Keeping the Faith:
African Americans Return to Congress, 1929–1970

With his election to the U.S. House of Representatives from a Chicago district in 1928, Oscar De Priest of Illinois became the first African American to serve in Congress since George White of North Carolina left office in 1901 and the first elected from a northern state. But while De Priest's victory symbolized renewed hope for African Americans struggling to regain a foothold in national politics, it was only the beginning of an arduous journey. The election of just a dozen more African Americans to Congress over the next 30 years was stark evidence of modern America's pervasive segregation practices.

The new generation of black lawmakers embarked on a long, methodical institutional apprenticeship on Capitol Hill. Until the mid-1940s, only one black Representative served at any given time; no more than two served simultaneously until 1955. Arriving in Washington, black Members confronted a segregated institution in a segregated capital city. Institutional racism, at turns sharply overt and cleverly subtle, provided a pivotal point for these African-American Members—influencing their agendas, legislative styles, and standing within Congress. Pioneers such as Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., of New York, Charles C. Diggs, Jr., of Michigan, and Augustus (Gus) Hawkins of California participated in the civil rights debates in Congress and helped shape fundamental laws such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964. For the first time, African Americans made substantive, not merely symbolic, gains within the institution. William L. Dawson of Illinois and Representative Powell became the first blacks to chair standing congressional committees. Eight of these trailblazers would eventually lead one or more standing House committees.

Demographic shifts continued to transform the black political base during these decades, fundamentally recasting the background and experiences of black Members of Congress. None of the black Members from this period represented a southern district or state—a testament to the near-complete disfranchisement of southern blacks and a massive, decades-long migration of millions of African Americans employed in agricultural work in the South to urban areas in the North in search of industrial jobs. While their representation of northern cities alone would have distinguished this group of black Members from their Reconstruction-Era predecessors, they were also overwhelmingly Democratic, sharply contrasting with the uniformly Republican 19th-century African Americans in Congress. New Deal reforms providing a modicum of economic relief—and, more compellingly, the promise of fuller participation in American life—drew Black Americans away from the party of Lincoln and into a durable Democratic coalition built by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. With the exception of De Priest and Senator Edward Brooke of Massachusetts, all the black Members of Congress from this era were Democrats.

Elected in 1964, John Conyers of Michigan was featured on the front cover of Jet *magazine in an article titled, "Nation Gets Sixth Negro Congressman."*
Collection of U.S. House of Representatives

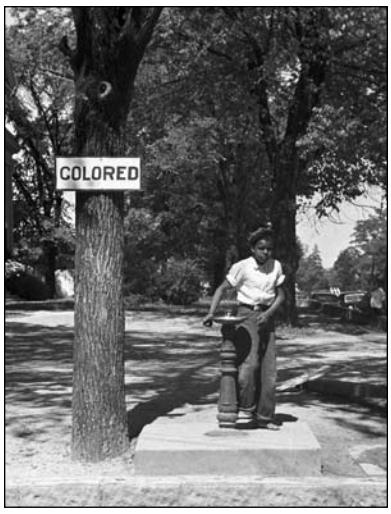
An atomistic individualism characterized the careers of African-American congressional pioneers in the early decades of this era. The burden of advocating black interests fell on the shoulders of a few Representatives: De Priest and Arthur Mitchell of Illinois in the 1930s and Powell and Dawson in the 1940s, joined by Diggs and Robert Nix of Pennsylvania in the 1950s. Seven of the 13 individuals to serve in this era were not elected until the 1960s, just as the civil rights movement led by Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., crested and compelled the federal government to enact legislative reforms. Yet this cohort formed a political vanguard that, in many respects, mirrored the experiences and trends reconfiguring black participation in modern American politics. Brooke—the first black U.S. Senator since Blanche Bruce of Mississippi during Reconstruction—entered the upper chamber in 1967; two years later, Representative Shirley Chisholm of New York became the first black woman to serve in Congress.

Like their Reconstruction-Era predecessors, these African-American Members endured racist slurs and prejudicial slights that complicated their development as legislators. Too few to effect change as a voting bloc within Congress, they acted either as public advocates commanding the spotlight on behalf of racial equality or as patient insiders who sought to deliver economic and political benefits to black constituents by accruing influence within the existing power structure. Yet the symbolism of this handful of black congressional careers initiated between the onset of the Great Depression and the social ferment of the late 1960s far exceeded the sum of its parts. Arguably for the first time, Black Americans who sent Representatives to Capitol Hill were substantively rewarded with legislative efforts made expressly on their behalf. "Keep the faith, baby," Representative Powell famously intoned, "spread it gently and walk together, children."[1] His oft-repeated words captured the essence of African Americans' growing collective political activism .

