

HST 202: US History W20 (Escobar)

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Legacy of Reconstruction
by [Joe Escobar](#) - Friday, February 21, 2020, 5:26 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Legacy of Reconstruction topic.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, something that describes the specific question you are addressing. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Legacy of Reconstruction

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Intro to birthright citizenship
by [Tanner Hermanson](#) - Saturday, February 22, 2020, 4:15 PM

The issue that sparked my interest the most out of these four topics happens to be birthright citizenship. Why is it that a baby born to an illegal immigrant on United States soil is an automatic U.S. citizen? Birthright citizenship is the answer to that lofty question. Birthright citizenship was established in 1868 by the Fourteenth Amendment added to the United States Consitution. It states: "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" (Wikipedia). We still abide by this statement today in the United States. However, the dark side of birthright citizenship has reared its ugly head as we constantly see in the news that illegal immigrants are fleeing their homes in Mexico and South America, trying to start a new life in the United States and a lot of them are robbed, killed, or deported. Some 12,000,000 illegal immigrants are currently in the United States and this number keeps on climbing (Professor Eric Foner Video). Roughly 30 countries have this law of birthright citizenship in place, however, very few countries in the Western Hemisphere (where the U.S. is located) have this law (Class Notes). This concept of birthright citizenship, that has caused all sorts of controversy in the U.S. today, did not come to fruition until just after the Civil War and it was because of the Civil War, that it even exists today. Most people do not even know that this law was ratified during the Reconstruction time period after the Civil War.

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Racial Nationalism vs. Civic Nationalism



by [McKenna Wilson](#) - Sunday, February 23, 2020, 12:52 PM

After listening to Dr. Foner’s speech I could not agree with him more that the period of reconstruction is one of the least well known and understood of American History. Before listening to him speak and reading this Chapter in the textbook, I didn’t truly understand the difference between Ethnic Nationalism and Civic Nationalism. Dr. Foner states that Ethnic Nationalism, what the US exhibited back then, was “grounded in the racial boundaries of slavery.” Civic Nationalism is how America is set up now that allows people from other countries to begin the process to become a US Citizen even if they were not born here and not American. Dr. Foner explains that countries like Germany do not have Civic Nationalism and still are running off of ethnicity and race/ background. In America, if an illegal immigrant has a baby in the United States, then that baby is considered a US citizen. Many countries do not have this and Foner further explains that. The Civil War and the period of Reconstruction allowed for the change over in America from racial nationalism and civic nationalism.

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Birthright Citizenship

by [Riley McQueen](#) - Sunday, February 23, 2020, 6:55 PM

In the video Professor Foner talked about how in the United States today we are still living with the consequences of the end of the Civil War. One of the consequences was going to become of the slaves regarding citizenship. Slaves at this time have been there for generations, they were born in the United States, but because of the Supreme Court decision in the Dred Scott case they weren’t allowed to become citizens. Foner used this to connect it to a more relevant issue we have which is birthright citizenship. Birthright citizen is when a woman enters a country illegally and gives birth that child is a legal citizen of that country. This is a ramification of the civil war that didn’t exist beforehand, there were free blacks who lived without citizenship, but because the war ended the debate on what's going to happen to them came up leading to the 14th amendment.

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Re: Birthright Citizenship

by [Phoebe Fergus](#) - Tuesday, February 25, 2020, 11:45 PM

Hi Riley! I wrote my forum post on the same topic and did find it very interesting that so few places in the world have birthright citizenship while the United States does have it. Like you have already stated, birthright citizenship was something that came from the end of the civil war, and did not necessarily pan out the way it was expected to. How do you feel about the topic of birthright citizenship today and how do you feel about Trumps advances toward it?

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Re: Birthright Citizenship

by [Riley McQueen](#) - Wednesday, February 26, 2020, 2:30 PM

Hey Phoebe! I find the idea of birthright citizenship to be a good one. I believe that it is a way for immigrants to try to achieve the “American Dream” and give their family an opportunity that they might not have been able to get otherwise. It was created for Freedmen after the war but has since expanded to anyone who comes to America. On the issue of Trump, I don’t agree with his opinion. Some people, him included, think that the issue only relates to illegal immigrants coming into the country to have children that then become citizens which is just not the case. It is legal to come to the United States to have a baby if you have obtained the proper visas legally and many go back to their own country. Plus there are plenty more reasons people come into a country illegally and a major reason is economic opportunity. The fact that Trump wants to abolish Birthright Citizenship would mean that he would have to amend the Constitution or make an executive order. He doesn’t have the support to amend the constitution and the executive order will be taken to court as a violation of the 14th amendment so it probably won't happen under his administration.

