

**Main Idea**

In the 1950s and 1960s, an organized movement demanding civil rights changed American society and led to a series of new federal laws that protected the civil rights of African Americans and other groups.

**Reading Focus**

1. What was the civil rights movement, and what effects did it have on American society?
2. What new federal laws were passed in response to the civil rights movement?
3. How were civil rights extended to women, minorities, and people with disabilities?
4. How are affirmative action policies a part of the civil rights movement?

**Key Terms**

civil rights movement

civil disobedience

poll tax

affirmative action

reverse discrimination

quota

**The Civil Rights Movement** (pp. 334–335)

The **civil rights movement** was a mass movement in the 1950s and 1960s to guarantee the civil rights of African Americans. Its members used nonviolent protests to fight injustice and work for new laws.

A key event in the movement came in 1955 when Rosa Parks, an African American, refused to give up her seat to a white person on a public bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Her arrest sparked a boycott of Montgomery buses led by civil rights leaders including Martin Luther King Jr. When the city did not integrate the buses, the NAACP filed suit. The NAACP won in federal district court, and the decision was upheld by the Supreme Court.

Civil rights leaders used boycotts, marches, and other forms of **civil disobedience**, or nonviolent refusals to obey the law as a way to advocate, or

support, change. Despite their nonviolent actions, they were often attacked by those against change, including state and local officials. Images of such attacks spread support of the movement around the country.

In 1963 more than 200,000 people attended the March on Washington, where Martin Luther King Jr. gave his “I Have a Dream” speech. The March on Washington focused national attention on the civil rights movement.

A march in Alabama from the cities of Selma to Montgomery drew more national attention to the civil rights movement when peaceful protesters were attacked in an event now known as Bloody Sunday. Bloody Sunday helped lead to the passage of new federal laws to protect the rights of African Americans and other minorities.

**Reading Check Sequencing** What were the key events of the early civil rights movement?

### **New Federal Laws** (pp. 336–337)

The civil rights movement caused Congress to pass a new series of civil rights laws. By the mid-1960s these laws began to change the legal protections of all Americans.

### **Civil Rights Laws under Eisenhower**

The Civil Rights Act of 1957, signed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, created the Civil Rights Commission, which investigated cases of discrimination and suggested solutions. The Civil Rights Act of 1960 gave the federal government the power to actively engage in voter registration and made it illegal to block someone's right to vote. However, southern resistance weakened the laws' effects.

**Civil Rights Act of 1964** This law banned discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in voting, employment, and public accommodations. Age was added in 1967. This law was passed under the commerce clause, which allowed Congress to ban discrimination by any person or business that engaged in interstate commerce.

**Voting Rights Laws** Southern states used a variety of means to keep African Americans from voting. Courts had struck down many of the laws creating voting restrictions. In 1964 the country ratified the Twenty-fourth Amendment, which banned the use of the poll tax to prevent people from voting. A **poll tax** is a tax levied, or placed, on someone who wants to vote. In spite of these efforts, African Americans were still discouraged from voting, sometimes by violent events such as Bloody Sunday. The 1965 Voting Rights Act was an attempt to change this.

**Effects of New Federal Laws** The new laws gave the federal government real power to stop discrimination. It was no longer legal to discriminate against people in voting, hiring, housing, or access to public

accommodations based on race, national origin, religion, or sex.

**Reading Check Summarizing** What major federal civil rights laws were passed in the 1950s and 1960s?

### **Extending Civil Rights** (pp. 337–338)

The civil rights laws of the 1950s and 1960s protected all groups from discrimination, not just African Americans. Other new laws and court decisions extended civil rights protections specifically to women, Hispanics, Native Americans, and people with disabilities.