Pre-Congressional Experience

Numerous parallels can be drawn between the black Congressmen of the Reconstruction Era and the 13 African Americans who were elected to Congress between 1929 and 1970. Many were born in the South, some into well-to-do circumstances. All were well educated, especially compared to the general population, and they drew from a growing reserve of political experience. Like most of their white congressional colleagues, 20th-century black Members of Congress tended to be selected from the elite of their communities. Each had bridged the gulf that separated blacks from the opportunities enjoyed by better-educated, more-affluent whites. A leading political scientist notes that "in terms of education, income, and occupation, these black representatives resemble their white counterparts more than they do their African-American constituents."[2]

Six of the blacks elected to Congress from 1929 to 1970 were born into racially segregated circumstances in the South.[3] Some participated in the Great Migration to northern and western urban areas with their parents (or, later, as young adults), attracted by better economic, social, and cultural opportunities.[4] Born in Florence, Alabama, Oscar De Priest was 7 when his family joined the 1878–1879 exodus of some 60,000 black families from the Lower Mississippi Valley to Kansas; he eventually moved to Chicago as a young man. His successor, Arthur Mitchell, was born in Lafayette, Alabama, and taught school in the South before attending



Jim Crow reigned in North Carolina in the 1950s, where water fountains on the Halifax County courthouse lawn bore the signs of segregation.

Image courtesy of Library of Congress

Nearly one million blacks served in World War II, most in the segregated U.S. Army. This 1942 picture of a military policeman astride his motorcycle on a base in Columbus, Georgia, underscored the reality that Jim Crow practices prevalent in civilian life were also a part of military service.

Image courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration

northern colleges to earn his law degree, eventually settling in Chicago in the 1920s—a decade when nearly 750,000 blacks moved to the North. William Dawson, who succeeded Mitchell, was born in Albany, Georgia, and attended school in the South before moving to Chicago prior to World War I. It was not until mid-century that the first black Members of Congress were elected to represent the cities where they were born and raised. These included Charles Diggs of Detroit (1954), John Conyers, Jr., of Detroit (1964), Louis Stokes of Cleveland (1968), William L. Clay, Sr., of St. Louis (1968), Shirley Chisholm of Brooklyn (1968), and George W. Collins of Chicago (1970).

Service in the U.S. Army played a formative role in the lives of a majority of these Members of Congress.[5] For those born in the North, the military was a brusque introduction to blatantly segregationist practices. Both Diggs and Stokes, who were stationed in the Deep South, recalled instances of discrimination when African-American soldiers were refused food service, while white GIs and German prisoners of war dined together. "That was the shock of recognition to me, that an enemy was more welcome than a black," Diggs observed.[6] That experience sparked Diggs's future political commitment to securing equal rights for African Americans. Shortly after taking office in 1943, William Dawson, who had graduated from the country's first black officers' candidate school in 1917, declared, "I know what segregation in the army means. . . . It is a damnable thing anywhere and I resent it."[7] As a Member of Congress during World War II, Dawson was a vocal proponent of integrating U.S. forces and, in 1944, when Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson suggested that black soldiers were unfit for combat duty, Dawson demanded his removal.[8] Edward Brooke, who served during World War II in Europe in the segregated 366th Combat Infantry Regiment and later in the 224th Engineering Battalion, recalled, "The prejudice Negro soldiers faced in the army was underscored by the friendliness of the Italians, who were colorblind with regard to race. . . . It was maddening to be given lectures on the evils of Nazi

In an effort to bring more African Americans to the polls, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) sponsored numerous voter registration drives such as this one at Antioch Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia.

Image courtesy of Library of Congress

racial theories and then be told that we should not associate with white soldiers or white civilians."[9] After being drafted in 1953, five years after the services were integrated by presidential order, William Clay, Sr., was stationed at Fort McClellan in Alabama—an army post that was still largely segregated, in Clay's words, "with all the insobriety of the last Confederate general and the insolence of the last Confederate infantryman." Clay organized a boycott against the segregated barbershop, a whites-only Post Exchange restaurant, and a segregated swimming pool. Later, Representative Diggs launched an investigation into base practices at Fort McClellan.[10]

Like their Reconstruction predecessors, 20th-century black political pioneers in Congress were exceedingly well educated—eclipsing the educational level of the average American and far surpassing the educational level of their fellow Black Americans.[11] All graduated from high school. Only one, De Priest, did not receive at least a partial college education; seven studied law at elite historically black institutions and Ivy League schools. As organs of political protest and racial advancement, African-American churches played a central role in the larger civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, but religious studies and service in the pulpit were not a prerequisite for black Members of Congress. Among these black Members, only Adam Clayton Powell, who succeeded his father as pastor of New York's Abyssinian Baptist Church, was trained in the ministry.

