

THE REPUBLICAN PARTY: *150 Years of Advancing Civil Rights*



To stop the Democrats' pro-slavery agenda, anti-slavery activists founded the Republican Party, starting with a few dozen men and women in Ripon, Wisconsin on March 20, 1854. The party spread across the northern and western United States like a prairie fire of freedom. The first Republican state convention was held in Jackson, Michigan in July 1854. The Republican National Committee met for the first time in 1856, followed four months later by the first Republican National Convention.



The first African-American Senator and Representatives in the 41st and 42nd United States Congress, from top left, Rep. Robert de Large (R-SC), Rep. Jefferson Long (R-GA), Sen. Hiram Revels (R-MS), Rep. Benjamin Turner (R-AL), Rep. Josiah Walls (R-FL), Rep. Joseph Rainey (R-SC), Rep. Robert Elliott (R-SC)

In the election of 1860, Republicans swept to victory in the White House and won majorities in both houses of Congress. Just six years after the party's founding, the Governor of every northern state in America was a Republican. That phenomenal progress was possible only because the Republican Party was based on the powerful idea that our nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to equality, must live up to its founding principles.

Despite fierce Democrat opposition, Republicans passed constitutional amendments banning slavery, extending the Bill of Rights to the states, guaranteeing equal protection of the laws and due process to all citizens, and extending the right to vote to persons of all races and backgrounds. Republicans in Congress also enacted the nation's first-ever Civil Rights Act, which extended citizenship and equal rights to people of *all* races, *all* colors, and *all* creeds. In 1875, the Republicans expanded these protections

to give all citizens the right of equal access to all public accommodations.

Struck down by the Supreme Court eight years later, this landmark legislation would be reborn as the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

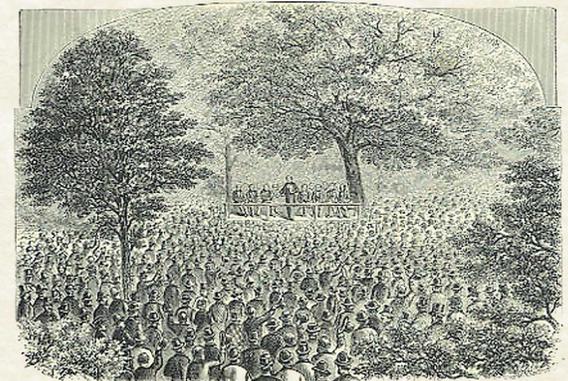
Republicans led the fight for women's rights, and most suffragists were Republicans. In fact, Susan B. Anthony bragged about how, after voting (illegally) in 1872, she had voted a straight Republican ticket. The suffragists included two

African-American women who were also co-founders of the NAACP: Ida Wells and Mary Terrell, great Republicans, both of them.

Republican Senator Aaron Sargent wrote the women's suffrage amendment in 1878, though it would not be

passed by Congress until Republicans again won control of both houses 40 years later. It was in 1916 that the first woman was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, Republican Jeannette Rankin. The first woman mayor was elected in 1926, the Honorable Bertha Landes of Seattle, another great Republican.

Democratic opposition to Republican efforts to protect the civil rights of all Americans lasted not only throughout Reconstruction, but well into the 20th century. In the South, those Democrats



The first Republican State Convention was held on July 6, 1854 in Jackson, Michigan.



The Americans with Disabilities Act, proposed by President George H. W. Bush and signed by him in 1990, was the world's first comprehensive civil rights law for people with disabilities. Today, 50 million disabled Americans enjoy the law's protection against discrimination.

who most bitterly opposed equality for blacks founded the Ku Klux Klan, which operated as the party's terrorist wing.

Every single African-American in Congress until 1935 was a Republican. Among the Republican pioneers were South Carolina's Joseph Rainey, the first black member of the House of Representatives, in 1870. Republican Hiram Revels of Mississippi became the first black U. S. Senator the same year. Two years later, Pinckney Pinchback of Louisiana became the nation's first black Governor.

California was the first state to have a Hispanic governor, Republican

Romualdo Pacheco, in 1875. The first Hispanic U. S. Senator, Octaviano Larrazolo, came to Washington from New Mexico as a Republican in 1928. The first Jewish U.S. Senator outside the former Confederacy was a Republican from Oregon, Joseph Simon, and the first Jewish woman to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives was a California Republican, Florence Kahn.

In 2004, America marked the 50th anniversary of the modern civil rights movement, which began with the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision. That landmark decision was written by Chief Justice Earl Warren, the three-term Republican Governor of California appointed by Republican President Dwight Eisenhower. The



Following the liberation of Afghanistan under the leadership of President George W. Bush in Operation Enduring Freedom in 2001, women gained their civil rights for the first time in that country's long history. More than a century earlier, Republicans led the fight for women's suffrage in America, authoring the Susan B. Anthony amendment to our own Constitution.

author of *Brown* was also the 1948 Republican vice presidential nominee.

Three years after *Brown*, President Eisenhower won passage of his landmark Civil Rights Act of 1957. Republican Senator Everett Dirksen authored and introduced the 1960 Civil Rights Act, and saw it through to passage. Republicans supported the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act overwhelmingly, and by much higher percentages in both House and Senate than the Democrats. Indeed, the 1964 Civil Rights Act became law only after overcoming a Democrat filibuster.

The first Asian-American U.S. Senator was a Republican, Hiram Fong from Hawaii. The first African-American Senator after Reconstruction was a

Republican, Ed Brooke from Massachusetts. The first Asian-American federal judge was a Republican, Herbert Choy. The first woman on the Supreme Court was a Republican, Sandra Day O'Connor. The first Hispanic presidential Cabinet member was a Republican, Lauro Cavazos, Secretary of Education under Ronald Reagan. The longest-serving African-American

in a leadership position of the U.S. House of Representatives was a Republican, J.C. Watts. The first women elected to the majority Leadership in both the House and the Senate were Republicans, Jennifer Dunn and Kay Bailey Hutchison. The highest-ranking women ever in the majority Leadership in Congress, both currently serving, are Republicans: Kay Bailey Hutchison and Deborah Pryce.

Today, the Republican Party continues its historical commitment to civil rights at home and around the world.



In 2004, President George W. Bush signed into law the DC School Choice Incentive Act, to provide scholarship assistance for low-income students in poorly-performing public schools who want to attend private schools. DC Mayor Anthony Williams (above left) and Republican U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige (above right) pointed out that 60% of African-Americans support school choice.