

The Right to Vote

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- Nowhere in the text does it explicitly say that citizens have the right to vote in elections.
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- However, that is not to say the Constitution says nothing about elections.
 - Through the Elections Clause, it gives Congress and the federal government the power to determine the “Times, Places, and Manner” of congressional elections.
 - Congress has used this power throughout the nation’s history to, for example, establish a single national Election Day and mandate single-member congressional districts.
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Constitutional Amendments

- The **14th Amendment** extends citizenship to all natural born or naturalized Americans regardless of race and guaranteed that rights of citizenship, like voting, cannot be restricted by the states.
- The **15th Amendment** prohibits restricting the right to vote due to race.
- The **17th Amendment** requires states to elect senators by popular vote.
- The **19th Amendment** extends voting rights to all women.
- The **26th Amendment** extends the right to vote to everyone 18 years of age and older.
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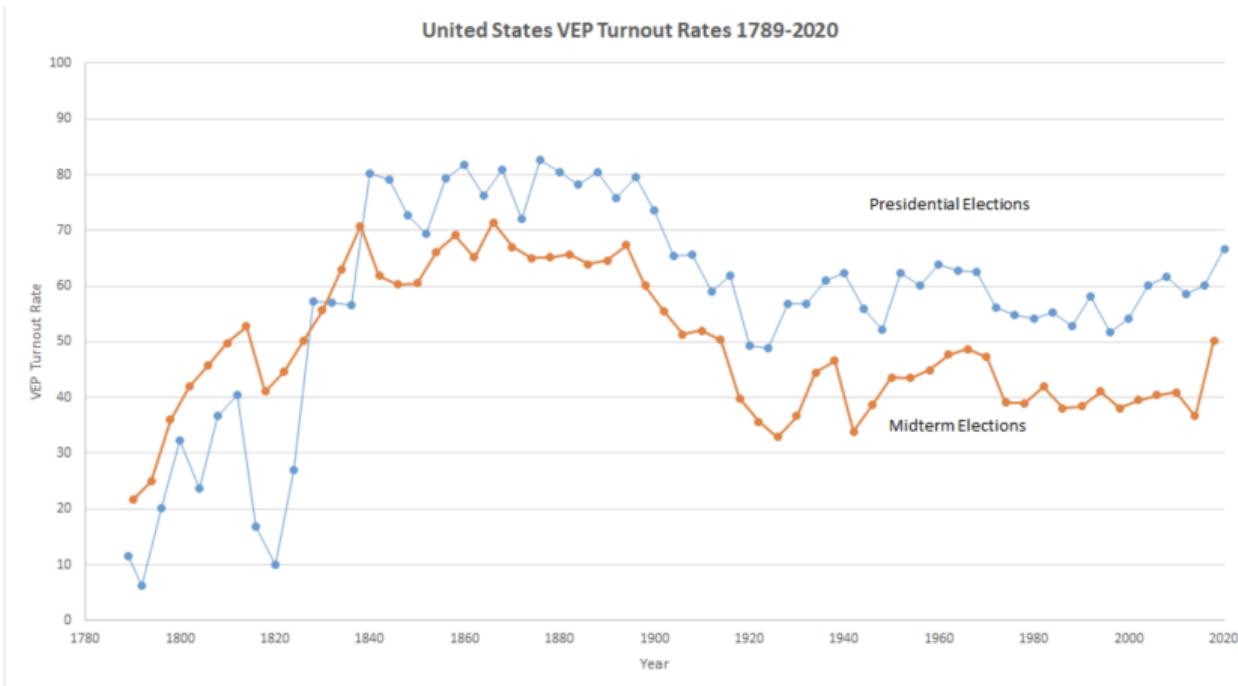
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Should we have this amendment?

"Every citizen of the United States, who is of legal voting age, shall have the fundamental right to vote in any public election held in the jurisdiction in which the citizen resides."

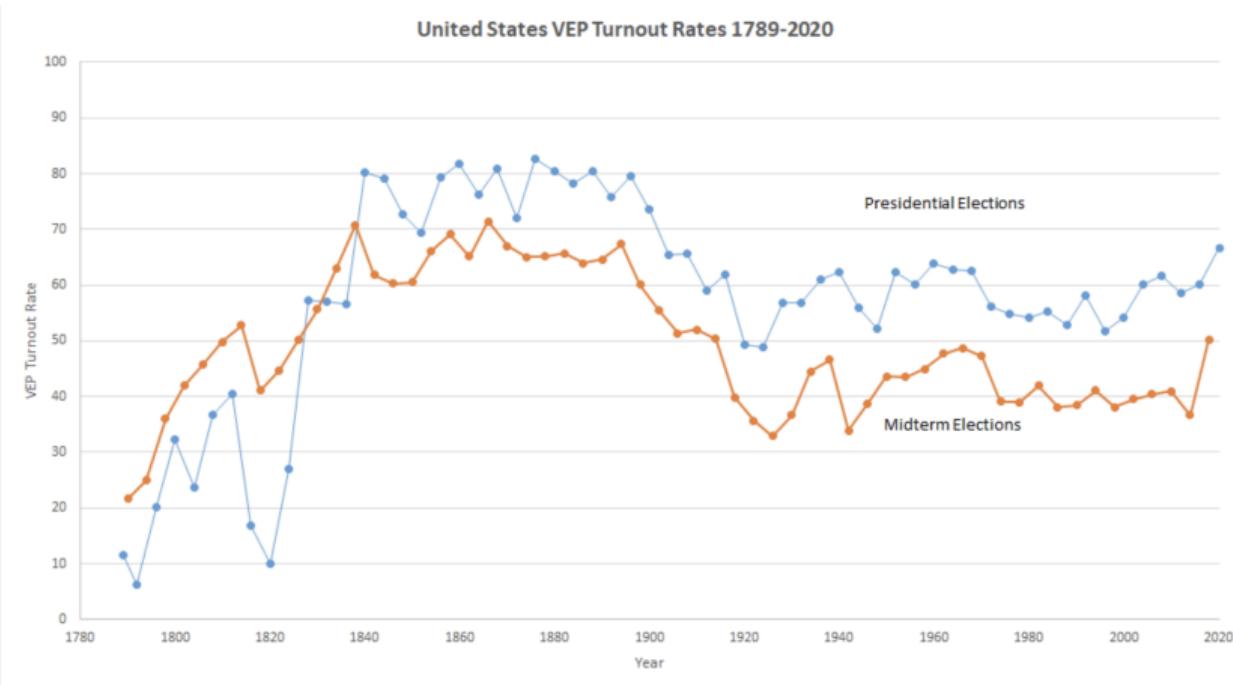
Voting On the decline?

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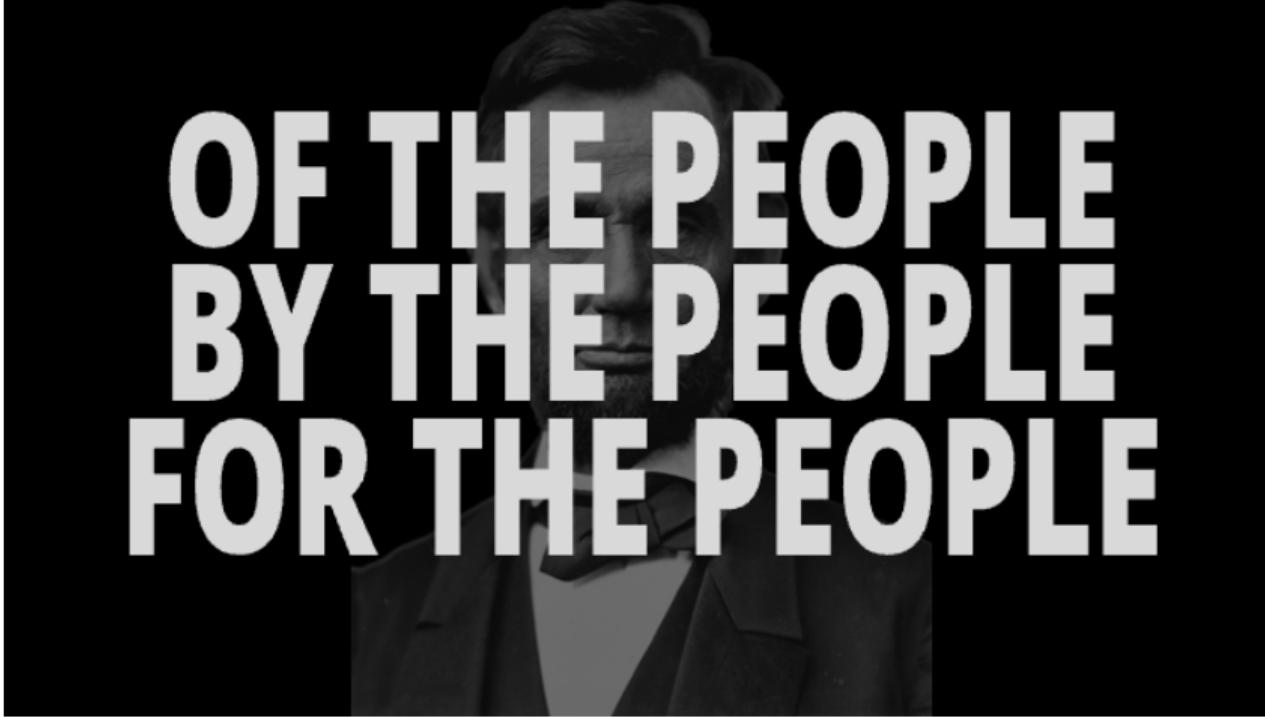
Trust in Government

% who say they trust the government to do what is right just about always/most of the time



<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2022/06/06/public-trust-in-government-1958-2022/>

Of the people, By the people, For the people



OF THE PEOPLE
BY THE PEOPLE
FOR THE PEOPLE

- Gettysburg Address, November 19, 1863

- To be of the people, it must be made up of the people.
- i.e., a representative form a government
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- Government should do the things that people want
- Government should be responsive to the people when they change their minds

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Universal Suffrage

- It is often popularly conceptualized that voting rights have steadily increased over time, so that we now have universal (or near) suffrage.

