

Disability & Voting Rights

A Timeline

- **1789:** **States have the power to set voting requirements.** Generally states limited this right to property-owning or tax-paying white males (about 6% of the population).
- **1870:** **15th Amendment** prevented states from denying the right to vote on the grounds of race or color.
- **1920:** **19th Amendment** provided women the right to vote.
- **1924:** **Native Americans are granted citizenship** and the right to vote through the Indian Citizenship Act, regardless of tribal affiliation.
- **1965:** **The Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA)** required election officials to allow voters with disabilities to receive assistance from a person of the voter's choice (other than voter's employer or union representative). Also prohibited voter discrimination based on a citizen being able to read, write, have a particular level of education, or pass a test.
- **1984:** **The Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984** required accessible polling places in federal elections or an alternate means of voting on Election Day.
- **1990:** **The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** is a federal civil rights law that provides protections to people with disabilities. Title II of the ADA requires state and local governments ("public entities") to ensure that people with disabilities have a full and equal opportunity to vote. The ADA's provisions apply to all aspects of voting, including voter registration, site selection, and the casting of ballots, whether on Election Day or during an early voting process.
- **1993:** **The National Voter Registration Act of 1993** aimed to increase the historically low registration rates of people with disabilities and required all offices that provide public assistance or state-funded programs to provide the opportunity to register to vote in federal elections.
- **2002:** **Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA)** required that sites hold federal elections to provide at least one accessible voting system for people with disabilities at each polling place. The accessible voting system must provide the same opportunity for access and participation, including privacy and independence, that other voters receive.