Political opportunities were more often secular. The majority of the African Americans elected to Congress during this period had experience in elective office. Five served on city councils in major urban areas as a result of the growing population and influence of blacks in northern cities: De Priest, Dawson, and Collins served in Chicago, Powell served in New York City, and Clay served in St. Louis. Diggs, Hawkins, and Chisholm served in state legislatures. Edward Brooke served two terms as Massachusetts attorney general, becoming one of the highest-ranking African-American law enforcement officials in history.[12] Only Stokes, Nix, and Conyers won election to the House without having held an elective office, but all three had extensive local political experience.[13]

Reflecting inroads made by the modern women's rights movement, gender diversity became a reality for Black Americans in Congress during this era.[14] In 1968, Shirley Chisholm won a newly redistricted seat in Brooklyn, becoming the first African-American woman elected to Congress. She ran against James Farmer, a famous civil rights activist nominated as the Liberal-Republican candidate partly because he argued that the Democrats had for too long "thought they had [the black vote] in their pockets." Chisholm and Farmer staked out similar economic and social positions, and their campaigns were nearly identical, but Farmer argued that women had been "in the driver's seat" in black communities for an extensive period and that the district needed "a man's voice in Washington."[15] Chisholm prevailed, becoming an overnight symbol of crumbling barriers for blacks in national political office. Within five years, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke of California, Barbara Jordan of Texas, and Cardiss Collins of Illinois joined her in the House. "The black man must step forward," Chisholm was fond of saying, "but that doesn't mean that black women have to step back."[16]

Representative Shirley Chisholm of New York became the first African-American Congresswoman when she was elected in 1968 from a newly reconfigured, majority-black district in Brooklyn, New York. Ebony *magazine featured the lawmaker in an article titled, "New Faces in Congress."*

Collection of U.S. House of Representatives (Detail)

Cold War:

A state of ideological, economic, political, military, and cultural warfare between the United States and the Soviet Union (USSR) from 1947 until 1991. Developing from divergent American and Soviet foreign policies concerning the restoration of Europe after World War II, the conflict spread from Europe to the rest of the world. Although there were no direct military conflicts, the Soviet and American superpowers tried to alter the international balance of power in their favor by competing globally for allies, strategic locations, natural resources, and influence in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The Cold War ended with the collapse and disintegration of the USSR in 1991.

As commemorated on this fan, the 85th Congress (1957–1959) was the first Congress since Reconstruction with four black lawmakers serving simultaneously.
Collection of U.S. House of Representatives

Legislative and Electoral Characteristics

Committee Assignments

As in the Reconstruction Era, African-American Members through the mid-20th century were assigned largely to middling committee positions.[17] Among black Members' committee assignments were Invalid Pensions (3), Interior and Insular Affairs (3), Veterans' Affairs (3), Indian Affairs (2), Post Office and Post Roads (2), Expenditures in the Executive Departments (2), and District of Columbia (2). No black Members served on the Agriculture Committee (despite House leaders' initial attempt to assign Shirley Chisholm to the panel), largely because they represented northern industrialized districts. As in the 19th century, the Education and Labor Committee—which had oversight of federal laws affecting schools, workplaces, and unions—was the most common assignment, with four black Members in this era.