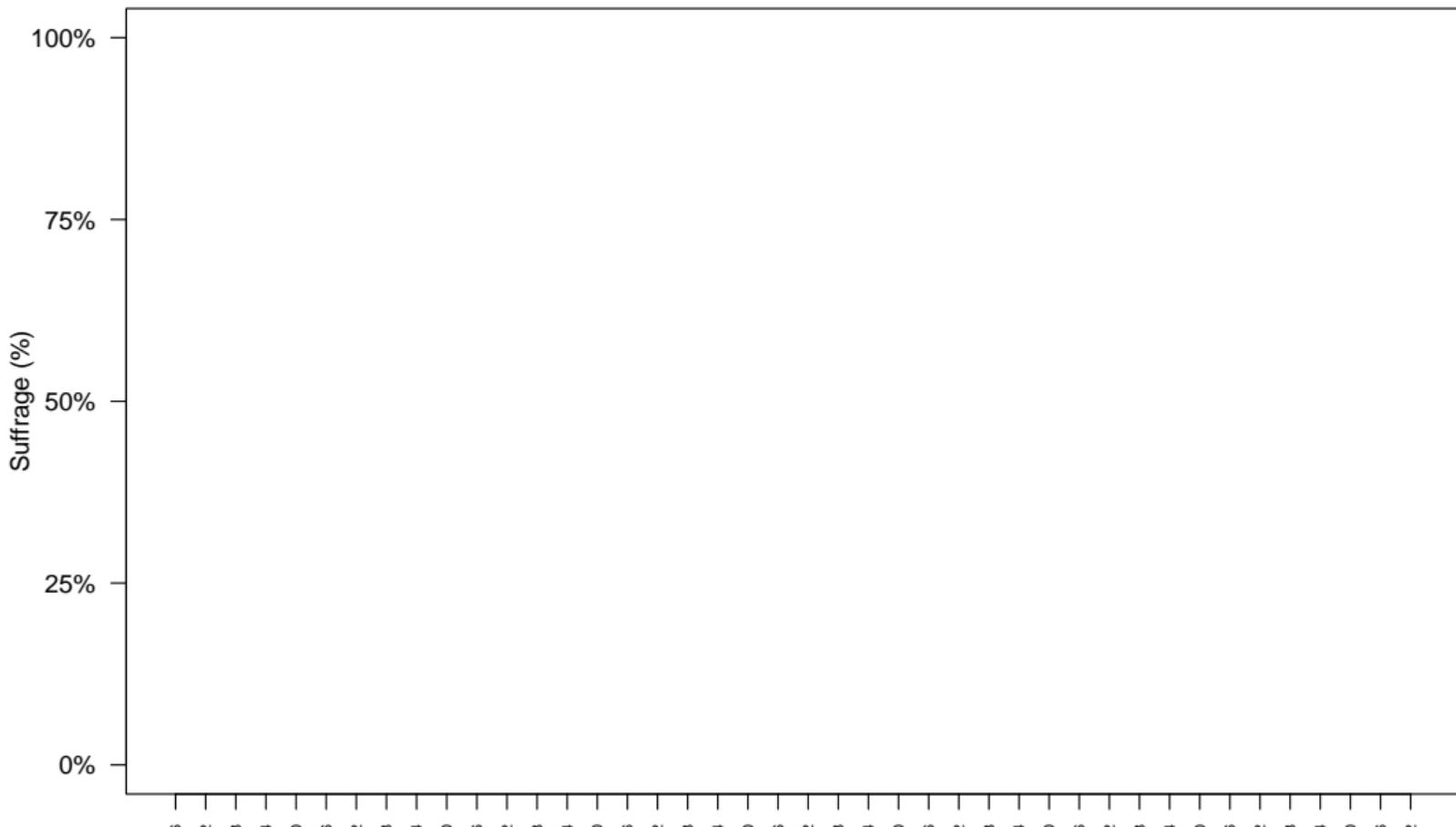
Tocqueville's rule of social behavior

- “rule of social behavior”
- Tocqueville believed that once some voting qualifications were lifted, it would lead to abolishing all qualifications.

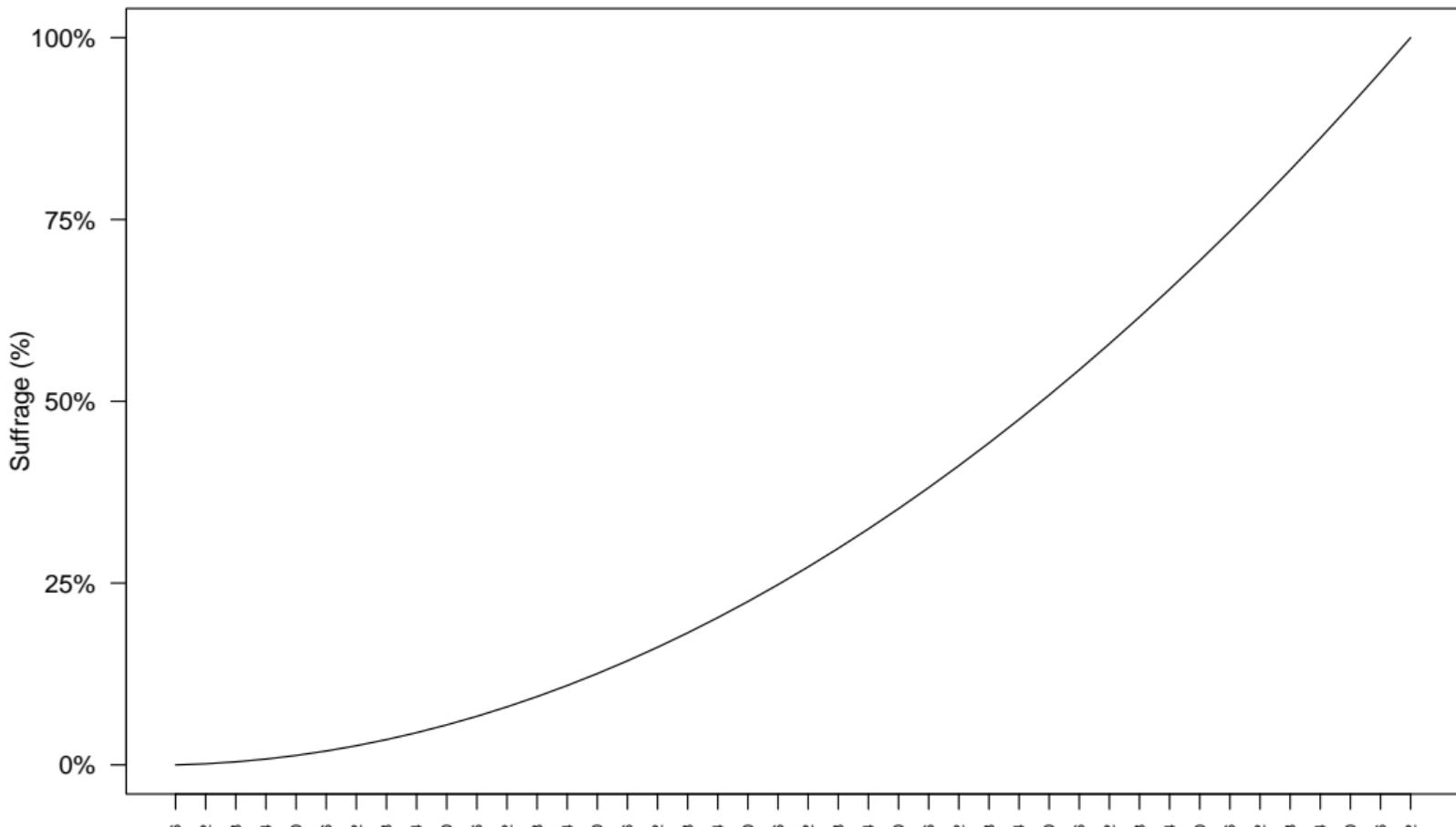
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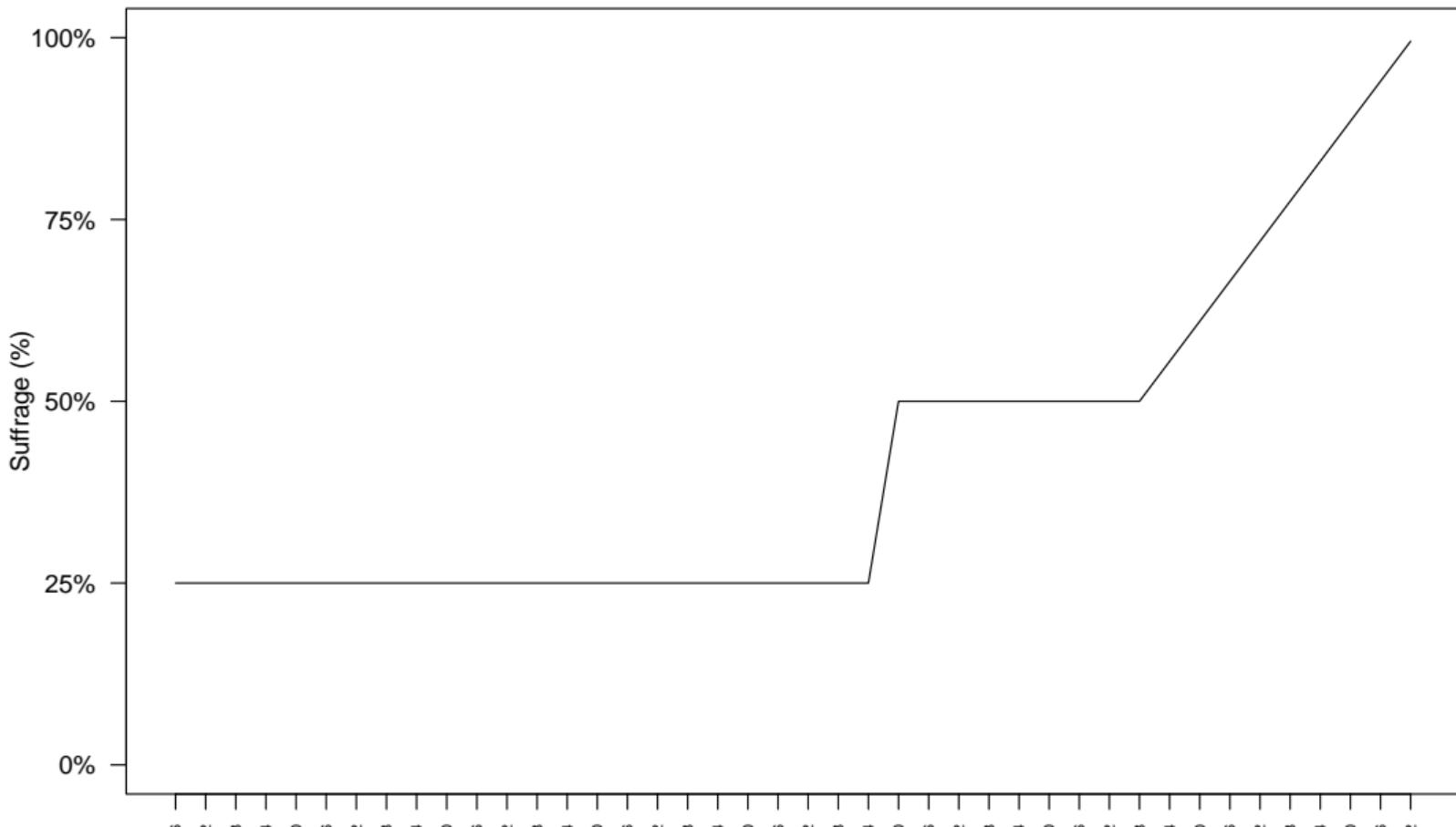
What do you imagine the trajectory of voting rights to be?



