these circumstances, Democrats complain that “the existing administration is the representative of conspiracy only.”

## THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM

1884

Asserting the equality of all men before the law, we hold that it is the duty of the government in its dealings with the people to mete out equal and exact justice to all citizens of whatever nativity, race, color, or persuasion (religious or political). We believe in a free ballot <sup>†</sup> and a fair count, and we recall to the memory of the people the noble struggle of the Democrats in the Forty-fifth and Forty-sixth Congresses by which a reluctant Republican opposition was compelled to assent to legislation making everywhere illegal the presence of the troops at the polls, <sup>††</sup> as the conclusive proof that a Democratic administration will preserve liberty with order.

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<sup>†</sup> Significantly, contrary to this claim, it was *only* Democratic state legislatures that instituted poll taxes to limit African American influence, thus conclusively refuting their claim of a belief in a “free” ballot.

<sup>††</sup> See note on pp. 10-11 explaining how Reconstruction came to an end when federal troops were removed from the polls.

## THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM

1884

The Republican Party, having its birth in a hatred of slave labor and a desire that all men may be truly free and equal, <sup>†</sup> is unalterably opposed to placing our workingmen in competition with any form of servile labor. <sup>††</sup> . . . We extend to the Republicans of the South – regardless of their former party affiliations – our cordial sympathy; and we pledge to them our most earnest efforts to promote the passage of such legislation as will secure to every citizen of whatever race and color the full and complete recognition, possession, and exercise of all civil and political rights.

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<sup>†</sup> See note on the birth of the Republican Party on p. 3.

<sup>††</sup> While there were many forms of “servile labor,” two of the most repugnant included that instituted under the “Black Codes” and that of forced apprenticeships, both of which became widespread in the South in the years following the Civil War. The “Black Codes” created criminal offenses for minor charges such as vagrancy (often imposed against a black when he was looking for a job), insubordination, disrespect, and other such verbal “offenses” that resulted in jail time. The “convicted” individual was sentenced to plantation labor that often was the equivalent of slavery. Forced apprenticeships were similar, but were imposed on black minors rather than adults. Black youth were forcibly taken from parents and forced into “apprenticeships” that were nothing more than a means of cheap labor for former slave owners.

<i>THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM</i>	<i>THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM</i>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1888</b></p> <p>No mention of racial equality or civil rights.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1888</b></p> <p>We reaffirm our unswerving devotion to the national Constitution and the indissoluble Union of the States, to the autonomy reserved to the States under the Constitution, to the personal rights and liberties of the citizens in all the states and territories of the Union, and especially to the supreme and sovereign right of every lawful citizen, rich or poor, native or foreign born, white or black, to cast one free ballot † in public elections and to have that ballot duly counted. We hold the free and honest popular ballot, and the just and equal representation of all the people, to be the foundation of our republican government and demand effective legislation to secure the integrity and purity of elections, †† which are the fountains of all public authority. We charge that the present administration and the Democratic majority in Congress owe their existence to the suppression of the ballot.</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: 0;"/> <p>† See notes on poll taxes on pp. 9 and 11.</p> <p>†† African American Rep. John Roy Lynch personally experienced vote-counting difficulties from those Democrats whom he described as “the ballot box stuffer [and] the shot-gun holder of the South.” As he explained to a public gathering: “In my state, the ‘official return’ is an official fraud. When I ran for Congress in the Sixth District of Mississippi in 1880, I know that there were not less than 5,000 votes [cast] for me that were counted for the [Democrat] that ran against me. Now, bear in mind, the official report gave him 5,000 of my votes. . . . Now, I say that is wrong.” Numerous other African American legislators experienced similar difficulties, and the records of multiple congressional hearings during that time confirm the massive voter fraud committed by Democrats against African American candidates.</p>

*THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM***1892**

We warn the people of our common country, jealous for the preservation of their free institutions, that the policy of federal control of elections to which the Republican party has committed itself is fraught with the gravest dangers. . . . It strikes at the North as well as at the South and injures the colored citizen even more than the white; † it means a horde of deputy marshals at every polling place, armed with federal power.

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† This was a completely erroneous assertion. The Democrats had engaged in extensive efforts to suppress black voting, and those efforts had been successful. For example, in Mississippi in 1892, there were 70,000 more blacks than whites in the state but white voters outnumbered black voters by a margin of 8 to 1. And in Birmingham, even though some 18,000 blacks lived in the city at the turn of the century, only 30 were eligible to vote. In Alabama and Florida, the number of black voters was reduced by nearly 90 percent, and by the 1940s, only 5 percent of blacks in the Democratic South were registered to vote. In fact, in 1965 in Selma, Alabama – a city with more black residents than white residents – the voting rolls were 99 percent white and only 1 percent black. Clearly, Democratic voter suppression efforts had been successful, however Republicans had sought to have federal protections at the polling places to protect African Americans from corrupt local officials, and it is to this practice of protecting black voters with federal marshals that Democrats here object.

*THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM***1892**

We demand that every citizen of the United States shall be allowed to cast one free and unrestricted ballot in all public elections, † and that such ballot shall be counted and returned as cast; that such laws shall be enacted and enforced as will secure to every citizen, be he rich or poor, native or foreign-born, white or black, this sovereign right guaranteed by the Constitution. . . . We denounce the continued inhuman outrages perpetrated upon American citizens for political reasons in certain southern states of the Union. ††

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† See the notes on poll taxes on pp. 9, 11 and 13.

†† The “inhuman outrages” perpetuated upon African Americans in the South were largely committed through the Democrats’ Ku Klux Klan.

It is indisputable historical fact that the Klan was started by Democrats. In fact, during congressional hearings on the subject, one prominent Democrat testified that the Ku Klux Klan “belongs to . . . our party – the Democratic Party.” And the first Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan was prominent Democrat Nathan Bedford Forrest, an honoree at the 1868 Democratic National Convention. Recall also that every Democrat in Congress voted against the 1871 bill to punish Klan violence (see note on p. 8 about this bill).

Why were blacks so often the target of Klan violence? According to African American U. S. Rep. John Roy Lynch: “More colored than white men are thus persecuted simply because they constitute in larger numbers the opposition to the Democratic Party.” African American U. S. Rep. Richard Cain of South Carolina, a bishop of the AME denomination, agreed, declaring: “The bad blood of the South comes because the Negroes are Republicans. If they would only cease to be Republicans and vote the straight-out Democratic ticket there would be no trouble. Then the bad blood would sink entirely out of sight.” It was these Democratic and Klan “inhuman outrages” to which Republicans here object.

*THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM*

**1896**

The Constitution of the United States guarantees to every citizen the rights of civil and religious liberty. The Democratic Party has always been the exponent of political liberty and religious freedom, † and it renews its obligations and reaffirms its devotion to these fundamental principles of the Constitution.

**1900**

No mention of racial equality or civil rights.

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† This statement is completely erroneous. Not only had Democrats stridently opposed *all* of the two dozen civil rights laws passed to that point. In fact, in 1893 when Democrats won the Presidency, the House, and the Senate, they immediately passed laws repealing the civil rights laws that had not yet been struck down by the Supreme Court, and specifically repealed all civil rights laws protecting black voting rights or punishing Klan violence. They accomplished all of this within only two years after taking control of Congress.

Just as Democrats had opposed political liberty for African Americans they also opposed religious liberty. For example, in 1865, when the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment was passed to abolish slavery, prominent African American minister Henry Highland Garnet was asked to preach a sermon in Congress to commemorate that happy event. With Republican support (no Democrats joined in inviting him to preach his sermon), Garnet did preach that sermon in Congress on Sunday, February 12, 1865, becoming the first African American to speak in the halls of Congress.

The records are indisputable and unequivocal that Democrats opposed both the political and religious freedoms of African Americans.

*THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM*

**1896**

We proclaim our unqualified condemnation of the uncivilized and posterous practice well known as lynching, † and the killing of human beings suspected or charged with crime without process of law.

**1900**

It was the plain purpose of the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution to prevent discrimination on account of race or color in regulating the elective franchise. †† Devices of state govern-

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† Of all forms of violent intimidation, lynchings were by far the most effective. Between 1882 and 1964, 4,743 individuals were lynched – 3,446 blacks and 1,297 whites. Republicans led the efforts to pass federal anti-lynching laws and their platforms consistently called for a ban on lynching, but Democrats successfully blocked every anti-lynching bill and the Democratic platforms never did condemn lynchings.

