Primary Sources: Civil Rights Act of 1964

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President Lyndon B. Johnson (center) meets with civil rights leaders (from left) Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Whitney Young and James Farmer at the White House in January 1964. Yoichi Okamoto, Wikimedia Commons

Editor's Note: The Civil Rights Act was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson on July 2, 1964. It made discrimination in public places unlawful. It required schools and other public places to be integrated. It made job discrimination unlawful. Here are some of the most important parts of the legislation.

AN ACT

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 gives everyone the right to vote.

This act makes discrimination unlawful.

The act will give the Attorney General power to stop discrimination. The Attorney General's job is to enforce the law in the United States. Under this act, he has the power to protect the rights of everyone in public spaces.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 will extend the Commission on Civil Rights. A commission is a committee. The group will work to make sure people are being treated equally.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prevents discrimination in government programs.

This act creates a Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity.

TITLE I — VOTING RIGHTS

Under the law, the same guidelines or practices are required for everyone.

A person who makes a mistake when registering, or signing up, to vote is still allowed to vote.

Reading and writing tests are not needed when signing up to vote.

TITLE II — NO DISCRIMINATION

Everyone is allowed to use the same goods, services, and equipment. Everyone has the same rights.

All people are allowed to stay in any inn, hotel, or motel. It does not matter what race, gender, religion or ethnicity they are.

Everyone is allowed to eat in any restaurant or cafeteria. They are also allowed to go to any movie theater, concert hall, or sports field.

TITLE III — NO SEGREGATION

All people deserve equal treatment no matter what race, color, church, or background. All people are allowed to use the same buildings. If the Attorney General gets a complaint about not being allowed use of public buildings, the Attorney General can take action. He can make sure that action is taken. He can desegregate the public places.

TITLE VI — NO DISCRIMINATION IN GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Nobody should be excluded because of race, color, or background. No person should be denied benefits because of race, color, or background. No person should be subjected to discrimination under any government program or activity.

TITLE VII — EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

A boss, company or work group cannot do any of the following because of someone's race, whether they are male or female, what religion they follow or where they are from:

They cannot hire or fire someone.

Companies cannot pay people different amounts of money.

Bosses cannot deny their workers the chance at work or a better job.

Companies are not allowed to refuse to recommend someone for a job.

Unions, or groups that fight for the rights of workers, cannot prevent people from becoming members.

Bosses are not allowed to judge workers based on their appearance.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is made up of five members chosen by the President. This group will be created by this Act. The group will help to fight discrimination in business.

TITLE VIII — REGISTRATION AND VOTING

The Secretary of Commerce collects voting numbers and statistics. This is to see how people are voting by race, color, and background. These numbers will help to see whether there is discrimination in voting practices around the country.

When signing up to vote or voting, no one needs to tell anyone else about his race, religion, or background. People are also not required to tell anyone else how they voted or why. Everyone has the right to not answer these questions.