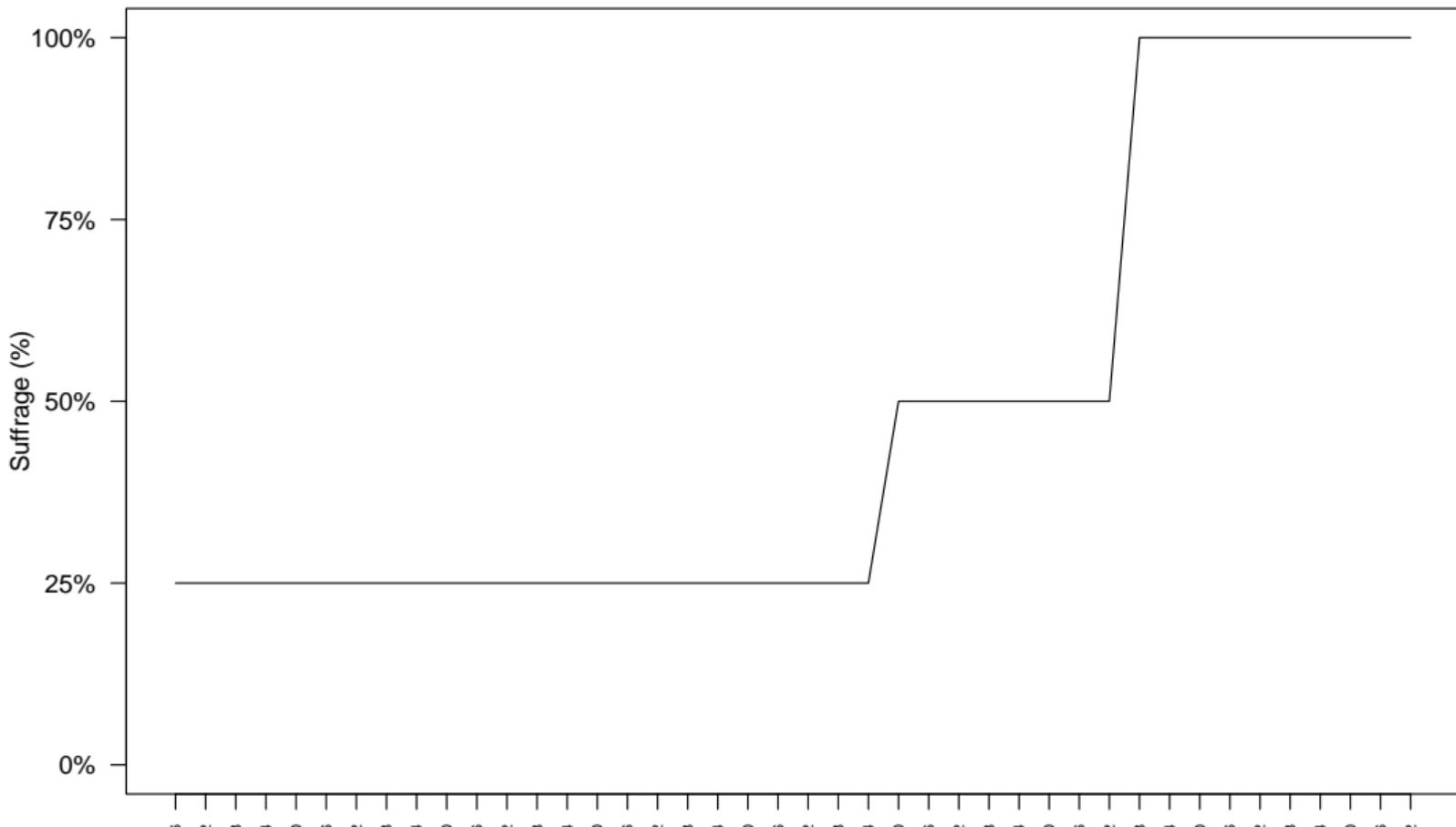
Exponential?



Stepped and gradual?



Stepped and Steady?



Colonial “democracy”



- At its birth, the United States was not a *democratic* nation—far from it
 - Democracy was a pejorative – “mob rule”, “government by the unfit”, “disorder”
- But, between the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the constitutional convention, states had started writing their own suffrage laws
- The consequences of these laws would have effects that last through even today

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Received Legacy



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- Elsewhere, ownership of personal property or payment of taxes could substitute for real estate

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Property Requirements

- Both in England and in the colonies
 - men who possessed property (especially “real property,” i.e., land and buildings) had a unique *“stake in society”*
 - property owners alone possessed sufficient *independence* to warrant their having a voice in governance
- The ballot was not to be entrusted to those who were economically dependent because they could too easily be controlled or manipulated by others

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Franklin on Voting Rights

Today a man owns a jackass worth fifty dollars and he is entitled to vote; but before the next election the jackass dies. The man in the meantime has become more experienced, his knowledge of the principles of government, and his acquaintance with mankind, are more extensive, and he is therefore better qualified to make a proper selection of rulers—but the jackass is dead and the man cannot vote. Now gentlemen, pray inform me, in whom is the right of suffrage? In the man or in the jackass? -Benjamin Franklin

Residency Requirements

- Many colonies instituted residency requirements to exclude transients who presumably lacked the requisite stake in the colony's affairs
 - some made citizenship, of England or the province, a prerequisite for voting
 - several colonies formally barred all servants from the polls, while others expressly excluded paupers (*dependents*)

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Social membership limitations

- In the eighteenth century, Catholics were disfranchised in **five** states and Jews in **four** states
- *Native Americans, free blacks, and non-naturalized aliens* could vote in some places and not in others
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- **Question:** How do voters in cities differ from those in non-urban contexts in the 18th century?

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 - Unclear how many people could and did vote
- There certainly were communities, particularly newly settled communities where land was inexpensive, in which 70 or 80 percent of all white men were enfranchised
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- The issue of suffrage was always near the center of that debate:
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Franchise and Suffrage

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- (Intercessory prayer is a form of prayer where one person prays on behalf of another person or a group)
- Even Pennsylvanian James Wilson, a signer of both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, and one of the more democratic of the founding fathers, described suffrage as a “darling privilege of free men” that could and should be “extended as far as considerations of safety and order will permit.”

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James Wilson on Suffrage

- “*A momentous question now occurs—who shall be entitled to suffrage? This darling privilege of freemen should certainly be extended as far as considerations of safety and order will possibly admit. The correct theory and the true principles of liberty require, that every citizen, whose circumstances do not render him necessarily dependent on the will of another, should possess a vote in electing those, by whose conduct his property, his reputation, his liberty, and his life, may be all most materially affected.*”

- “*In the constitution of Pennsylvania, the great principle, which animates and governs this subject, is secured by an explicit declaration, that ‘elections shall be free and equal.’ This is enumerated among the great points, which are “excepted out of the general powers of government, and shall for ever remain inviolate.’ The practical operation of this great and inviolable principle is thus specified and directed: ‘In elections by the citizens, every **freeman** of the **age of twenty one** years, having **resided in the state two years** next before the election, and within that time **paid a state or county tax**, which shall have been **assessed at least six months** before the election, shall enjoy the rights of an elector.”*”

Earning the privilege

- Only men with property, preferably *real** property, were deemed to be sufficiently attached to the community and sufficiently affected by its laws to have earned the privilege of voting
 - The propertyless, if enfranchised, would constitute a menace to the maintenance of a well-ordered community
- The interests of the propertyless, like those of women and children, could be represented effectively by wise, fair-minded, wealthy white men. (Virtual Representation)

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Natural Rights of [wo]men

**WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS
TO BE SELF-EVIDENT,
THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED
EQUAL**

Natural Right alternative

- Opposing these traditional views were a series of persuasive and somewhat innovative arguments advocating for the expansion of voting rights, especially to men without property ownership.
- The most broadly framed of these arguments was simple: voting was a “*natural right*” that the state **could not suspend** except in the most extreme circumstances.
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The Pandora's box

- If voting was a natural right, then everyone should possess it
- Did this mean that not just every man (including poor men) should vote, but women as well?
 - * What about African Americans—and recently arrived aliens?
 - * Or children?
- If there was a “right” to suffrage, was it not wrong or immoral to deprive any group or individual of that right?
- How could one justify denying anyone his or her natural—or socially acknowledged— rights?

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NO TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION



Avoiding Pandora's Box

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The final cluster of arguments for expanding the franchise was rather different: extending the right to vote to everyone who was serving, or had served, in the army or the militia

What about fighters?

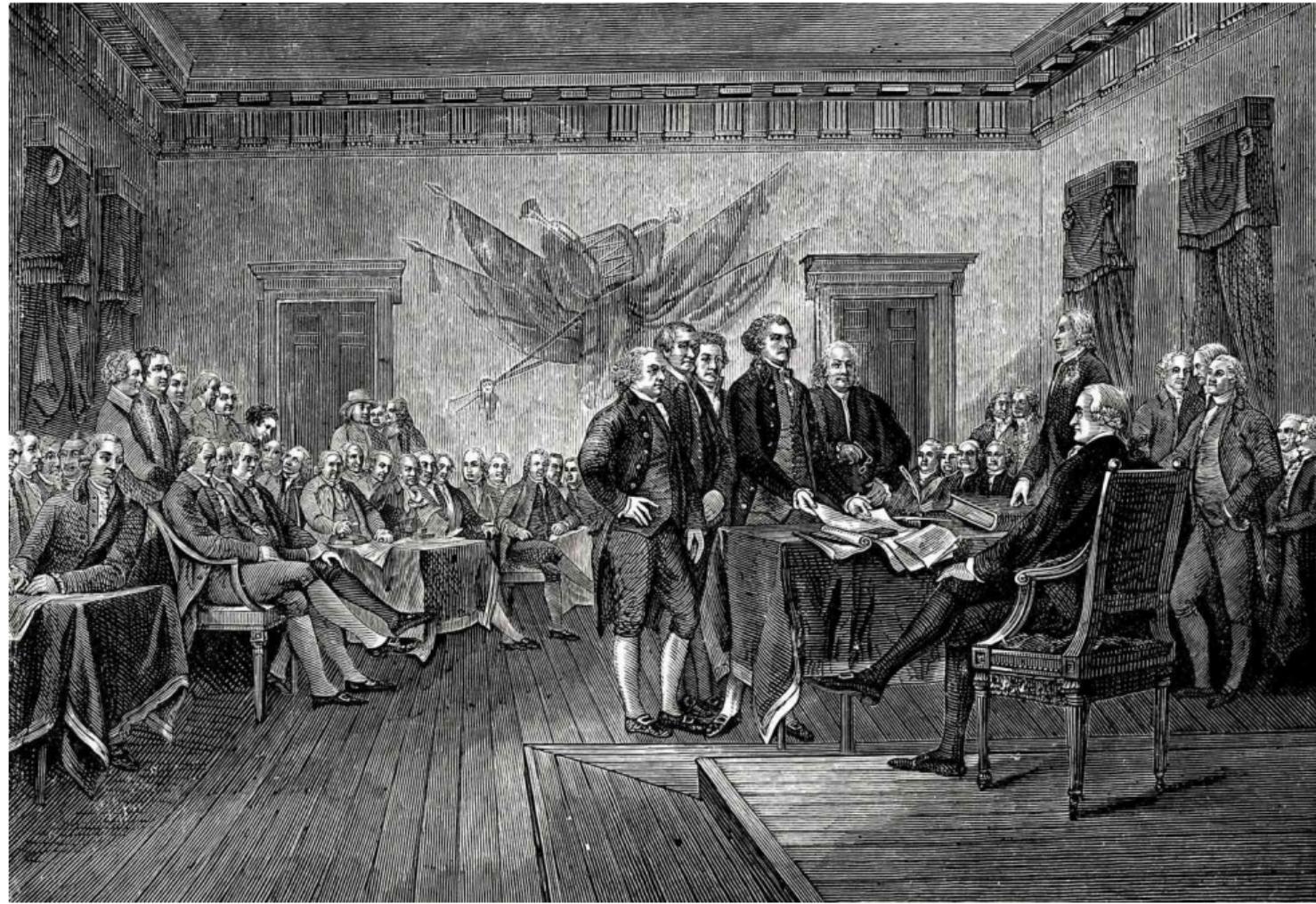
- “*Every man in the country who manifests a disposition to venture his all for the defense of its liberty, should have a voice in its council.*”
 - Philadelphia pamphleteer, probably Thomas Young

Consent to be governed

- Arguments for and against a more democratic suffrage were voiced in newspapers, broadsides, provincial assemblies, town meetings, gatherings of militiamen, and constitutional conventions, as well as taverns, inns, city streets, and private homes
- The very act of declaring independence from Britain compelled the residents of each colony to form a new government, and the process of forming new governments inescapably brought the issue of suffrage to the fore **For a government to be legitimate, who must consent to its design and structure?**

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Small Electorate at founding

- Only a small fraction of the population cast ballots in the elections that elevated George Washington and John Adams to the office of the presidency
 - George Washington received one vote from each elector (that cast a ballot). The New York legislature failed to appoint its allotted 8 Electors in time. Two Electors from Maryland did not vote. One Elector from Virginia did not vote and one Elector was not chosen because an election district failed to submit returns.
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Pennsylvania democracy

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- The militiamen succeeded in electing a constitutional convention dominated not by the traditional elites but by *artisans*, *lesser merchants*, and *farmers*.
- That convention, in the fall of 1776, produced the **most democratic constitution** in the thirteen original states:

The new state constitution established a unicameral legislature, elected annually by all adult males. It also provided for a state executive, a state judiciary, and a state militia. The new constitution was based on the principles of the Declaration of Independence, and it prohibited slavery and involuntary servitude. The new constitution was adopted on December 12, 1776, and it became effective on January 1, 1777.