†† Democrats had strenuously and unanimously opposed the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment that provided voting rights for African Americans (see note on p. 8 regarding this Amendment). By 1900, Democrats began actively seeking a repeal of the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment (as well as the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment). As Democratic U.S. Senator Ben Tillman from South Carolina explained: "We made up our minds that the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the Constitution were themselves null and void." According to prominent Democrat leader A. W. Terrell of Texas, the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment was what he called "the political blunder of the century." Democratic U.S. Rep. Bourke Cockran of New York and Democratic U.S. Senator John Tyler Morgan of Alabama agreed with Terrell and were among the Democrats seeking a repeal of the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment. In fact, Democratic U.S. Senator Samuel McEnery of Louisiana even declared: "I believe . . . that not a single south-

*THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM*1904

The race question has brought countless woes to this country. The calm wisdom of the American people should see to it that it brings no more. To revive the dead and hateful race and sectional animosities in any part of our common country means confusion, distraction of business, and the reopening of wounds now happily healed. †

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† Contrary to this claim, the "wounds" were *not* "happily healed." Lynchings were still occurring frequently and the Ku Klux Klan was entering its second national revival of membership and activity, with several Klan members at that time even being elected Democrats.

*THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM*1904

ments, whether by statutory or constitutional enactment, to avoid the purpose of this amendment are revolutionary and should be condemned. †

We favor such congressional action as shall determine whether by special discrimination the elective franchise in any state has been unconstitutionally limited, and if such is the case, we demand that representation in Congress and in the electoral college shall be proportionately reduced as directed by the Constitution of the United States. ††

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ern Senator would object to such a move." (The southern Senators were almost exclusively Democrats.) Fortunately, Democrats were unsuccessful in their efforts to repeal the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments.

† For the dozen separate devices used by Democratic state governments to circumvent the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment, see the note on p. 9.

†† The 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, in establishing rights of citizenship and civil rights for African Americans, also included a provision declaring that states which abridged these freedoms would suffer a reduction in their representation at the Electoral College, thereby weakening their ability to influence a presidential election.

Because of the Black Codes and disenfranchisement tactics used by Democratic states in the South, the rights of citizenship of black Americans were seriously curtailed, including their right to vote. For example, in addition to the suppressive voting numbers given on p. 14, in 1890 in Mississippi, even though there were 70,000 more black voters than white voters, eligible white voters outnumbered eligible black voters by a margin of almost ten to one; in Alabama, the number of black voters was reduced from 181,000 in 1901 to only 3,000 in 1902; and in Texas, the number of black voters was reduced from almost 100,000 in the 1890s to only 5,000 by 1906. The above clause in the platform is calling for those states to be penalized under the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, with a loss in their representation at the Electoral College.

<i>THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM</i>	<i>THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM</i>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>1908</u></b></p> <p>No mention of racial equality or civil rights.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>1908</u></b></p> <p>The Republican party has been for more than fifty years the consistent friend of the American Negro. It gave him freedom and citizenship. We demand equal justice for all men without regard to race or color; we declare once more and without reservation for the enforcement in letter and spirit of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution, which were designed for the protection and advancement of the Negro, and we condemn all devices that have for their real aim his disfranchisement for reasons of color alone as unfair, un-American, and repugnant to the supreme law of the land. †</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>1912</u></b></p> <p>No mention of racial equality or civil rights.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>1912</u></b></p> <p>No mention or racial equality or civil rights.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>1916</u></b></p> <p>No mention of racial equality or civil rights.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>1916</u></b></p> <p>No mention or racial equality or civil rights.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>1920</u></b></p> <p>No mention of racial equality or civil rights.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>1920</u></b></p> <p>We urge Congress to consider the most effective means to end lynching in this country, †† which continues to be a terrible blot on our American civilization.</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: 0;"/> <p>† See note on pp. 9 detailing the various ways that Democrats kept African Americans from voting.</p> <p>†† See note on p. 15 about lynchings.</p>

<i>THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM</i>	<i>THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM</i>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1924</b></p> <p>No mention of racial equality or civil rights.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1924</b></p> <p>We urge the Congress to enact at the earliest possible date a federal anti-lynching law so that the full influence of the federal government may be wielded to exterminate this hideous crime.<sup>†</sup></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1928</b></p> <p>No mention of racial equality or civil rights.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1928</b></p> <p>We renew our recommendation that the Congress enact at the earliest possible date a federal anti-lynching law so that the full influence of the federal government may be wielded to exterminate this hideous crime.<sup>†</sup></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1932</b></p> <p>No mention of racial equality or civil rights.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1932</b></p> <p>For seventy years the Republican Party has been the friend of the American Negro. Vindication of the rights of the Negro citizen to enjoy the full benefits of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is traditional in the Republican Party, and our Party stands</p>
	<hr/> <p><sup>†</sup> See note on p. 20. One of the many Republican attempts to ban lynchings had occurred in 1921 when Republican U. S. Rep. Leonidas Dyer of Missouri introduced a federal anti-lynching bill, but Democrats fought its passage. That delay was costly. The NAACP sadly reported that “since the introduction of the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill in Congress on April 11, 1921, there have been 28 persons murdered by lynchings in the United States.” The Dyer bill was eventually killed by Democrats. In fact, Democrats killed every single anti-lynching bill introduced in Congress – even those occasionally introduced by an individual Democrat. As a result of the steadfast Democrat obstruction on this issue, Congress never passed an anti-lynching bill. (See also note on p. 15 about lynching laws.)</p>

