

# Suffrage and Civil Rights

Chapter 6

Section 3

# The Fifteenth Amendment

- Ratified in 1870
- For 90 years, States found loopholes in order to prohibit African Americans from voting
- African Americans were met with violence when simply attempting to register
- Gerrymandering took place to limit the power of African Americans
- Democrats dominate Southern politics for nearly 100 years

# Early Civil Rights Legislation

- Civil Rights Act of 1957 – sets up a commission to investigate claims of voter discrimination
- Civil Rights Act of 1960 – federal voting referees were to help people register and vote in elections

# Civil Rights Act of 1964

- Prohibited the discriminatory use of voter registration and literacy
- Injunctions used to overcome racial barriers
- Highlight of this law was the Selma March – African Americans attempting to register are met with violence from authorities
- As a response, President Lyndon Johnson pushes for stronger legislation

# The Voting Rights Act of 1965

- Finally puts 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment into effect in all elections
- Time period of the legislation extended with the Voting Rights Act Amendments of 1970, 1975, and 1982.
- Virtually did away with poll taxes and literacy test
- Establishes **preclearance** for all new election laws

# Amendments to the Act

- 1970 – extended law for an additional five years and 5 year ban on literacy tests
- 1975 – seven year extension of the law and a permanent ban on literacy tests
- 1982 – 25 year extension of the law and placed in provisions dealing with the minority language population