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- Vermont went a step further than PA, however, eliminating not only property requirements but taxpaying qualifications as well.
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Wrap up on Colonial America

Suffrage in state constitutions

- Suffrage was defined as a constitutional issue:
 - all the early state constitutions (except that of Delaware) treated the right to vote as a matter of fundamental —and thus constitutional— law, rather than statute law.
- Implicit in this treatment was the notion that suffrage requirements ought to be durable and difficult to change; legislatures and governors alone were not entrusted with the power to tamper with the right to vote.
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Revolutionary Period

- The revolutionary period witnessed a broad range of reactions to economic restrictions on the franchise.
- Although often overshadowed by other issues (*such as taxation or the structure of future legislatures*), the breadth of the franchise mattered greatly to citizens of the thirteen original ex-colonies and the new state of Vermont.
- In every state, there was pressure for suffrage reform, as well as conservative opposition to a less class-biased, more economically inclusive franchise.
- The outcomes of these conflicts followed *no* clear regional pattern; they seem instead to have been shaped largely by the strength of local elites and by the political processes that unfolded in each state. **The overall result was a mixed bag of substantial changes, cosmetic alterations, and preservation of the status quo**

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The New Nation

The State and the Nation

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- But the *Constitution of the United States* forged a link between state suffrage rules and the right to vote in national elections:
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- Presidents were to be chosen through a complex mechanism that later came to be known as the "*Electoral College*"
- "*Electors*" in each state were to meet and cast ballots for two persons, and those ballots were to be transmitted to Congress, where they would be opened and counted: the person receiving the largest number of votes would be elected president and the runner-up would become vice president

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Democracy Ascendant

Early US Population

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<4 mil

10 mil

20 mil

1790

1820

1850

25 Mil
20 Mil
15 Mil
10 Mil
5 Mil
0 Mil

1790 1796 1802 1808 1814 1820 1826 1832 1838 1844 1850

State expansion of franchise

- States were compelled to substantially revise their governance structures post-Revolution.
- From 1790 to 1850s, all 31 states by 1855 convened at least one constitutional convention, with some holding multiple.
- Key motivators for these conventions included debates over political authority, citizen rights, and power distribution, specifically concerning voting rights and state legislative representation.
- A new era began with a fresh generation of political leaders, bringing novel ideas and facing new challenges.

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- States were compelled to substantially revise their governance structures post-Revolution.
- From 1790 to 1850s, all 31 states by 1855 convened at least one constitutional convention, with some holding multiple.
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Key Legal Developments in Election Administration

- **Administrative Developments:** Transformation of broad legal principles into detailed electoral rules.
- **Defining Residency:** States clarified criteria for residency or inhabitant status for voter eligibility.
- **Voter Registration Processes:**

• Online voter registration
• Same-day voter registration
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Evolution of Property Requirements in Suffrage

- **Post-Revolution Shift (Post-1790):** Gradual elimination of property qualifications for suffrage, a trend initiated during the revolution.
- **New States' Stance:**
 - * No new state entering the Union post-1790 imposed mandatory property requirements in their original constitutions.
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- **Inconsistency with Republican Ideals:**
 - The shift away from property requirements was seen as a contradiction to the core principles of republicanism, which emphasized equality and the right to participate in government.
- **Residual Requirements (By 1850s):**
 - By the mid-19th century, most states had removed property requirements for men, but some residual requirements remained, particularly for women and African Americans.

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Source: Wikipedia

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Rise of Taxpayer Requirements

- **Beyond Property Requirements:**

- Demise of property requirements did not equate to the removal of all economic qualifications for voting.

- **Taxpaying Requirements (1790 Onwards):**

From 1790 onwards, the requirement to pay taxes became a key qualification for voting. This shift was driven by the need to ensure that only those who could demonstrate a stake in the political process were allowed to participate. The introduction of taxpaying requirements was part of a broader movement towards more inclusive forms of democracy, reflecting changing social and economic realities.

- **Conceptual Distinction and Continuity:**

The shift from property requirements to taxpaying requirements represents both a conceptual distinction and a continuity in the evolution of voter qualifications. Conceptually, it marks a move away from a focus on ownership of land or property to a focus on participation in the economic system through taxation. Continuously, it reflects the ongoing process of adapting democratic principles to new societal contexts, ensuring that political power remains accessible to a broad range of citizens.

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- **Taxpaying Requirements (1790 Onwards):**

- Prevalent in several states since 1790.
 - Adopted by others soon following property qualifications.
 - Aimed at excluding the poor from voting.

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- **Taxpaying Requirements (1790 Onwards):**

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- New western states, such as Ohio and Louisiana, mandated voter taxpayer status.

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The shift from property requirements to taxpaying requirements represented a significant conceptual leap in voter qualification standards.

It reflected a broader societal shift towards valuing individual economic contribution over traditional property ownership.

This transition paved the way for more widespread suffrage and played a crucial role in the evolution of American democracy.

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Eroding Economic Barriers

- **Modification of Property Qualifications (1808-1811):**
 - 1808: Congress altered property qualifications in the Northwest Ordinance.
 - 1811: Enfranchisement of all *free white males* who paid taxes and resided in the territory.
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 - 1830: Missouri Compromise (prohibited new states from having slaves)
 - 1850: Fugitive Slave Act (ensured slaves would be returned to their owners)
- **Opposition to Taxpaying Provisions:**
 - 1850: Kansas-Nebraska Act (allowed voters to decide whether to allow slavery)
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 - 1850: Compromises of 1850 (including the Fugitive Slave Act)

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 - The Missouri Compromise (1820) prohibited new slave states from establishing taxpaying requirements.
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Source: "Economic Barriers to Citizenship in the United States," by James W. Kettman, Jr., in *American Political History*, 1992, pp. 111-112.

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Convergence of State and Local Eligibility Requirements

- **Alignment of State and Municipal Laws (1790-1850s):**
 - State and municipal suffrage laws became nearly identical across most regions.
- **Shift in Municipal Charter Perception:**
 - Municipal charters were seen as state-created documents, subject to state control.
- **State Supremacy Concept:**
 - States could overrule local ordinances.
- **Standardization of Suffrage Regulations:**
 - National standards were established through state legislation.

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Source: www.suffrageweb.net/section/1790-1850s

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Residency Requirements

- **Adjustments Across States:**

- Post-elimination of property qualifications, states extensively modified their residency rules.

- **Reduced Residency Requirements:**

Some states have reduced the length of time required for residency, such as Florida's requirement of 12 months versus 24 months previously.

Other states have eliminated the requirement entirely, such as California.

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 - Post-elimination of property qualifications, states extensively modified their residency rules.
- **Reduced Residency Requirements:**
 - States like Delaware, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Indiana, and Michigan shortened their residency requirements.
 - This change enfranchised a significant number of previously ineligible migrants.

Immigrant Non-Citizen Voting

- **Extension to Immigrants:**
 - A dramatic, albeit non-unidirectional, historical trend was granting voting rights to immigrants.
- **Ambiguous Citizen-Alien Distinction (End of 18th Century):**
 - The distinction between citizens and aliens was often ambiguous and fluid.
- **Federal Policy in Northwest Territories:**

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 - The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 established a framework for the admission of new states, including provisions for the admission of territories and the granting of voting rights.

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- **Opposition Arguments:**

Opponents argued that aliens did not have a right to vote because they were not citizens and did not have a stake in the country's political process. They also claimed that giving aliens the right to vote would undermine the principles of democracy by allowing non-citizens to influence the political decisions of the United States.

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Citizenship and Naturalization

- **Federal Naturalization Policies:**
 - Changes in naturalization procedures until 1802.
 - 1802 Law: Foreign-born white males could become citizens after five years of residency and three years post declaration of intent.
- **Constitutional Revisions in States:**
- **Trend in New States (1800-1840):**
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- **Constitutional Revisions in States:**

After the Civil War, many states revised their constitutions to grant citizenship to African Americans. This was done through state constitutional conventions or by amending existing state constitutions.

- **Trend in New States (1800-1840):**

Between 1800 and 1840, 17 new states joined the Union. Most of these states had strict requirements for naturalization, often requiring proof of U.S. residence for several years before granting citizenship.

- **Jacksonian Era Shift (Post-1828):**

Following the election of Andrew Jackson in 1828, there was a shift in federal naturalization policies. The Naturalization Act of 1855 simplified the process for foreign-born white males, making it easier for them to become citizens.

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- **Trend in New States (1800-1840):**

• New states tended to have more lenient naturalization requirements than existing states.

- **Jacksonian Era Shift (Post-1828):**

• Jacksonian era saw a shift towards more stringent naturalization requirements.

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Source: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services: A Brief History* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2003), 10.

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- **Influence of Second-Party System:**

- Dynamics of partisan politics under the second-party system intensified the push for broader suffrage.

- **Democratic Mantle and Accusations:**

Democrats claimed the mantle of progressivism.

Accusations of corruption were leveled at the Republicans.

- **Campaigns Against Taxpaying Provisions:**

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Sources of Expansion of the Franchise

- Key factors contributing to the expansion varied by state.

Broadening of the Suffrage

- **Convergence of Factors (first half of the 1800s):**

- Significant shifts in social structure and composition.
- Emergence or growth of situations where expanding the franchise benefited the franchised's material interests.
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Changing Social Statuses

- **Rising Ineligibility Under Property Requirements:**
 - Growth in the number of adult males unable to meet property requirements in states with such mandates.
- **Urban Population Growth:**
 - Shift from rural to urban areas and their impact on social status.
- **Discrepancy in Social and Political Participation:**
 - Analysis of participation levels and its implications.

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 - Discrepancy between social status and political participation, leading to a disconnect between the two.

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- **Role of the Disfranchised:**

- Unable to initiate change independently.

- **Support from the Enfranchised:**

- Enfranchised individuals and groups provide support, resources, and political leverage to the disenfranchised.

- **Motivations for Sharing Political Power:**

- Motivations include a desire for social justice, equality, and democracy, as well as strategic alliances and power sharing.

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War, What is it Good For?

- **Post-Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Impacts:**

- Middle-class citizens supported extending suffrage to lower classes, believing it would:
 - * Enhance their own security
 - * Ensure continued service in the army and militia, protecting their way of life.

- Lessons from the War of 1812:

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- **Lessons from the War of 1812:**
 - The war demonstrated the need for a more professional and better equipped military.
 - It highlighted the importance of national defense and preparedness.
- **Specific Context in the South:**
 - The South's dependence on agriculture and its vulnerability to naval blockade.
 - The role of the Southern militia in defending against invasions.

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- **Specific Context in the South:**
 - The Southern states had a long history of maintaining a standing army, which contributed to their ability to defend themselves during the Civil War.

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- Inhabitants of emerging states from sparsely populated territories favored broadening the franchise.