<i>THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM</i>	<i>THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM</i>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1936</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">No mention of racial equality or civil rights.</p>	<p>pledged to maintain equal opportunity and rights for Negro citizens. †</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>1936</b></p> <p>We favor equal opportunity for our colored citizens. We pledge our protection of their economic status and personal safety. We will do our best to further their employment in the gainfully occupied life of America, particularly in private industry, agriculture, emergency agencies, and the Civil Service. We condemn the present New Deal policies which would regiment and ultimately eliminate the colored citizen from the country's productive life and make him solely a ward of the federal government.</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: 0;"/> <p>† African Americans had historically been loyal to the Republican Party. In fact, in the 1932 presidential election during which this platform was written, incumbent Republican President Herbert Hoover received more than three-fourths of the black vote over his Democratic challenger Franklin D. Roosevelt. Why had Republicans received so much African American support? In 1875, African American Republican U. S. Rep. Joseph Hayne Rainey had explained: "We intend to continue to vote so long as the government gives us the right and necessary protection; and I know that right accorded to us now will never be withheld in the future if left to the Republican Party." Consequently, black Americans – long being the victims of Democratic-sponsored racism and segregation – continued their loyalty to Republicans well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.</p>

*THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM***1940**

Our Negro citizens have participated actively in the economic and social advances launched by this Administration, including fair labor standards, social security benefits, health protection, work relief projects, decent housing, aid to education, and the rehabilitation of low-income farm families. † We have aided more than half a million Negro youths in vocational training, education, and employment. We shall continue to strive for complete legislative safeguards against discrimination in government service and benefits and in the national defense forces. We pledge to uphold due process and the equal protection of the laws for every citizen, regardless of race, creed or color. ††

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† The President at this time was Democrat Franklin Delano Roosevelt. In an unusual move for Democrats, Roosevelt in 1932 had invited black Americans to vote Democratic in the elections. However, Roosevelt understood his Party, and made only subtle overtures to black Americans while avoiding any overt civil rights promises. While Roosevelt created what became known as his "Black Cabinet" to advise him on issues of importance to black Americans, and although he did begin to include black Americans in economic programs, he did little for civil rights and in fact did not even introduce a single bill to protect or promote civil rights.

†† It was under Roosevelt that Democrats for the first time placed language in their platform calling for an end to racial discrimination; yet despite the new language in their platform, Democrats in Congress still killed every civil rights bill introduced in that era.

*THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM***1940**

We pledge that our American citizens of Negro descent shall be given a square deal in the economic and political life of this nation. Discrimination in the civil service, the army, navy, and all other branches of the government must cease. To enjoy the full benefits of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, universal suffrage must be made effective for the Negro citizen. Mob violence shocks the conscience of the nation and legislation to curb this evil should be enacted.

*THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM***1944**

We believe that racial and religious minorities have the right to live, develop, and vote equally with all citizens, and share the rights that are guaranteed by our Constitution. Congress should exert its full constitutional powers to protect these rights.

**1948**

The Democratic Party commits itself to continuing its efforts to eradicate all racial, religious, and economic discrimination. † We again state our

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† While Franklin D. Roosevelt began a change in the way national Democrats treated African Americans, it was his successor, Harry S. Truman, who was even more courageous. He became the first Democratic President to advocate for strong civil rights protections. Truman introduced an aggressive 10-point civil rights legislative package that included an anti-lynching law, a ban on the poll tax, and desegregation of the military, but congressional Democrats killed his proposals, including his proposed Civil Rights Commission.

Truman – like FDR before him – learned that it was difficult for rank-and-file Democrats to reshape their long-held views on race. The depth of this opposition was easily seen in significant elements of the Democratic Party. For example, when Ma Ferguson (Texas' Democratic gubernatorial candidate) dared to criticize the Klan's role in the southern Democratic Party, she was directly opposed in her Democratic primary with a Klan candidate, thus costing her the cohesive support of the Texas Democratic Party. In fact, a number of Klansmen ran on the various Democratic tickets in that era

*THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM***1944**

We pledge an immediate congressional inquiry to ascertain the extent to which mistreatment, segregation, and discrimination against Negroes who are in our armed forces are impairing morale and efficiency, and the adoption of corrective legislation. The payment of any poll tax should not be a condition of voting in federal elections and we favor immediate submission of a constitutional amendment for its abolition. † We favor legislation against lynching and pledge our sincere efforts in behalf of its early enactment.

