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US History

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Throughout United States history, Congress has passed legislation to address important social and economic issues. These laws have had a significant impact on American society. Both the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Homestead Act of 1862 were pieces of congressional legislation which had resolving impacts in America.

In the 1960's, the United States was facing social pressure to end segregation and create a more equal society for all. After the Civil War, Jim Crow laws, under the guise of creating a separate but equal society, mandated segregation in public places such as bathrooms and schools. Civil Rights movements were prevalent in both the North and South. Civil Rights leaders, such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X, used both non violence and force to protest the unfair treatment of black Americans. The Civil Rights Act made it illegal to segregate based on race. Some lasting impact of this were negative. Riots erupted as a result of black Americans gaining rights they previously didn't have. Many protests resulted from integration, which was not welcomed in the South. Additionally, lynchings in the South highlighted just how bad, racial tensions in America were, following this Act. Despite imperfect relations in America today, the Civil Rights Act did have some positive effects, such as granting more equal rights regardless of skin color.

In addition to the Civil Rights Act, the Homestead Act also had a lasting impact on American society. The Homestead Act was originally passed by Abraham Lincoln to get Americans to cultivate land and migrate westward. This Act stated that if you were to migrate westward, live and cultivate the land that was given to you, which was 160 acres, for five years it was eventually given to you for free. Although many settlers got free land, people migrated westward and America grew and railroads were made. The Homestead Act didn't have a positive effect on everyone. Native Americans lost their land and many diseases spread which ended up killing both settlers and Native Americans. Conflict also ended up erupting with Mexico as well. The Homestead Act was one of the Acts that had both positive and negative effects on American history.

It is obvious that both the Civil Rights Act and the Homestead Act had huge impacts on American society. Not only did they change change how people interact socially, but they also shifted the American economy. Both of these Acts of Congress show how important legislation can be in shaping American history.