- **Motivations Behind Broad Franchise:**

- Population growth and political representation

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Political Competition

- **Link Between Suffrage Reform and Political Parties:**
 - Political parties and electoral competition significantly influenced suffrage expansion.
 - Both *party loyalty* and *party identification* became prominent elements of public life
- **Electoral Strategy and Voter Enfranchisement:**
- Strategic Expansion of the Franchise:
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- **Electoral Strategy and Voter Enfranchisement:**
 - Political parties used various strategies to expand voter turnout and maintain their support base.
 - These strategies included offering incentives to voters, such as free meals or transportation, to encourage participation.
 - Political parties also focused on identifying and targeting specific demographic groups to increase their voter base.
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(Summary) Sources of Expansion of the Franchise

- Progress Towards Universal White Male Suffrage (Mid-19th Century):
 - Significant strides made in expanding voting rights.
- Key Drivers of Suffrage Expansion:
 - Industrialization and urbanization
 - Political parties and interest groups
 - Social movements (e.g., Abolitionists, Women's suffrage)
 - Technological advancements
 - International influences and comparative politics
- Role of Government Entities:
 - National governments
 - State governments
 - Local governments
- Impact on Political Participation:
 - Increased voter turnout
 - Diversification of political representation
 - Strengthening of democratic institutions

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The expansion of the franchise led to increased political participation among white men. It also paved the way for future movements for women's suffrage and other marginalized groups.

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Backsliding and Sideslipping

- The dominant thrust of legal change was toward increasing the number of voters, laws also were passed that **tightened voting requirements**.
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- Others were designed after the abolition of property and taxpaying requirements.
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 - this was interpreted locally to mean that property-owning women could vote
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- It rose steadily from 1790 to 1850
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Pennsylvania Had among the most liberal constitution during the revolutionary era, added the word “white” to its constitutional requirements in 1838. This happened two years after its supreme court had ruled that blacks could not vote because they were not “freemen.”

- The federal government prohibited Blacks from voting in the territories it controlled;
 - in 1857, the Supreme Court ruled that Blacks, free or slave, could not be citizens of the United States
- By 1855, only five states (Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and Rhode Island) did *not* discriminate against African Americans,

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Growing Racism

- While abolitionist sentiment was growing, so too were sharply antagonistic, fearful, and hostile attitudes toward Blacks, especially in the North
- Republican factions were hostile to Black voting between 1810 and 1820, in part because they feared (correctly) that Blacks would constitute a Federalist voting bloc,
 - * politically active Blacks throughout the North tended to support the Federalists because of their opposition to slavery
- In later decades, Democratic opposition to African-American suffrage was reinforced by the (equally correct) conviction that most Blacks would vote for Whigs.

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- In the North in 1850, Blacks constituted more than 2 percent of the population in only one state, New Jersey
- Many areas that witnessed heated debates on the subject (e.g., Ohio and Indiana) had populations that were less than 1 percent black.
- The Black vote was decisive in a controversial county election in Pennsylvania in the 1830s, a fact that contributed to the adoption of a racial exclusion in the 1838 constitution.
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- The ability of Native Americans to participate in politics was narrowed between 1790 and the 1850s
- Their legal status began to be clarified—*in a negative direction*.
- Indian tribes were “*domestic, dependent nations*,” according to Chief Justice Marshall, and thus individual Indians, living with their tribes, were aliens, even if born in the United States.
- Twenty years later, the Dred Scott decision affirmed this interpretation, while suggesting a path toward citizenship: Indians (unlike Blacks) could, if they left their tribes and settled among whites, “be entitled to all the rights and privileges which would belong to an immigrant from any other foreign people.”

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- Congress did attempt to naturalize some tribes, usually in return for a tribal agreement to accept a limited allotment of land
- Congressional actions affected only a small number of Native Americans.
- Several states formally moved to disfranchise all Indians, or Indians “not taxed,” or members of specific tribes, while others expressly limited suffrage to citizens or to “civilized” Indians who were “not a member of any tribe.”
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Other classes of people

- Despite the abolition of property requirements, most Americans did not believe that all adult white males were entitled to full membership in the political community
- Pauper exclusions were not antiquated carryovers of colonial precedents; they were generally *new constitutional provisions, often adopted at the same conventions that abolished property or taxpaying requirements*
- The exclusion of paupers constituted a direct rejection of claims that suffrage was a right that ought to be universal among white males
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- The right to vote also was withheld from another group of men who violated prevailing social norms, those who had committed crimes, particularly felonies or so-called infamous crimes
- Disfranchisement for such crimes had a long history in English, European, and even Roman law, and it was hardly surprising that the principle of attaching civil disabilities to the commission of crimes appeared in American law as well
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Residency Requirements

- In several states, the franchise also was restricted by lengthening state or local residency requirements
 - in some states, the reverse was true
- In the absence of property or taxpaying qualifications, it seemed sensible to restrict the franchise to those who were familiar with local conditions and likely to have a stake in the outcome of elections.
- The average requirement tended to be one year in the state and three or six months in an individual township or county

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"The least we can require is this very simple manifestation of intelligence."

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- Although the image of an educated electorate clearly had its attractions, these proposals were rapidly rebutted
 - * there were many fine, upstanding citizens who happened to be illiterate or barely literate but were perfectly capable of responsibly exercising the franchise
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Working Class and Socialism

- From the earliest periods, class played a relatively small role in American social and politics life.
- Enfranchisement of the American working class was uniquely early and quite uncontested
 - * American workers gained universal suffrage (or at least universal white male suffrage) early in the process of industrialization and thus never were obliged to organize collectively to fight for the franchise.
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Absence of class as a political wedge

- The subsequent evolution of American politics and American labor had a noticeable *absence of a strong socialist movement* **To the extent that the working class was indeed enfranchised during the antebellum era (and one should not ignore that women, free blacks, and recent immigrants constituted a large portion of the working class), such enfranchisement was largely an unintended consequence of the changes in suffrage laws**

Industrial Revolution and Suffrage

- The broadening of the franchise in antebellum America transpired before the industrial revolution had proceeded very far and before its social consequences were clearly or widely visible
- There were relatively few manufacturing workers in the northern states when property qualifications were abolished or new constitutions without property restrictions were adopted
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- The early extension of voting rights occurred because the rights and power of the working class were not at issue when suffrage reforms were adopted.
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Trends against suffrage

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- The concern about immigrant voters in the Northeast was mounting at precisely the same time that many Midwestern states were extending the franchise to non-declarant aliens.
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Mid-Nineteenth Century to the Twentieth Century

- After 1850, conflict over the right to vote heightened dramatically
 - There was a shift in temper after mid-century, marked by a heightened resolve on the part of those seeking to contract the right to vote or limit its further expansion
 - Freedmen were enfranchised during Reconstruction because Republicans in Congress came to believe that freedom would be illusory without political rights
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High Point of Democracy

"the democratic principle... reached its culmination about 1850." > Atlantic Monthly - The high tide of faith in democracy in the United States was reached at mid-century in the 1800s; thereafter it ebbed

- The first targets of the nation's shifting political mood in the 1850s were working-class immigrants, especially those from Ireland
- Although foreshadowed by the public debates of the 1840s, a full-blown *nativist* movement surfaced only during the following decade, precipitated by an extraordinary surge in immigration after 1845
 - * Between 1845 and 1854, nearly three million foreigners arrived, equal to roughly 15 percent of the population in 1845; in 1854 alone, the flow reached a record high of 427,833, a figure that would not be surpassed until the 1870s By the mid-1850s, more than one-fifth of all residents of Boston and New York were Irish-born

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Immigrants, settlers

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- Laws permitting declarant non-citizens to vote after a limited residence period were passed in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, Indiana, Oregon, Kansas, and Washington territory between 1848 and 1859.
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- They were generally poor
 - they crowded into densely populated, urban neighborhoods
 - they were commonly depicted as rowdy rather than "upright, honorable, and industrious"
 - they were often瞧ed down upon
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Trump equivalent (there's always one it seems)



Donald J. Trump

@realDonaldTrump



In addition to winning the Electoral College in a landslide,
I won the popular vote if you deduct the millions of
people who voted illegally

3:30 PM · Nov 27, 2016



133.8K



87.8K people are Tweeting about this

Objections

- Whig and then Republican objections were strengthened by the tendency of many immigrants to drink alcohol and vote Democratic
- Abolitionists came to regard immigrants as a pro-slavery voting bloc that would help to keep the planter aristocracy in power in the South **Political nativism moved to the foreground of the political stage, however, when the Know-Nothings burst onto the scene in 1853–1854**

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Know-Nothings

- The Know-Nothings dominated political life in the Northeast, parts of the Midwest, and even southern states with sizable immigrant populations, such as Louisiana and Maryland
- By 1854, the Know-Nothings had a million members, as well as chapters in all northern states
- The Know-Nothings expressed disdain for the existing party system, opposed the extension of slavery, and endorsed a host of genuinely progressive reforms:

• Prohibition
• Improved public schools
• Free public land

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 - strengthened lien laws for mechanics
 - property rights for married women
 - expansion of public schools

Religious Bigotry

- But, they gave voice to unvarnished ethnic and religious bigotry, denouncing and caricaturing immigrants in general, and Catholics in particular
- To join the “Order of the Star Spangled Banner” (original name for their a secret organization), one had to be:
 - native-born
 - white male adult
 - Protestant – “Christian” members were preferred

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Know-Nothing Political Success

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 - They won gubernatorial elections in nine states and controlled legislative branches in at least a half dozen
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- Most Know-Nothing support came from the eastern half of the state, which had rapidly industrialized and become home to hundreds of thousands of Irish immigrants.
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"The broad and radical democratic doctrine of the natural rights of men shall be applied to all men, without regard to race, or color, or condition. [Suffrage] is not a privilege or a prerogative, but a right . Every man has a right to have a voice in the laws, the magistracies, and the policies that take care of him. That is an inherent right ; it is not a privilege conferred.""

- Henry Ward Beecher, New York's influential Protestant minister

- Most white Americans, however, did not share such views
 - In the South, the prospect of Black enfranchisement not only violated two centuries of structured and deeply rooted racism but also threatened the postwar white goal of regaining political, social, and economic control over the Black population
- There was ongoing hostility in the North as well
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Reconstruction

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- Pres. Johnson offered lenient terms to the southern states so that they could be restored quickly to the Union
- Johnson's program demanded few reforms and virtually guaranteed that political and economic power in the South would remain in the hands of whites, including those who had supported the rebellion
- Alarmed at this prospect and at the resistance of many southern leaders to policies emanating from Washington, the Republican-controlled Congress began to formulate its own program in 1866
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- The moderate majority of Republicans in Congress negotiated the passage of the *Fourteenth Amendment* in June 1866.
- A compromise measure, the amendment was designed to
 - * punish Confederate political leaders (by preventing them from holding office)
 - * to affirm the South's responsibility for a share of the national debt,
 - * to provide for the reconstruction of the Southern states, and
 - * to grant African Americans citizenship and equal protection under the law.