**1948**

Lynching or any other form of mob violence anywhere is a disgrace to any civilized state, and we favor the prompt enactment of legislation to end this infamy. †† One of the basic principles of

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† It was not until 1964 that the poll tax was finally abolished through the passage of the 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution. A repeal of the poll tax had been proposed on at least fourteen occasions prior to its final approval, and on five of those occasions the House had actually passed a ban; but each time Senate Democrats kept the poll tax alive. It was nearly eighty-five years after the poll tax to limit African American influence was instituted by Democrats before the ban on the poll tax was finally approved by the U. S. Senate. Significantly, 91 percent of the Republicans in Congress voted to end the poll tax – a level of support much higher than that of Democrats; and of the 16 Senators who wanted to keep the poll tax alive in 1964, 15 of them were Democrats. The 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment banned poll taxes, but only for federal elections. Two years later, however, in 1966, the U. S. Supreme Court finally struck down poll taxes for all elections, including state and local. (See also the notes about poll taxes on pp. 9, 11, and 13.)

†† See notes on pp. 15 and 18 regarding Republicans attempts to ban lynching.

## THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM

belief that racial and religious minorities must have the right to live, the right to work, the right to vote, the full and equal protection of the laws, on a basis of equality with all citizens as guaranteed by the Constitution. †

and were elected; and at the national level, several Democratic U. S. Senators were members of the Klan. Despite the existence of the Klan and other racist groups within the Democratic Party, Truman nevertheless worked to change his party. In 1946, he became the first modern President to institute a comprehensive review of race relations – and not surprisingly, he faced strenuous opposition from within his own party. In fact, Democratic U.S. Senator Theodore Bilbo of Mississippi called on every “red blooded Anglo Saxon man in Mississippi to resort to any means” to keep blacks from voting.

The website for the Democratic National Party properly acknowledges Truman's important contributions, declaring that, “With the election of Harry Truman, Democrats *began* the fight to bring down the barriers of race and gender.” Truly, it was under Harry Truman that Democrats *began* – that is, they made their first serious efforts – to fight against the barriers of race.

† Southern Democratic Governors, fearing that Truman might succeed in his civil rights goals, denounced his civil rights agenda and proposed a meeting in Florida of what they called a “southern conference of *true* Democrats” to plan their strategy to halt civil rights progress. That summer at the Democratic National Convention when Truman placed into the national Democratic platform the strong civil-rights language that appears above, it resulted in a walkout of southern delegates. Southern Democrats then formed the Dixiecrat Party and ran South Carolina Democratic Governor Strom Thurmond as their candidate for President. Thurmond's bid was unsuccessful. (Strom Thurmond later had a dramatic change of heart on civil rights issues and in 1964, he left the Democratic Party. In 1971, as a Republican U. S. Senator, Thurmond became the first southern Senator to hire a black in his senatorial office – something no southern Democrat in the U. S. Senate had ever done.)

## THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM

this Republic is the equality of all individuals in their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This right of equal opportunity to work and to advance in life should never be limited in any individual because of race, religion, color, or country of origin. We favor the enactment and just enforcement of such federal legislation as may be necessary to maintain this right at all times in every part of this Republic. We favor the abolition of the poll tax as a requisite to voting. † We are opposed to the idea of racial segregation in the armed services of the United States.

† See notes on previous page about poll taxes.

*THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM*

**1952**

The Democratic Party is committed to support and advance the individual rights and liberties of all Americans. We will continue our efforts to eradicate discrimination based on race, religion, or national origin.

**1956**

We will continue our efforts to eradicate discrimination based on race, religion, or national origin. We know this task requires action not just in one section of the nation but in all sections. It requires the cooperative efforts of individual citizens and action by state and local governments. . . . We are proud of the record of the Democratic Party in securing equality of treatment and opportunity in the nation's armed forces, the Civil Service, and in all areas under federal jurisdiction. The Democratic Party pledges itself to continue its effort to eliminate illegal discriminations of all

*THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM*

**1952**

We condemn bigots who inject class, racial, and religious prejudice into public and political matters. Bigotry is un-American and a danger to the Republic. The Republican Party will not mislead, exploit, or attempt to confuse minority groups for political purposes. All American citizens are entitled to full, impartial enforcement of federal laws relating to their civil rights. . . . We will prove our good faith by appointing qualified persons, without distinction of race, religion, or national origin, to responsible positions in the government; † federal action toward the elimination of lynching; federal action toward the elimination of poll taxes as a prerequisite to voting; appropriate action to end segregation in the District of Columbia; [and] enacting federal legislation to further just and equitable treatment in the area of discriminatory employment practices.