**Women** The Equal Pay Act of 1963 required employers to offer equal pay to men and women doing the same work. The Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968 banned discrimination against women as well as racial and ethnic groups. In 1972 Title IX of the Education Amendments banned discrimination against women by colleges and universities that received federal funds. The Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1975 prohibited banks and other businesses from discriminating against women in making loans or giving credit. Finally, numerous Supreme Court decisions, including one outlawing sexual harassment, protected women's rights.

**Hispanics** Key events in Hispanics' fight for civil rights included:

- 1946—A California federal court ruled that segregating Hispanic students was illegal.
- 1954—The Supreme Court ruled in *Hernandez v. Texas* that the equal protection clause applied to Hispanics and other racial groups.
- 1973—In *Keyes v. Denver Unified School District* the Court ruled that de

facto segregation of Hispanics in public education was unconstitutional.

- 1975—The Voting Rights Act was expanded to require ballots to be printed in Spanish and other languages.

**Native Americans** Native Americans also protested for new laws and civil rights protections. The American Indian Movement (AIM) used aggressive and symbolic protests to demand a review of treaty violations and more education and economic help for Native Americans. Congress passed several laws, including the Indian Self-Determination and Education Act of 1975 and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (1978) to address Native Americans' concerns.

**People with Disabilities** In 1990 Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibited discrimination against people with disabilities and required accessibility in public buildings. Conditions in state-run psychiatric facilities improved after a court case in Alabama, *Wyatt v. Stickney* (2003).

**Reading Check Summarizing** How were civil rights extended to groups besides African Americans?

**Affirmative Action** (pp. 339–340) Women and racial and ethnic minorities still suffer disadvantages from generations of discrimination. They often face unequal access to education, employment, and social opportunities. One policy that has attempted to address this issue is **affirmative action**—a policy that requires employers and institutions to provide opportunities for members of certain historically underrepresented groups. Supporters believe government should actively promote equality for members of racial and ethnic groups and women. Opponents argue that such efforts lead to special privileges for

members of targeted groups and are unfair to whites.

**Early Affirmative Action Efforts** The federal government first used affirmative action policies in the 1960s when it required government contractors to create more diverse workforces. In 1965 President Lyndon Johnson issued Executive Order 11246, requiring government contractors to set goals and timetables for minority hiring.

By the late 1970s, policies such as these became controversial. Some people believed they were a form of **reverse discrimination**, or discrimination against the majority group. They argued that giving people preference because of race or sex was wrong.

**The Bakke Case** The first major case against affirmative action was *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978). Allan Bakke, a white student, was denied entry to the University of California—Davis Medical School. The school had a **quota**—a fixed number or percentage—of minorities needed to meet the requirements of an affirmative action program. Bakke sued because he could not compete for the 16 spaces in the class that were reserved for nonwhite students. The Court ruled in favor of Bakke, saying that the quota system was invalid because it did not let Bakke apply for the 16 places. A majority of the justices did say that race could be a determining factor in university admissions, however.

**The Michigan Cases** Two Michigan cases also addressed affirmative action: *Gratz v. Bollinger* and *Grutter v. Bollinger*. Gratz and Grutter were white women who had applied to and been rejected by two different programs at the University of Michigan. Some minority applicants with lower test scores and grade-point averages had been admitted, however. The Court ruled in Gratz's case that she should have

admission because the program's policy awarded points to minorities based solely on the fact that they were minorities. The Court rejected Grutter's case, however, because in her program race was just one factor considered for admission.

**Ballot Measures** Several states have passed ballot measures restricting

affirmative action policies. California, Washington, and Michigan all have policies forbidding state and local agencies from giving someone preferential treatment based on race, color, ethnicity, or sex.

**Reading Check Summarizing** How have affirmative action policies changed over time?

### SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

1. **Identify** Which two key events in the **civil rights movement** took place in Alabama?
2. **Describe** What were three major civil rights laws or actions passed or taken in the 1960s, and what did each do?
3. **Identify** Which groups besides African Americans benefited from the civil rights movement?
4. **Define** Define each of the following terms: **affirmative action, reverse discrimination, quota.**