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XIV Amendment

Fourteenth Amendment:

- Section 1
- **All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.**

Fourteenth Amendment:

- Section 2
- **Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each State, excluding Indians not taxed. But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of electors for President and Vice President of the United States, Representatives in Congress, the Executive and Judicial officers of a State, or the members of the Legislature thereof, is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such State, being twenty-one years of age, and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens twenty-one years of age in such State.**

Fourteenth Amendment:

- Section 3
- **No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.**

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- Section 4
- **The validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law, including debts incurred for payment of pensions and bounties for services in suppressing insurrection or rebellion, shall not be questioned. But neither the United States nor any State shall assume or pay any debt or obligation incurred in aid of insurrection or rebellion against the United States, or any claim for the loss or emancipation of any slave; but all such debts, obligations and claims shall be held illegal and void.**

Fourteenth Amendment:

- Section 5
- **The Congress shall have power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.**

- By declaring that “all persons born or naturalized in the United States” were “citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside,” the amendment at long last offered a national definition of citizenship and confirmed that Blacks were indeed citizens.
- Since most congressional Republicans ->- whatever their personal beliefs ->- were convinced that northern whites would not support the outright enfranchisement of Blacks, the amendment took an oblique approach
 - * any state that denied the right to vote to a portion of its male citizens would have its representation in Congress (and thus the Electoral College) reduced in proportion to the percentage of citizens excluded

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- The amendment tacitly recognized the *right of individual states to create racial barriers*
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- Black enthusiasm for political participation was so great that freedmen often put down their tools and ceased working when elections or conventions were being held
- By June 1868, seven states, with manhood suffrage, had been readmitted to the Union, and the process was well under way elsewhere.
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- Anti-Black and anti-Republican violence flared up throughout the region, often spearheaded by the rapidly growing Ku Klux Klan
- Republican achievements in the South were accompanied by a succession of electoral defeats in the North
 - * The Democrats gained ground from the Atlantic to the Pacific.
- Interpreted by both parties as the consequence of Republican support for Black suffrage, this electoral swing led the Republicans to seek more moderate ground — in part out of fear that they could lose the 1868 presidential election and thereby bring a premature end to Reconstruction.
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 - * Southern Republicans were wary of increasing Black political rights, particularly in the event that the Democrats returned to power in the South or nationally
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- The “rights” arguments in behalf of any particular suffrage extension opened up a Pandora’s box, because the same arguments could justify anyone’s enfranchisement.
- Enfranchising Blacks on the grounds that voting was a right or natural right carried the implication that all adult male citizens should be enfranchised
- Some argued to be consistent and to set the matter to rest, once and for all, the franchise indeed should be further extended rather than limited
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- Senators from the West were apprehensive that it would enfranchise the Chinese
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 - it was passed easily only in New England, where Blacks already voted, and in the South, where the federal government had already intervened to compel Black enfranchisement
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Amendment XV

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Section 1

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Section 2

The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

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 - The Civil War and Reconstruction invigorated and extended (in some quarters, at least) the democratic convictions that had flourished at mid-century
- The extraordinary circumstances surrounding the war propelled many Americans to support Black suffrage, and as happened repeatedly in American history, contending with the issue of race provoked new thinking about democratic rights in general

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- It is a remarkable fact that the Wilson amendment (or some variant thereof) came so close to passage
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Source: www.ourdocuments.gov/documents/federal-elections-bill

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- All of which took place *without* great protest from the North
 - Although Republican politicians and newspapers routinely criticized the disfranchising laws, scattered efforts to enforce the Fourteenth Amendment by reducing the congressional representation of southern states generated little support
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The Redemption of the North

Elections in the 1870s-80s

- National elections were closely contested
- Control of Congress changed hands frequently
- Presidents were elected by razor-thin margins

Source: www.ourdocuments.gov/documents/election-margins

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- By 1910, there were eight, three of which contained more than a million people
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Immigrants and labor

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 - 25% of the 1917 (WWI) population was immigrant
- The vast majority of these immigrants were propertyless workers rather than settlers.
- The Irish and Germans continued to arrive
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Immigrant electoral behavior

- To many old-stock Americans, the mass of immigrant workers was an unwelcome addition to the electorate
 - immigrants were seen as being:
 - poor
 - uneducated
 - unassimilated
 - radical
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- They purportedly were prone to voting illegally, irresponsibly, and against the interests of their betters
- Charges of corruption and naturalization fraud were repeated endlessly
 - * electoral outcomes were twisted by “naturalization mills” that, with the aid of “professional perjurors and political manipulators,” transformed thousands of immigrants into citizens in the weeks before elections
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Reforms against suffrage

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Source: www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/article/exploring-the-origins-of-partisan-politics/

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- Economic qualifications continued to offer opponents of universal suffrage a direct and potentially efficient means of winnowing out undesirable voters
- The tax requirement had served as an obstacle to poor people's voting and as a drain on the treasuries of both political parties
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- Elections were hotly contested, and white Southerners, seeking to “*redeem*” the region from Republican rule, engaged in both legal and extralegal efforts to limit the political influence of freedmen
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- In its 1888 platform, the Republicans charged “*that the present Administration and the Democratic majority owe their existence to the suppression of the ballot by a criminal nullification of the Constitution and laws of the United States.*”
- After they were victorious in that year’s elections, the Republicans had a chance to do something about it: they had won the presidency and control of both houses of Congress
 - * They proposed the *Federal Elections Bill*
 - * a small number of petitions to federal circuit courts could lead to the appointment of federal supervisors who entrusted with

The bill was never passed, but it did become the model for the *Electoral Count Act of 1887*, which established the process for counting electoral votes.

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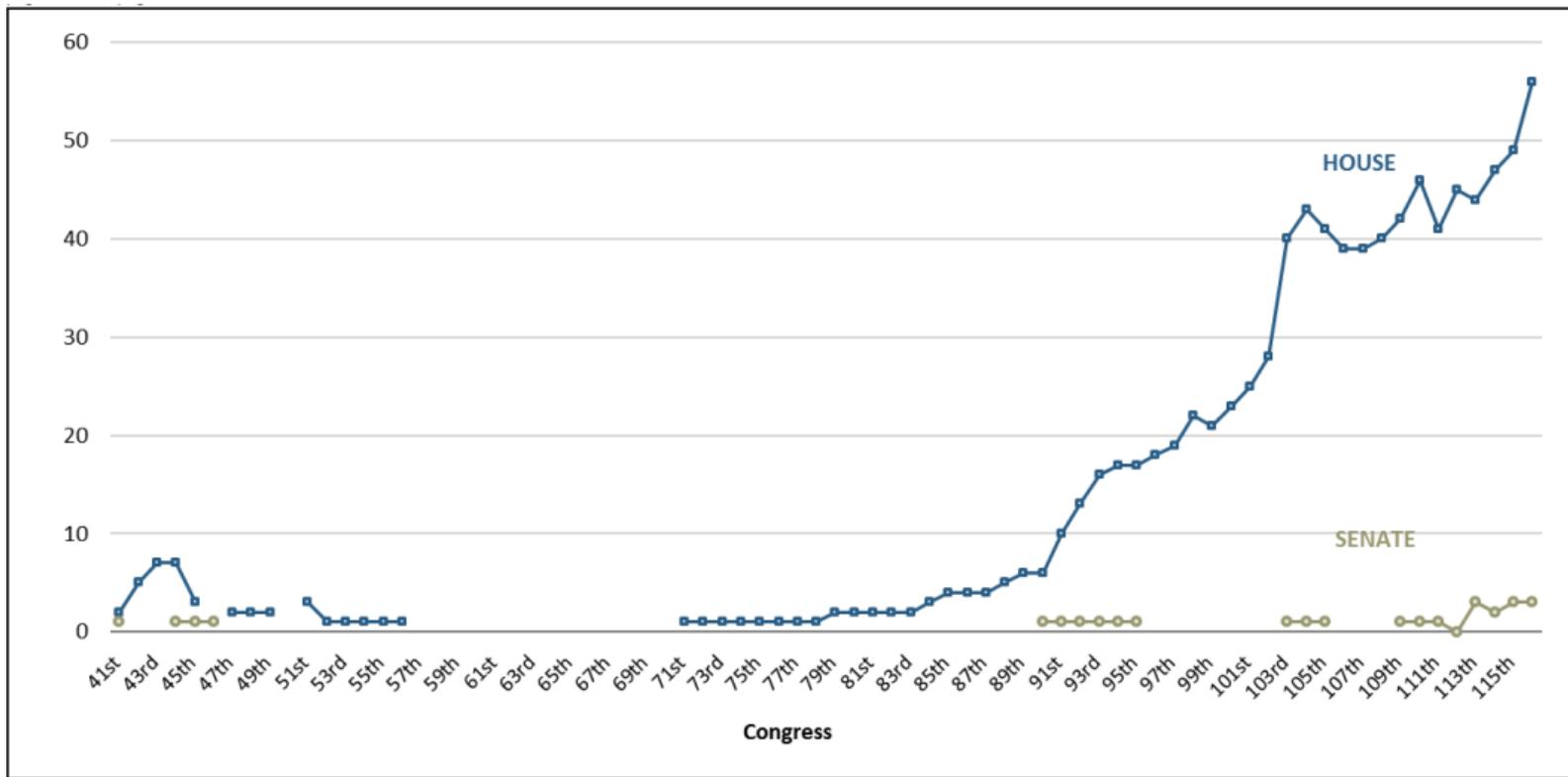
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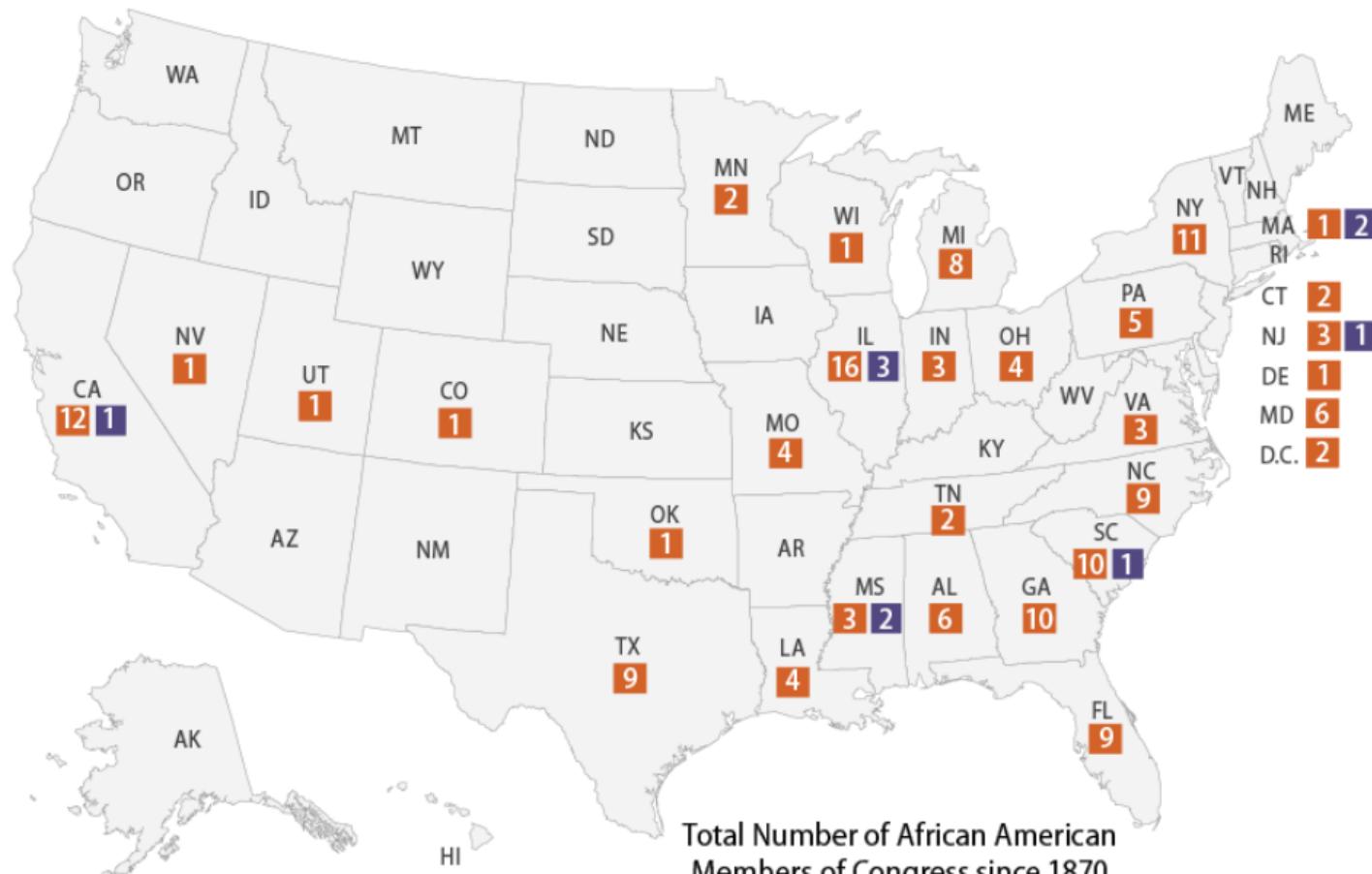
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- These provisions included:
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 - Even small tax requirements were a deterrent to the poor
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Uneven enforcement