**1956**

We shall ever build anew, that our children and their children, without distinction because of race, creed, or color, may know the blessings of our free land. The Republican Party points to an impressive record of accomplish-

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† Republican World War II hero Dwight D. Eisenhower became President in this election. Eisenhower determined to eliminate racial discrimination in all areas under his authority. He therefore issued executive orders halting segregation in the District of Columbia, the military, and federal agencies. Furthermore, he was the first president to appoint a black American – Frederic Morrow – to an executive position on the White House staff.

## THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM

kinds, in relation to (1) full rights to vote, (2) full rights to engage in gainful occupations, (3) full rights to enjoy security of the person, and (4) full rights to education in all publicly supported institutions. Recent decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States relating to segregation in publicly supported schools † and elsewhere have brought consequences of vast importance to our nation as a whole and especially to communities directly affected. We reject all proposals for the use of force to interfere with the orderly determination of these matters by the courts.

† In 1954, the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education* finally struck down state segregation laws in education, thus reinstating what Republicans had done nearly seventy-five years earlier in the 1875 civil rights bill. The southern Democratic response to the Court decision ending segregated education was two-fold: a response of words, and a response of actions.

In the category of words, 100 Democrats in Congress – 19 U. S. Senators and 81 U. S. Representatives – passed the “Southern Manifesto” denouncing the Court’s decision. Those 100 Democrats declared that desegregation was “certain to destroy the system of public education” and that there would be what they called an “explosive and dangerous condition created by this decision.”

At the state level Democratic Governor Herman Talmadge of Georgia issued a written attack on the Court decision and promised that there “will never be mixed schools while I am Governor.” Mississippi Democratic Governor James Coleman, when asked in an interview on “Meet the Press” whether the public schools of Mississippi would ever be integrated, succinctly replied, “I would say that a baby born in Mississippi today will never live long enough to see an integrated school.” This was typical of what many southern Democrats did in the category of words.

But the Democratic response went beyond words and also included actions. Following the

## THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM

ment in the field of civil rights and commits itself anew to advancing the rights of all our people regardless of race, creed, color, or national origin. In the area of exclusive federal jurisdiction, more progress has been made in this field under the present Republican Administration than in any similar period in the last 80 years. † The many Negroes who have been appointed to high public positions have played a significant part in the progress of this Administration. Segregation has been ended in the District of Columbia government and in the District public facilities including public schools, restaurants, the-

† Given the actions of President Eisenhower on civil rights issues (see note on previous page regarding Eisenhower and civil rights), it was not surprising that in his 1956 reelection, Eisenhower – like Republican Presidents before him – received significant support from black voters.

Following his reelection, Eisenhower continued his civil rights efforts. In 1957, he proposed a bold civil rights bill to increase black voting rights and protections – proposals promptly blocked by Democratic Senator James Eastland of Mississippi, the Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. In fact, Eastland is credited with killing *every* civil rights bill that came before his committee in the 1950s, and his committee was literally known as the burial ground for civil rights legislation in the U. S. Senate. When Senate Republicans sought to keep Eisenhower’s civil rights bill from going to Eastland’s burial ground, only 10 Senate Democrats joined in that effort. Nevertheless, those few Democrats, combined with the strong Republican numbers, was sufficient; they were able to prevent Eisenhower’s bill from going to Eastland’s committee.

With Eastland unable to kill the bill in committee, other Senate Democrats responded with a filibuster against the civil rights bill. In fact, South Carolina’s Senator Strom Thurmond, still a Demo-

## THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM

1954 school desegregation decision, southern Democratic Governors went to extreme lengths to keep the Court decision from going into effect. For example, in 1956, Democratic Governor Allan Shivers of Texas deployed the Texas Rangers to keep blacks from entering public schools in Mansfield. The following year, 1957, Democratic Governor Orval Faubus of Arkansas called out the National Guard to keep black students from entering Central High School in Little Rock. However, Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower intervened and federalized the Arkansas National Guard to take it away from Governor Faubus. He then replaced the Arkansas Guard with 1,200 troops from the elite 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, ordering them to protect the nine black students who had chosen to go to Central High. Democrats in the U. S. Senate strongly protested against Eisenhower's actions to protect these black students. For example, Georgia Democratic Senator Richard Russell specifically complained about using "the whole might of the federal government, including the armed forces . . . to force a commingling of white and Negro children in the state-supported schools of the state."