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Birthright Citizenship for everyone

by [Ryan Peel](#) - Saturday, February 29, 2020, 7:52 PM

Hello to both of you! You guys don't mind me squeezing in here, do you? Umm, I hope not, but here we go. I didn't think about Birthright Citizenship applying to people who immigrate legally. To me, it felt like someone who would enter illegally would take advantage of it more than someone who came with the proper papers, visas, and other documentation. But of course, after reading... your conversation with each other... Am I the only one who finds it strange to write that? Shouldn't it be that I heard it? Either way, after seeing it, I think I get it... Those who are born in the US are automatically counted as citizens. I've seen in some instances that applying for citizenship can take a while. The department can move very slow, getting all the appropriate background checks done, the proper investigations finished, should they need that, it can take quite some time. But, only the parents need to go through this process. The children don't unless they are born elsewhere. It's quite a wonderful system...

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Some things I didn't know...

by [Ryan Peel](#) - Sunday, February 23, 2020, 8:48 PM

The Foner video gave me a new insight into immigration, the civil war, and citizenship, among other things. According to Foner, if an illegal alien, a person who crosses the border into the US illicitly or unauthorized, if she becomes a mother while in the US, her child becomes a US citizen, while the mother still remains an alien. While in other countries like Germany, this isn't true. In the US we have the concept of "birthright citizenship" (Foner video, 3:54). This is a result of the Civil War. After the Civil War, we had many newly freed blacks who weren't citizens, as citizenship only applied to the white populace before the Civil War. Free blacks in the North didn't even have citizenship before the Civil War. That's really shocking to me. The black populace wasn't even viewed as people back then, they were viewed as merchandise or property. Thank you, Justice Taney. Thank you for reinforcing that a person, who is clearly a person, is in fact, less than a person.

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Birthright Citizenship Then and Now

by [Phoebe Fergus](#) - Sunday, February 23, 2020, 10:35 PM

In Professor Eric Foner's video, he begins to talk about why a child who is born in the United States, with immigrant parents, is immediately granted citizenship, when their parents are not. This is known as Birthright Citizenship, which we have talked about in previous classes. Foner states " That is an outgrowth of the civil war, that did not exist before the civil war" (Professor Foner on the Legacy of Reconstruction). Foner also mentions that there were slaves and free blacks that were born in the United States, who were still not considered citizens. The 14th Amendment is what brought forward birthright citizenship. The textbook talks about the 14th Amendment stating, "Section 1 defined all native born or naturalized persons, including blacks, as American citizens and prohibited the state from abridging the 'privileges and immunities' of citizens" (Textbook, p. 474). This was said to define and enforce civil rights. As of today, there have been many things going on that have to do with birthright citizenship. One news article brought to my attention that President Trump is trying to revoke birthright citizenship in the United States today. He has said that The White House is looking into ending the policy and that it is a "Magnet for illegal immigration". While many would agree with his statement it is hard to say just how everyone feels about ending birthright citizenship in the United States. From what we know currently, The 14th Amendment guarantees birthright citizenship to anyone born in the United States and it is not as easy as President Trump amending the constitution.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/22/us/birthright-citizenship-14th-amendment-trump.html>

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Birthright citizenship in the 19th Century & illegal immigration issues today

by [Patryce Miller](#) - Sunday, February 23, 2020, 11:56 PM

Birthright citizenship defined in the early 19th Century as white only citizenship. An example of this is the Dred Scott decision (web video legacy of reconstruction 4:47). Which basically states that slaves weren't citizen so there for couldn't sue, whether or not they where born here. It was thanks to the abolitionist that the birthright citizenship to all in the late 19 century (1865-1877). **Making this right apply to anyone** not just white. Which applies to illegal immigration issues today. In the late 19 century the 14 amendment was met to give African Americans who been here generations their rights. They have never been any where else and grew up with our culture. But now and days First generation of migrates twists that right so their kids could us that right and send money home to them/ give them a better life.