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- Discrimination also was built into literacy tests, with their “*understanding*” clauses: officials administering the test could, and did, judge whether a prospective voter’s “*understanding*” was adequate
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 - By 1910, in Georgia, only 4 percent of all Black males were registered to vote.
 - In Mississippi, electoral turnout had exceeded 70 percent in the 1870s and approached 50 percent in the decade after the Redeemers came to power: by the early twentieth century, it had plummeted to 15 percent and remained at that level for decades.
- In the South as a whole, post-Reconstruction turnout levels of 60 to 85 percent fell to 50 percent for whites and single digits for Blacks
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The North stood by

- All of which took place *without* great protest from the North
 - Although Republican politicians and newspapers routinely criticized the disfranchising laws, scattered efforts to enforce the Fourteenth Amendment by reducing the congressional representation of southern states garnered little support
- The Supreme Court upheld the legality of all of the major techniques of disfranchisement
 - The Civil Rights Cases (1883) held that the 14th Amendment did not prohibit states from passing laws that denied African Americans equal protection under the law.
 - Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) held that the "separate but equal" doctrine was constitutional.
- The North tolerated disfranchisement in the South ->- in part from weariness, in part due to the partisan interests of the Democratic Party, and in part because Northerners too had been losing faith in democracy

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The Redemption of the North

Elections in the 1870s-80s

- National elections were closely contested
- Control of Congress changed hands frequently
- Presidents were elected by razor-thin margins

Source: www.ourdocuments.gov/documents/election-margins

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 - The rapid spread of industrialization and class and interest-group conflict
 - The tariff and the money supply (which affected prices and the availability of credit) were issues in every national election
- Railroad rates and regulation often dominated state political contests
- City dwellers fought over the development and financing of increasingly necessary water, sewer, and transport systems

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↳ Republicans controlled Congress and the White House

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Immigrants and labor

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 - 25% of the 1917 (WWI) population was immigrant
- The vast majority of these immigrants were propertyless workers rather than settlers
- The Irish and Germans continued to arrive
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Immigrant electoral behavior

- To many old-stock Americans, the mass of immigrant workers was an unwelcome addition to the electorate
 - immigrants were seen as being:
 - poor
 - uneducated
 - unassimilated
 - radical
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- States held constitutional conventions that defined or redefined the shape of the electorate and outlined of the electoral process
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Money and the Vote

Economic qualifications

- Economic requirements for voting were not a dead issue after 1850
- Economic qualifications continued to offer opponents of universal suffrage a direct and potentially efficient means of winnowing out undesirable voters
- The tax requirement had served two purposes:
 - It was a way to keep the poor from voting.
 - It was a way to keep African Americans from voting.
- In the North, a poll tax was used by the Republicans to disenfranchise the poor, often immigrants, who more often than not supported Democrats

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- Beginning in the 1890s, the nation witnessed the growth of a significant movement to **restrict immigration altogether**
 - * widespread middle-class anxiety about the impact of the foreign-born on politics, particularly urban politics
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Immigrant Voters

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 - Required naturalized citizens to present their naturalization papers to election officials before registering or voting
 - Although not unreasonable on its face, this requirement, as lawmakers knew, was a significant procedural hurdle for many immigrants, who might easily have lost their papers or been unaware of the requirement
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- These laws were unabashedly aimed at making it more difficult for men and women to become citizens, and by all accounts they succeeded, reducing the proportion of immigrants who could vote
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Asian immigrants

- Intense apprehensions about poor European immigrants may have been, they paled in comparison to American attitudes toward the Chinese and other east Asians
- By the final quarter of the nineteenth century, most Americans (and especially those on the West Coast) wanted not only to keep the Chinese from voting but to halt Chinese immigration and even deport those who were already here
 - * feared because of their willingness to work for low wages
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- The Chinese had never been a significant political presence because they had almost always been treated as nonwhite and therefore ineligible for citizenship
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A knowledge of the language of our laws and the faculty of informing oneself without aid of their provisions, would in itself constitute a test, if rigorously enforced, incompatible with the existence of a proletariat.

– Charles Francis Adams, Jr. “Protection of the Ballot” (1869)

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Justifications for literacy tests

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- Australian Ballot first appeared in Australia in 1856 and then was implemented in England in 1872
- For much of the nineteenth century, voters had obtained their ballots from political parties

The secret ballot, also known as the Australian ballot, is a method of voting where the voter's choice is recorded in secret. This method was first used in Australia in 1856 and later adopted in England in 1872. In the United States, it was first used in New Jersey in 1878 and then spread to other states. The secret ballot is used in many countries around the world today. It is considered to be a more fair and democratic way of voting because it prevents election officials from knowing who voted for whom. This can help to prevent voter intimidation and ensure that all voters have a equal say in the outcome of an election.

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 - It was a standard ballot, usually printed by the city or state, containing the names of all candidates for office
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Increasing literacy tests in the North

- Opposition to literacy test was strong (outside of the South)
 - Northern Democrats, who counted the urban poor among their constituents, generally voted against education requirements
 - So too did politically organized ethnic groups, regardless of their party affiliation, which helps to explain why no English-language literacy tests were imposed in the Midwest
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Source: Wikipedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literacy_test#cite_note-13

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literacy_test#cite_note-14

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Literacy test effects

- The potential impact of these literacy laws—all of which were sanctioned by the courts—was enormous.
- According to the census (which relied on self-reporting), there were nearly five million illiterate men and women in the nation in 1920
 - * this was roughly 8 percent of the voting-age population
- Other sources suggest that in fact the figure was much higher
- A reasonable estimate is that a minimum of several hundred thousand voters—and likely more than a million—were barred by literacy tests outside of the South

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Migrants and Residents

- The difficulty of defining or establishing residence was becoming more complex
 - in Boston, only 64% of residents who lived there in 1880 still lived there in 1890
- There was an increasingly accepted legal notion that sheer physical presence in a community for a specified length of time was not sufficient for a person to be considered a resident
 - In 1880, the U.S. Census defined a resident as someone who had been living in a place for at least six months.
 - By 1900, the definition had changed to one year.
- Courts found themselves evolving criteria to gauge the intentions of both individuals and groups (such as ministers and railway workers, who were often on the move) as they tried to apply broadly stated laws to extremely varied situations.
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Education and residency

- The most difficult case proved to be students at colleges, seminaries, and other institutions of higher learning
- In many states, there was substantial sentiment in favor of prohibiting students from gaining residence in the communities where they attended college:
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Physical presence

- The notion that legal residence was tied as much to intention as physical presence inexorably led states to consider mechanisms for absentee voting
 - for men and women who were temporarily away from home but intended to return
- The Civil War and the desire to permit soldiers to vote during the war severed the link between voting and physical presence in a community
- World War I added a new urgency to the issue, since nearly three million men were inducted into the army
- By 1918, nearly all states had made provisions for men serving in the military to cast their ballots, at least in time of war

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- Concerns about fraud generally were alleviated by tight procedural rules and requirements that absentee ballots be identical to conventional ones
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voter Registration

Keeping Track of Voters

- Before the 1870s in most states, there were no official preprepared lists of eligible voters
- Men who sought to vote were not obliged to take any steps to establish their eligibility prior to election day
- Between the 1870s and World War I the majority of states adopted formal registration procedures, particularly for their larger cities
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 - How far in advance of elections did a man or woman have to register?
 - When would registration offices be open?
 - Did one register in the county, the district, the precinct?
 - What documents had to be presented and issued?
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Political fights over the rules

- The two parties also feuded over the hours that the polls would be open
 - when the Republicans were able to, they passed laws closing the polls at sunset on the grounds that illegal voting was most likely to occur after dark
 - the Democrats protested that “sunset laws” kept workers from voting, and when in power, they extended the hours into the evening
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Early Nineteenth Century Democracy

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- In the North and West, exclusions were on a smaller scale, but still numerous:
 - depending on the state or city in which he lived, a man could be kept from the polls because:
 - * he was an alien
 - * a pauper

• In the South, however, there were many more restrictions on voting rights.

• These restrictions were often referred to as "Jim Crow laws".

• Jim Crow laws were laws that discriminated against African Americans.

• These laws were passed in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

• They were used to keep African Americans from voting.

• Some of the laws included:

- Poll taxes
- Literacy tests
- Grandfather clauses
- White primaries
- Segregation

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• It can be no surprise, in light of this legal history, that turnout at elections dropped during the latter half of this period.

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 - had moved from one state to another in the past year
 - had recently moved from one neighborhood to another
 - did not possess his naturalization papers
 - was unable to register on the third or fourth Tuesday before an election
 - could not prove that he had canceled a prior registration
 - been convicted of a felony, or been born in China or on an Indian reservation
- It can be no surprise, in light of this legal history, that turnout at elections dropped during the latter half of this period
- *Voting was not for everyone*

- In the North and West, exclusions were on a smaller scale, but still numerous:
 - depending on the state or city in which he lived, a man could be kept from the polls because:
 - he was an alien
 - a pauper
 - a lumberman
 - an anarchist
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Root Causes of regression

- Those who wielded economic and social power in the rapidly changing late nineteenth century found it difficult to control the state (which they increasingly needed) under conditions of full democratization
- In the South, the abolition of slavery, coupled with the beginnings of industrialization and the compelling need for a docile, agricultural labor force, created pressures that overwhelmed fledgling democratic institutions
- In the North and West, the explosive growth of manufacturing and of labor-intensive extractive industries generated class conflict on a scale that the nation had never known
- As Max Weber noted long ago, it is during periods of rapid economic and technological change that class becomes most salient and class issues most prominent
- The United States was not the only country whose political institutions were profoundly shaken by the stresses of industrialism

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- Both North and South, however, the legal contraction of the franchise made a difference
- Millions of people (most of them working class and poor) were deprived of the right to vote in municipal, state, and national elections
 - * Their exclusion from the electorate meant that the outcomes of innumerable political contests were altered
 - * different policies were put into place
 - Jim Crow laws
 - Segregation
 - De jure discrimination
- Many of the core institutions of the modern American state—stitutions built and solidified between Reconstruction and World War I were shaped and accepted by a polity that was far from democratic

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Women's Suffrage

- As half the population, women constituted the largest group of adults excluded from the franchise at the nation's birth and throughout the nineteenth century
 - efforts to gain the right to vote persisted for more than seventy years
 - eventually gave rise to the nation's largest mass movement for suffrage, as well as a singular countermovement of citizens opposed to their own enfranchisement
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- decades later, the reaction against universal suffrage retarded its progress
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- the voting rights of immigrants and the poor pressed repeatedly against the claims of women in the North and West
- Women were not a socially segregated group:

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From Seneca Falls to the Fifteenth Amendment

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- The convention was held in a local church
 - attracted nearly three hundred people, including many men
 - After two days of discussion, one hundred of the participants signed and adopted a "Declaration calling for equal rights for women, including the right to vote in the elective franchise"
- Declaration of Sentiments
- Laws made only by men, the declaration detailed, relegated women to an inferior place in the social, civil, and economic order

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 - A formal document listing the grievances of women against men
 - The document asserted that women were entitled to the same rights as men
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Why no female franchise?

- Although women were regarded as intelligent adults, they were viewed as having capacities different from those of men
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- Women were treated in law as members of families rather than as autonomous individuals
 - Women did not seem (to men) to be endangered by their inability to vote
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 - women were seen as less likely to be swayed by political parties than men
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The timing of Seneca Falls and the Rise of Suffrage

- Women remained outside the polity throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, and efforts to promote their inclusion were rare
- The decades preceding Seneca Falls had witnessed:
 - * the expansion of an urban and quasi-urban middle class in much of the North who valued and embraced an expansion of civil, economic, and political rights
 - * the number of women in the paid labor force increased sharply
 - * the growth of a women's movement that demanded greater educational opportunities for women
 - * the formation of the American Anti-Slavery Society
- The termination of property and taxpaying restrictions on voting and debates about the enfranchisement of aliens and African Americans, threw open the logical and rhetorical doors to the further expansion of suffrage.