Georgia Democratic Governor Marvin Griffin also attacked Eisenhower's actions but praised Arkansas Governor Faubus for his attempt to prevent blacks from entering Central High School. Governor Griffin promised that as long as he held office, he would "maintain segregation in the schools; and the races will not be mixed, come hell or high water." To prepare for the possibility that Eisenhower might do in Georgia what he had done in Arkansas, legislation was introduced in the Democratically-controlled Georgia legislature so that if desegregation was attempted, the public schools of the state would be dissolved and replaced with state-run private schools so that blacks could be excluded. These type of schools became known as "segregation academies."

Meanwhile, in Arkansas, Democratic Governor Faubus, unable to prevent black students from attending school because of the federal protection they received, simply shut down the schools for the next year to prevent further attendance. And Virginia Democratic Governor James Almond – like other southern Democratic

## THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM

aters, and playgrounds. The Eisenhower Administration has eliminated discrimination in all federal employment. Great progress has been made in eliminating employment discrimination on the part of those who do business with the federal government and secure federal contracts. This Administration has impartially enforced federal civil rights statutes, and we pledge that we will continue to do so. We support the enactment of the civil rights program already presented by the President to the Second Session of the 84<sup>th</sup> Congress. The regulatory agencies under this Administration have moved vigorously to end discrimination in interstate commerce. Segregation in the active Armed Forces

crat at that time, set the record in the U. S. Senate for the longest individual filibuster speech ever given in Senate history – over twenty-four hours of continual speaking in his attempts to block Eisenhower's 1957 civil rights bill. The stiff Democratic opposition in the Senate resulted in a watered-down version of Eisenhower's original bill.

Despite the fact that the bill was much weaker than introduced, Eisenhower did succeed in creating a Civil Rights Division within the U. S. Justice Department. This division subsequently played a prominent role in helping secure civil rights in the South during the 1960s and 1970s. That law also started a Civil Rights Commission that became instrumental in publicizing the effects of southern segregation and racial oppression.

In 1959, Eisenhower presented a second civil rights bill to Congress. That bill was met with unyielding opposition in the House by Democratic Representative Howard Smith of Virginia, Chairman of the House Rules Committee. Smith would actually disappear from Congress for weeks on end in order to keep his committee from acting on the civil rights bill. As had happened in the Senate with the earlier Eisenhower civil rights bill, a few House Democrats were willing to join

## THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM

## THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM

of the United States has been ended. For the first time in our history there is no segregation in veterans' hospitals and among civilians on naval bases. This is an impressive record. We pledge ourselves to continued progress in this field. . . . The Republican Party accepts the decisions of the U. S. Supreme Court that racial discrimination in publicly supported schools must be progressively eliminated. † We concur in the conclusion of the Supreme Court that its decision directing school desegregation should be accomplished with "all deliberate speed" locally through Federal District Courts. . . . This progress must be encouraged and the work of the courts supported in every legal manner by all branches of the federal government to the end that the constitutional ideal of the law, regardless of race, creed, or color, be steadily achieved.

Governors – also shut down public schools in his state rather than permit black students to attend.

In 1960 in Louisiana, where Democratic Governor Jimmie Davis supported segregation, it required four federal marshals to accompany little Ruby Bridges so she could attend a public elementary school in New Orleans. When Ruby entered that school, every other parent in that school pulled their children out of the school, and for the entire year, little Ruby was the only student in that school building – just Ruby and her schoolteacher from Boston.

Some Democratic southern Governors, however, did work for integration – including Tennessee Governor Frank Clement, Florida Governor LeRoy Collins, and Kentucky Governor Happy Chandler – but these tended to be the exceptions among southern Democratic Governors rather than the rule, and their admirable behavior was clearly overshadowed by the negative behavior of the others.

with the Republicans to get that bill beyond Smith's committee. In fact, Democratic House member Emanuel Celler of New York, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, exerted extraordinary effort to move the bill forward even though he was strongly opposed by other members within his own party. When the bill finally passed the House and arrived in the Senate, it was gutted by Democrats before being passed into law, once again preventing the federal government from intervening on behalf of black Americans whose civil rights were being violated in the South.