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Post Civil War Citizenship
by [Zach Trotter](#) - Monday, February 24, 2020, 7:14 PM

Post war our country completely reconstructed views on citizenship and changed the way the U.S. accepts people as citizens. No longer did the country run on the idea of ethnic citizenship. The country brought to light, and changed the way people can become citizens within the U.S. during the reconstruction period. Many abolitionists relished the thought of a path to citizenship that did not discriminate through racial means during the pre-war era, and got a chance to make it a reality during the post-war era (reconstruction). Pre-war citizenship was for white people only, by way of the supreme court rule of 1857 in the Dred Scott decision, saying that America is a country for white people and that black people are aliens in the U.S. EVEN if they were born in the states, they can never be citizens. Today our country has and executes the idea that ANYBODY, man or woman, of any race, background, country, language can become a citizen in the United States of America, our citizenship policies stem from the civic citizenship ideals that was put into place during the reconstruction period of our country's history.

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More on Birthright Citizenship
by [Tanner Hermanson](#) - Tuesday, February 25, 2020, 10:25 PM

The question of what status the 4,000,000 freed blacks were to obtain after the Civil War was hotly debated (Professor Eric Foner). The birthright citizenship clause of the Fourteenth Amendment was written for the protection of the newfound rights for former slaves and their children. Former slaves and blacks, in general, were supposed to be treated as equals in the American Society after this amendment was ratified. This makes sense, especially due to the fact that a lot of the slaves were born within the boundaries of the United States. Certainly, their children were, and therefore, they should be considered equals to whites under the eyes of American law. Moreover, most slaves had been in the U.S. for more than three to five years, which helped their case for obtaining citizenship as well. Fast forward to today, however, it has been found that many *illegal* immigrants are abusing this law for financial purposes (Odyssey Article). Immigrants (specifically women), who are not legal citizens of the United States of America are crossing the border from Mexico, in order to have their child in America so that they will automatically be considered equal before the law to every other American citizen (Professor Eric Foner). This action has been coined the term 'drop and leave' (Odyssey Article). In addition, immigrants who have not gone through the legal process come to America to abuse the laws in order to receive welfare and other services from the government as well. I know that immigration has always been an issue in the United States throughout history, however, I don't think that leaders of America at the time of the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment ever would have suspected immigration (specifically birthright citizenship) to be the problem that it is today.

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Re: More on Birthright Citizenship
by [Zach Trotter](#) - Wednesday, February 26, 2020, 9:10 PM

I was curious after reading you post to know if you would make any changes to the birthright citizenship in the U.S. and if so, what kind of changes and how drastic? I agree with your statement that the leaders of America definitely did not know of what problems it could lead to. But at the time the U.S. was not one of the top 3 leading superpowers in the world, whereas today it is a way more sought after place to live and thrive and be successful and I think that draws in a lot of illegal aliens.

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Possible Changes to Birthright Citizenship Law

by [Tanner Hermanson](#) - Thursday, February 27, 2020, 11:00 PM

Hi Zach,

I definitely agree that the United States is a far more desirable place to immigrate to nowadays compared to the 1860s. America is a 'melting pot' of cultures and ethnicities and that is what makes this country so diverse. However, if I were in power, I would probably make a couple changes to the law of birthright citizenship. It is pretty clear that illegal immigrants do abuse this law for personal gain, whether that be through obtaining welfare from the government or having their child within the boundaries of the U.S. Just to give some numbers: it is estimated that more than two-thirds of all births in Los Angeles public hospitals...and nearly 10% of all births in the nation in recent years have been to mothers who are here illegally (Odyssey Article). I believe that this law of birthright citizenship is a little outdated as its main purpose was for the rights of colored people, who had been born in America and their ancestors had likely been born in America as well, roughly 150 or so years ago. My proposed change would be that a child born on United States soil would become a citizen, only if at least one of his/her parents was a U.S. citizen. I believe that this would help cut down on the number of illegal births in the United States and it would also reduce the amount of welfare that is being shelled out to illegal immigrants as well. This may not be a perfect solution, however, I strongly believe that it would help the problem, at least a little bit. Thanks for the response!