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- The public embrace of democracy was as broad as it ever had been
 - * the war and the plight of former slaves had energized the language of universal rights
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Source: https://www.womenshistory.org/teaching-resources/essays/what-were-the-immediate-reactions-to-the-fourteenth-amendment

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- the national drive for suffrage expansion, beginning with Seneca Falls, came to a close
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 - Women, as “persons,” were unquestionably citizens
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Minor v. Happersett (1875)

- In 1872, Virginia Minor sued a St. Louis registrar who prevented her from registering to vote. She Claimed:
 - they infringed on Virginia Minor's right of free speech, which was protected by the First Amendment
 - they violated the *Fourteenth Amendment*'s command that states not abridge the "privileges or immunities" of citizens of the United States.
- Voting, the Minors claimed, was one of those privileges
- Although the argument was a coherent one, the justices of the Supreme Court unanimously disagreed
- Upholding a lower court decision, they ruled in 1875 that suffrage was not coextensive with citizenship and thus that states possessed the authority to decide which citizens could and could not vote

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Another Legal Challenge

- Suffragists took another legal tack as well: they promoted tax rebellions among female property owners in the late 1860s and early 1870s
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Suffrage Convictions

- Supporters of women's suffrage sincerely and deeply believed not only in the rightness of their cause but in the power of their simple egalitarian arguments: women were capable adult citizens and as such ought to be able to choose the lawmakers and laws that governed them
- Suffragists lived in an era when a righteous cause –the abolition of slavery– that had triumphed over ferocious, entrenched opposition
- They had witnessed not only the end of slavery but also an extraordinary transformation of popular views and laws regarding Black suffrage

- If one accepted the premise that voting was a right, natural or otherwise, it was not a long leap from black to women's suffrage
- Black suffrage triumphed (albeit temporarily) not because the polity had become convinced of the virtues of equal rights or universal suffrage but due to the unique political exigencies of Reconstruction and the political goals of the Republican Party

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NWSA



- National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA)
 - Founded by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Stanton
- NWSA's strategy was to pressure the federal government to offer women the same constitutional protections given to freedmen in the Fifteenth Amendment
- Proposed Amendment: "the right of suffrage in the United States shall be based on citizenship" and that "all citizens... shall enjoy this right equally without any distinction or discrimination whatever founded on sex"
- "the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex"
- After 1893, no congressional committee reported it favorably until late in the Progressive era

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- Utah did the same in 1870 and 1896 (interrupted by a brief period when the federal government stripped Utah's women of the suffrage as a curious step in its effort to rid the territory of polygamy)
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- A significant number of locales (states, counties, and municipalities) where partial suffrage was adopted
 - permitted women to vote in
 - * municipal elections
 - * on liquor licensing matters
 - * on school issues
 - The most common form of partial enfranchisement involved schools
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Essentialist argument

- A more essentialist strand of argument: that women possessed particular qualities or virtues that would improve the character of politics and governance
 - were embraced by many male politicians who seemed more comfortable stressing women's unique virtues rather than their similarity to men
 - women would elevate the tone of politics
 - would be less corruptible and more likely to promote policies favoring social justice, peace, and sobriety
- This argument became preeminent by the end of the 1870s
- Has a conservative thrust as well: the virtues of women could be counted on to preserve the traditional social order, to protect property, order, and stability, particularly against the vices of the urban working class

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 - The argument was used to support women's suffrage, particularly in the United States.
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Less noble reasons for suffrage

- At times in the 1870s and 1880s, this rationale went a giant step beyond fairness and acquired a more overtly politicized, racist edge
 - female suffrage would benefit society because white native-born women outnumbered—and would outvote—blacks, the Chinese, aliens, or transients
 - the political dominance of “Americans,” therefore, would be insured by the enfranchisement of women
- Proponents of expansion rarely argued that women lacked the intelligence to participate in politics or that their enfranchisement would damage the political order
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- Opponents further insisted that voting was not a natural right and that women did not need to vote because their civil rights already were amply protected
- There was anxiety that enfranchising women would deform natural gender roles and destroy family life
 - * admitting women into the public arena would encourage promiscuity, undermine the purity of women, and expose them to the irresistible predations of men
 - * the sexual charms and selectiveness of women would distort the ways in which men voted
 - * the introduction of women into politics would bring about a decline in the quality of political discourse

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 - would create dissension within families, that inescapably there would be arguments between husband and wife that would fracture the family

Other reasons not to franchise females

- Opponents further insisted that voting was not a natural right and that women did not need to vote because their civil rights already were amply protected
- There was anxiety that enfranchising women would deform natural gender roles and destroy family life
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Suffragists rebuking critics

- Many women themselves were either opposed indifferent to their own enfranchisement
- The demand for suffrage was most resonant among middle-class women, women from families engaged in the professions, trade or commerce, and educated women who lived in cities and developing towns
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Upper-class anti-suffragists

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- The West was unusually receptive
 - All of the states that fully enfranchised women in the 1800s were west of the Mississippi, as were most states that held suffrage referendum
- What seems to have tipped the balance in a handful of western states was a combination of several additional ingredients:
 - The West had a much smaller industrial working class than the East and Midwest.
 - The West had a more homogeneous population, with less social stratification.
 - The West had a more open society, with less social hierarchy.
 - The West had a more democratic political culture, with less political corruption.
- Most western states between 1850 and the 1890s did not experience the massive growth of an industrial working class that triggered such an antidemocratic reaction in the East and Midwest.

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 - the egalitarian influences of frontier life and western Populism
 - the desire to encourage settlement
 - the influence of the National Woman Suffrage Association, which had a strong presence in the West
 - the lack of a large industrial working class in the West, which was a key factor in the East and Midwest
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 - By the end of the 1890s, NAWSA had created branches in every state, founded hundreds of local clubs, generated large quantities of literature, and was pressuring politicians everywhere
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Shifts in ideology

- If not shifts in ideology, at least by shifts in the emphases placed on various arguments
 - Mirroring the broader middle-and upper-class disenchantment with democracy, suffragists placed less weight on equal rights arguments, which implied that everyone, male and female, should possess the right to vote
 - They stressed instead the more palatable essentialist theme that feminine qualities would be a welcome addition to the polity
- Essentialist emphasis was reinforced by the increasingly common claim that women had distinct economic and social interests that could only be protected by possession of the right to vote
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Source: www.bbc.co.uk/history/warfare_fighting/we_were_at_war/votes_for_women_01.shtml

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 - “A Solution to the Southern Question” (1890 publication)
 - it was argued that “the medium through which to retain the supremacy of the white race over the African” (Belle Kearney)
 - The relationship between women’s suffrage and black enfranchisement in the South was complicated
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- Whatever its statistical validity, the anti-Black, anti-immigrant, and anti-working class argument in favor of women's suffrage was inescapably weakened by its own *internal contradictions*
- An **antidemocratic** argument in favor of enlarging the franchise could neither overwhelm nor outflank the simpler, more consistent conservative view that the polity should be as *narrowly circumscribed* as possible

A Mass Movement

- Shifts were under way that would soon change the movement's direction and fortunes;
- The first decade of the twentieth century proved to be less a period of failure than of fruitful stock-taking and coalition building
- The movement became socially and ideologically more diverse, attracting both elite and working-class supporters to complement its middle-class base Female workers
- By 1900, roughly one fifth of the labor force was female, and many of these women held poorly paid, semiskilled jobs
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 - that meant emphasizing *class* as well as *gender* issues
- Working women as well as their activist leaders displayed new interest in acquiring the right to vote
 - They believed that they could improve their working conditions and their political influence if they were enfranchised
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The Nineteenth Amendment

- In 1914 and 1915, the suffrage movement stood at a crossroads
 - Women were fully enfranchised in some states and had partial suffrage in many
 - Still, the movement for political equality still faced an uphill, obstacle-laden struggle
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- The Senate, where anti-suffragist southern Democrats constituted a proportionally larger bloc, took an additional year and a half to endorse the amendment
- After months of relentless political pressure and careful targeting of Republican and Democratic holdouts, the Senate (by a large Republican majority and a small Democratic one) finally came on board in the summer of 1919
- “essential to the successful prosecution of the great war of humanity in which we are engaged... We have made partners of the women in this war. Shall we admit them only to a partnership of sacrifice and suffering and toll and not to a partnership of privilege and of right? This war could not have been fought... if it had not been for the services of women.” - *Woodrow Wilson*

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 - they also believed it essential to move quickly, before the aura of wartime faded
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The Nineteenth Amendment

The Nineteenth Amendment Section 1: **The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex** Section 2: **Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation**

- It is a well-known irony in American history that politics did not change very dramatically after women were enfranchised
- The electorate nearly doubled in size between 1910 and 1920, but voting patterns and partisan alignments were little affected
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- Although some (but not many) Black women were able to register to vote
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Source: www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/article/excerpts-from-the-southern-power-presentation/

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How life (did not) changed

- Women were empowered by enfranchisement, and their lives consequently (if gradually) may have changed in a host of different ways, but they tended to vote for the same parties and candidates that their husbands, fathers, and brothers supported
- Class, race, ethnicity, and religion remained the more salient predictors of a person's voting behavior
- So, why was there opposition?

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Three Overarching Factors

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- ① The fear of the unknown

- * no one knew, especially in the nineteenth century, exactly what would happen if women voted

- ② The persistence of deeply ingrained standards of femininity and masculinity that appeared to be threatened by the prospect of women voting

- ③ The coincidence of historical timing that brought the issue of women's suffrage to the fore just as faith in broadly distributed political rights was beginning to diminish

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The fear of the unknown was a major factor in the opposition to women's suffrage. Many people were worried about what would happen if women voted.

The persistence of deeply ingrained standards of femininity and masculinity was another factor. Many people believed that women were not capable of making informed political decisions or that they would vote differently than men.

The coincidence of historical timing was also a factor. The issue of women's suffrage came to the fore just as faith in broadly distributed political rights was beginning to diminish.

Opposition to women's suffrage was also influenced by religious beliefs. Many people believed that God had created men and women with different roles and that women should not be involved in politics.

Opposition to women's suffrage was also influenced by economic factors. Many people believed that giving women the right to vote would lead to higher taxes and that women were not entitled to political rights because they did not contribute to the economy.

Opposition to women's suffrage was also influenced by social norms. Many people believed that women should not be involved in politics because it was not appropriate for them to do so.

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 - Grounded in culture, social patterns, and the division of labor, these standards led men (and some women as well) to believe that suffrage would genuinely be a pernicious heresy, a violation of divine law, a threat to the family, or a source of promiscuity and debasement
 - * The right to vote was an expression of masculine power, exercised in the male sphere of public life.
 - * Women's votes were seen as a threat to the traditional gender roles and family structure.
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 - for women to claim such power was to rob men of a piece of their identities, alter their social roles, and threaten their legal dominance over women
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 - ② The persistence of deeply ingrained standards of femininity and masculinity that appeared to be threatened by the prospect of women voting
 - Grounded in culture, social patterns, and the division of labor, these standards led men (and some women as well) to believe that suffrage would genuinely be a pernicious heresy, a violation of divine law, a threat to the family, or a source of promiscuity and debasement
 - The right to vote was an expression of masculine power, exercised in the male sphere of public life
 - for women to claim such power was to rob men of a piece of their identities, alter their social roles, and threaten their legal dominance over women
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