Nevertheless, massive gains were made in civil rights through Eisenhower's leadership and with the aid of Republicans and some Democrats in Congress.

† This refers to the Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* school desegregation decision. Significantly, Eisenhower's Attorney General had appeared before the Court to urge the elimination of segregation.

<i>THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM</i>	<i>THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM</i>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1960</b></p> <p>We shall also seek to create an affirmative new atmosphere in which to deal with racial divisions and inequalities which threaten both the integrity of our democratic faith and the proposition on which our nation was founded – that all men are created equal.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1960</b></p> <p>We supported the position of the Negro school children before the Supreme Court. † We believe: the Supreme Court school decision should be carried out in accordance with the mandate of the Court; continued vigorous enforcement of the civil rights laws to guarantee the right to vote to all citizens in all areas of the country; action to prohibit discrimination in housing constructed with the aid of federal subsidies; removal of any vestige of discrimination in the operation of federal facilities or procedures which may at any time be found. We pledge the full use of the power, resources, and leadership of the federal government to eliminate discrimination based on race, color, religion, or national origin and to encourage understanding and good will among all races and creeds.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1964</b></p> <p>Ending discrimination based on race, age, sex, or national origin demands not only equal opportunity but the opportunity to be equal. . . . We are firmly pledged to continue the nation's march towards the goals of equal opportunity and equal treatment for all Americans, regardless of race, creed, color, or national origin.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1964</b></p> <p>Opposition to discrimination based on race, creed, national origin or sex. We recognize that the elimination of any such discrimination is a matter of heart, conscience, education, as well as of equal rights under law. ††</p> <hr/> <p>† See note on previous page about <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i>.</p> <p>†† This era marked the passage of three landmark civil rights measures: the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1964 Constitutional Amendment abolishing the poll tax (see note on abolishing poll taxes on page 20), and the 1965 Voting Rights Act. How did these landmark measures become law?</p>

*THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM**THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM*

When Democrat John F. Kennedy was elected President in 1960, he had been less willing than Eisenhower to utilize executive orders to promote civil rights. He even delayed for more than two years the signing of an executive order to integrate public housing. However, following the violent racial discord in Birmingham in 1963, Kennedy sent a major civil rights bill to Congress – a bill based on the findings of Eisenhower's 1957 Civil Rights Commission. Kennedy worked aggressively for the passage of that civil rights bill but was tragically assassinated before he could see its success.

Democratic presidential successor Lyndon Johnson picked up the civil rights measure, but like his predecessors, he faced stiff opposition from his own party. In fact, Democratic Senators Robert Byrd of West Virginia and Richard Russell of Georgia led the opposition against the 1964 Civil Rights Act, including lengthy and extended filibuster speeches. Republican Senator Everett Dirksen resurrected language proposed by Eisenhower's Attorney General in 1960, thus breaking the filibuster of the civil rights bill and allowing Johnson to sign into law the Civil Rights Act of 1964, followed by the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

These two important civil rights acts were signed into law under a Democratic President, but it was the Republicans in Congress who made possible the passage of both acts, for Democratic President Johnson had been unable to garner sufficient Democratic support to pass either bill. At that time, Democrats had 315 members in Congress, holding almost two-thirds of the House and two-thirds of the Senate. President Johnson needed only a majority – only 269 votes – to get those bills passed; but out of the 315 Democrats, only 198 voted for passage. Democrats had it completely within their power to pass those bills and did not do so. The bills passed because Republicans overwhelmingly came to the aid of Democrat President Johnson: in fact, 83 percent of Republicans voted for those bills, a percentage of support almost twenty points higher than that of the Democrats. If not for the strong support of Republicans, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 would never have become law – not to mention the fact that the heart of both bills came from the work of Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

The 1964 Civil Rights Act had banned discrimination in voting, public accommodations, education, federal programs, or employment. The 1965 Voting Rights Act had banned literacy tests and authorized the federal government to oversee voter registration and elections in counties that had used such tests. Those two Acts – along with the 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution – were the final culmination of a century of civil rights legislation, and of even a longer period of attempts to secure equal rights and racial justice for African Americans. What was the effect of these three measures?

The positive impact of these changes was immediate. For example, within a year, 450,000 new southern blacks were successfully registered to vote and voter registration of black Americans in Mississippi also rose sharply – from only 5 percent in 1960 to 60 percent by 1968. The number of blacks serving in federal and state legislatures rose from only 2 in 1965 to 160 by 1990. The disenfranchisement laws and policies long enforced by southern Democratic legislatures had finally come to an end.