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Passing laws does not mean they are enforced

by [Melanie Green](#) - Thursday, February 27, 2020, 10:16 AM

In the video, Professor Eric Foner brings up a good point. Just because the government passes laws (or amendments to the constitution) does not mean they are enforcing them. In our history after the reconstruction period, according to the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendment, the former slaves or "Freedmen" should have gotten the same rights that any other white male citizen got. However, that was not the case. The blacks were not able to rent property, go to school with other whites or even vote in some areas. They were still treated like garbage, and even with the amendments, the treatment of blacks steadily declined throughout the years until the late 1900s. So just because the Federal government passes a law does not mean they or the states are willing to enforce it.

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Re: Passing laws does not mean they are enforced

by [Phoebe Fergus](#) - Saturday, February 29, 2020, 11:52 PM

This was something that was so interesting to learn about for me. Personally, I didn't know too much about history before this class and that's one of the reasons I wanted to take it. For this topic in particular, I knew that people were slaves and I knew that it "ended" after the civil war. I always imagined that there was of course a period of time right after, where things were done to make sure that former slaves were still not treated like people. I find it so crazy to learn about the awful things done to ensure this.

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Birthright Citizenship and the 14th Amendment

by [Alexander Marx](#) - Thursday, February 27, 2020, 7:58 PM

It is interesting to consider the issue of birthright citizenship today compared to congressional Republicans' intentions with the 14th amendment during the reconstruction era. As Eric Foner states in his talk, we are still living with the changes and consequences that took place during the reconstruction era and this is a prime example. The "Black Codes" that were implemented in 1865 by southern states in order to reinstate their versions of quasi-slavery needed to be addressed by the federal government, and northern Republicans needed to find a way to protect the rights of black men without alienating moderate voters for the upcoming congressional elections of 1866 (textbook p. 569). The 14th amendment was Republicans' answer to this issue, with the first section of the amendment consisting of what we now call birthright citizenship. Despite the nativism prevalent at the time, it does not seem like immigration was much of a consideration due to the more pressing domestic matters, and by viewing the other sections of the amendment this becomes more obvious. Among the other sections are

legislation that hinders the representation of states who do not allow black male suffrage, prevents certain ex-confederates from holding office, and allows congress to enforce these laws (textbook p. 570). This makes the context of the amendment clear regarding the state of the country post civil war, in that it was meant to truly reconstruct civil rights for the people who have been living here for multiple generations. The fact that modern day birthright citizenship has come from this amendment after learning about its history makes the two feel very disjunct from one another, and it would have made much more sense if there would have been additional legislation necessary to make birthright citizenship for immigrants a part of the Constitution of the United States.

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Passing Laws Vs. Enforcing Laws

by [Phoebe Fergus](#) - Thursday, February 27, 2020, 9:10 PM

In Professor Foner's video, he mentions that it was unknown what role freed slaves were going to play in American society (Professor Foner on the Legacy of Reconstruction). Although slavery was supposed to be over after the Civil War, discrimination would not stop, and it is something we still have today. Even after the 13th Amendment had gone into action, many were still struggling, and were not looked at as if they were free people. As talked about in class and in the textbook, if a poor black man was seen on the street he would be labeled a vagrant. In this case he would be told to pay a fine. If he didn't have that (which most didn't), then they would be appointed a job to work off their fine. Normally this was working for a plantation owner who would decide when the fine had been paid off. This is slavery under another name. Another example that we have talked about in class this week were the literacy tests given to people who wanted to vote. These tests were only mandatory for men whose father or grandfather was not able to vote before the year 1867. This ensured that black men would have to take these literacy tests which are impossible to pass. This resulted in making sure that the only people who were able to vote were white men. These are just a few examples of rights and laws not being enforced.

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Ethnic and Civic Nationalism

by [Riley McQueen](#) - Friday, February 28, 2020, 5:14 PM

After the Civil War, the period of reconstruction began and one of the top issues was citizenship for the Freedmen. At this time the United States practiced Ethnic Nationalism which Foner described it as " a nationalism based on language, folk, culture, and ancestry" (video 5: 30). One example is in today's world would be Germany. From reconstruction came the 14th Amendment which made freed slaves and anyone born on U.S. soil a U.S. citizen, this is Civic Nationalism. In the video, Foner said that the people who fought in the civil war fought for a definition of citizenship severed from the concept of race. This idea was started by a small group of abolitionists and grew into common practice in the U.S.

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A rigged test

by [Ryan Peel](#) - Friday, February 28, 2020, 11:06 PM

I just looked at the Literacy Test document, and my goodness, am I glad I was in Oregon, not just because that test is rigged to all heck to be either impossible to pass, or no challenge at all. Each question could be interpreted in 50 ways. Is it the "L" in the line or the page? The letter in the question, or the sentence below? One of the most screwed up questions I saw, without the explanation of this twisted test, is question 25, from the triangle, how are you supposed to guess that you were reading "down". How? On top of that, there was no guarantee that anyone would pass. The test administrator had complete and utter control over who passed and who failed. That's so bad! The questions aren't clear at all, they're also very tricky to figure out. There are a few that I'm struggling to grasp the correct answer to, but the administrator could deem my answer to be wrong, even though I'm writing down the most straightforward answer on the page. Some administrators got picky over printing your answer, not writing in cursive, and writing your answer, using cursive. It's so bad! I'm going to saying that a lot, I think. So, this test isn't to show who's literate and illiterate, it's to choose who can and who can't vote at the whims of someone else.



America's History is Not a Steady, Positive Line Up

by [Melanie Green](#) - Saturday, February 29, 2020, 11:03 AM

Before taking this class, I knew nothing about the reconstruction period. Which I think is weird because I've taken 3 American History classes. I've always been fascinated with our war history (including the Civil War) but never once did I read what really happened after the wars. I just saw things like the slaves were freed, some still had hard times but basically a happy ever after. Which is a good example of how people believe that America's history is always going up. America has always been getting better, striving for that perfect nation. The reconstruction period is a prime example of how that's not true. Now instead of seeing the blacks as less than, we started trying not to see them at all. Hoping they would go away. Maybe they would just die off. America did not have any moral revolution in this time like people want to believe. Instead their true morals and feelings towards the blacks came out. We see now how cruel and closed-minded they were. America was not immigrant or race friendly until very recently. America didn't care about anyone until recently. I think one could say that this is the first stepping stone we take to get to the point we are at. But that's it, it's just a stepping stone. It wasn't exactly for the better until many years later.

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Having rights vs. enforcing rights

by [Riley McQueen](#) - Saturday, February 29, 2020, 1:56 PM

The constitution has these rights written into it about civil rights, but they haven't always been enforced or they have been overruled by the federal government. Professor Foner said in the video "the rights 'on the books' aren't sufficient, they are not self-enforcing" (Video 6:50). The example given was the 14th Amendment, being born in the U.S. makes you a citizen, was put into the Constitution in 1868 but it was practically ignored for decades. Civil rights were also written into the constitution which provided "a [legal] basis for a civil rights revolution in the 1950s" (video 7:40) which Charles Sumpter called sleeping giants. In South Africa after apartheid ended the government had to start over and create a new constitution which ended up being over 200 pages to make amends. In the case of the United States, they didn't have to do all of that, all they had to do was follow what was originally written in the Constitution.

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A Rigged Test, Part 2.

by [Ryan Peel](#) - Saturday, February 29, 2020, 4:58 PM

I still have thoughts on the literacy test. Also, a few questions. Mainly, was it only Louisiana that proctored a literacy test as a voting requirement? Was it all the southern states? A few? Did all of the southern states who used the test rig it as badly as the Louisiana test? Was it easier in some states? So many questions, so many thoughts about how wrong this test is. I genuinely feel really bad for those who tried their very hardest on this one-sided requirement, only to be denied because the test administrator felt that the test taker shouldn't be allowed to vote, so they made up some reason that an answer was wrong. Did I mention that those questions had so many ways to be interpreted, and you only had 10 minutes to take the test? As well as having to come up with the answer on the fly for every question? 30 questions, open-ended answers, questions that are very loosely worded, intentionally to make them even trickier to nail down a suitable response for the test. It would've taken me at least an hour or two to really dissect the question and find what I would conceive to be a "correct" answer. I'd fail a 10-minute test like this! So, I really feel for those who tried their hardest, given the circumstances, and still failed.

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Laws and Enforcement

by [Alexander Marx](#) - Saturday, February 29, 2020, 8:34 PM

Eric Foner's statement that "rights on the books are not self enforcing" does a good job of summing up some issues experienced during and after the Reconstruction era with civil rights and the 14th Amendment. Just because

a law is passed does not make it automatically enforced, and there are many examples both from history and modern times. In the 1876 Supreme Court's rulings that earlier laws enforcing the 14th and 15th amendments which allowed the federal government to prosecute individuals were deemed unconstitutional, our textbook highlights an issue with enforcement by saying that "The Court did not say what could be done when states were controlled by white-supremacy Democrats who had no intention of enforcing equal rights" (Textbook p. 588). Ultimately the enforcement of these laws was an issue for many decades after the Compromise of 1877 failed to keep promises of fair treatment for freedmen. It was not all for nothing, however, as the "sleeping giants" within the legislation that passed during the Reconstruction period paved the way for the eventual success of the civil rights movement in the mid 1900s (Foner video).

Another issue pertaining to enforcement of laws that Foner brings up is when the federal government is infringing on our rights. If they are the ones who are supposed to "guarantee" us our rights, then who is there to keep them in check where they violate our rights themselves, such as the right to privacy? An additional example is one we discussed in class briefly near the beginning of the term regarding Oregon's plastic bag ban. Enforcement of the new law was very poor and for a long time it was hardly less likely to see plastic bags being used during shopping. As a final and funnier example, comedian Hannibal Buress did a bit where he talked about getting a ticket for jaywalking in Montreal one day and how flabbergasted he was, joking that it was a "fantasy crime" because of the lenience often seen in its enforcement. These examples all show that a law is only as strong as the enforcement that follows it.

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Passing Laws is Not The Same as Enforcing Laws: The Fifteenth Amendment For Example
by [Tanner Hermanson](#) - Saturday, February 29, 2020, 9:40 PM

For my last post to this particular section of Forum 3, I will be briefly discussing the idea that passing laws is not the same as enforcing them. To give an example, the Fifteenth Amendment of the Constitution states that: "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 race, color, or previous condition of servitude" (Class Notes). This amendment was passed by Congress in 1869 and ratified on February 3rd, 1870, however, this does not mean that the South just automatically gave in and let people of color freely walk up to the polls and vote. The enfranchisement of black Americans was severely pushed back on by white supremacist groups, such as the KKK as well as others. They used intimidation tactics against Carpetbaggers, Scalawags, and of course against Freedmen, in order to get them to vote for the Democratic Party, which was the party the KKK supported at the time (Class Notes). Sure, the Fifteenth Amendment had been passed and ratified, however, that did not stop the constant harassment of colored folks or non-Confederate whites. During the period of Reconstruction, however, the amendment was 'enforced' by the troops that were sent in by then President Ulysses S. Grant in 1871 as a clause of the Enforcement Act (Class Notes). Blacks were now able to go to the polls and vote for the Republican Party as they wanted to, due to the presence of federal troops. In addition, 100's of KKK members were fined or imprisoned, and habeas corpus (a writ requiring a person under arrest to be brought before a judge or into court, especially to secure the person's release unless lawful grounds are shown for their detention) was actually suspended in some places in the South in order to prosecute as many white supremacists as possible (Class Notes). Moreover, the Republican Party gained more and more power as voters in the South were actually able to vote how they wanted to. However, this all came crashing down in 1877, with the end of Reconstruction as the Compromise of 1877 was adopted. Federal troops were pulled out of the South and many Carpetbaggers and African Americans left with them and Southern 'Redeemer' Democrats started taking control. "537,000 African Americans moved from the South between 1880 and 1910" due to the "worsening world of white supremacy that arose in that period" (Textbook pg 615). Moreover, by 1905, nearly all black men were effectively disenfranchised by state legislatures in every Southern state. This right here is the different between just passing a law and actually enforcing a law. It boils down to a simple human nature concept: if somebody is not following the rules, force usually needs to be used so that 'order' can be restored. In this case, the deployment of federal troops was the force and that allowed for so many African Americans and non-Confederates to have their voices heard and their votes counted. Enforcing a law is taking action so that the beneficiary of the law truly is the beneficiary. I leave you with a quote from professor Eric Foner: "Rights on the books are not...self-enforcing."

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