There were a few exceptions to this pattern, however. William Dawson served on the Irrigation and Reclamation Committee in the 78th and 79th Congresses (1943–1947). That panel, which had wide-ranging jurisdiction over public lands and water projects, ranked in the top third of "attractive" committees. In 1965, John Conyers won a seat as a freshman on the influential Judiciary Committee, which was then under the leadership of liberal Democrat Emanuel Celler of New York. At the time, the assignment was an elite one, as Judiciary ranked behind only Ways and Means and Appropriations in terms of the number of Members who sought assignment there.[18] Members also considered the Foreign Affairs Committee to be among the upper tier of House committee assignments because of its relative visibility. Charles Diggs won a seat on this panel in 1959, becoming its first African-American Member. Diggs's appointment to the committee signified African Americans' increasing interest in Cold War policies, particularly as they affected the rise of postcolonial independent states in Africa. By 1969, he chaired the Subcommittee on Africa and served as one of the principal organizers of the congressional anti-apartheid movement. Since Senators' committee responsibilities tend to be broader than those of their House counterparts, the increased workload opened avenues onto important panels for Edward Brooke, who won assignments to the Senate Appropriations Committee, the Armed Services Committee, and the Joint Defense Production Committee.[19]

Longevity and Seniority

The turnover rate for incumbent black Members of Congress in the 20th century remained low. The creation of majority-black districts, particularly in the late 1960s and the 1970s, provided electoral safety for black House Members. Of all the African Americans who were elected to the House and the Senate from 1928 through 2007, only four were defeated in a general election: De Priest (1934), Brooke (1978), Delegate Melvin Evans of the Virgin Islands (1980), and Senator Carol Moseley-Braun of Illinois (1998). All the other African-American Members who lost their seats (12) were defeated in the Democratic primaries (usually by other African Americans). These trends reflected the growing power of incumbency among the general congressional membership.[20]

During this period, black Members of Congress tended to be slightly older upon their first election than the rest of the congressional population.[21] The average age of African-American Members at their first election was 46.4 years; their white colleagues, who began their careers at marginally earlier ages, enjoyed

a statistical, if not a determinative, advantage in accruing seniority at a younger age. Roughly one-third of black Members during this era were elected in their 30s, as was the general House population that was elected between 1930 and 1960. Moreover, four African-American Members elected in their thirties—Powell, Diggs, Conyers, and Clay—all had unusually long careers and eventually held a variety of leadership posts. At 31 years of age, Diggs was the youngest black Member elected during this period. Nix was the oldest; elected to the House for the first time at age 59, he claimed to be eight years younger than he actually was.

The trend toward increasing electoral safety led to longevity on Capitol Hill. Of the 13 African Americans elected to Congress between 1928 and 1970, 10 served at least 10 years; eight served more than 20 years.[22] Longevity allowed Members to gain the seniority on committees they needed to advance into the leadership or request more-desirable committee assignments. Consequently, a number of milestones were established during this era. Representative Dawson became the first African American to chair a standing congressional committee when he earned the gavel on the House Expenditures in the Executive Departments Committee (later named the Government Operations Committee) in 1949. With the exception of the period from 1953 to 1955, when Republicans controlled the chamber, Dawson chaired the panel until his death in 1970. Representative Powell served as chairman of the Education and Labor Committee from 1961 to 1967, overseeing much of the education reform legislation passed during the Great Society. Additionally, Dawson, Powell, Diggs, and Nix chaired 10 subcommittees on six separate standing committees during this era.[23]

Incumbency conferred a substantial amount of power. It discouraged opposition from within the party because in many instances the incumbent Member controlled or influenced much of the local political machinery. It also strengthened the intangible bonds between voter and Member. In some measure the electoral longevity of this set of African-American Members can be attributed to the power of the entrenched political machines that brought them to office. But Representatives' familiarity, established through their longevity, also fostered loyalty among their constituents. Viewed by their primarily African-American communities as advocates for black interests, most of these Members cultivated unusually cohesive bases of support.[24] These relationships endured even when incumbents such as Adam Clayton Powell and Charles Diggs faced ethics charges or legal problems.[25]

Party Realignment and the New Deal

The political realignment of black voters that began in the late 1920s proliferated during this era. This process involved a "push and pull"; the racial policies of Republicans alienated many black voters, while those of the northern wing of the Democratic Party attracted them.[26] In 1932, incumbent President Herbert Hoover received between two-thirds and three-quarters of the black vote in northern urban wards, despite his attempts to ingratiate himself with southern segregationists and his failure to implement economic policies to help blacks laid low by the Great Depression.[27] But most blacks cast their votes less because of Republican loyalty than because they were loath to support a candidate whose party had zealously suppressed their political rights in the South. Blacks mistrusted Franklin D. Roosevelt because of his party label, his evasiveness about racial issues in the campaign, and his choice of a running mate, House Speaker

Unlike Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., William Dawson of Illinois preferred to stay out of the limelight and work within institutional pathways to effect civil rights change.
Collection of U.S. House of Representatives

Realignment:

A new or unique merging of disparate political parties, philosophies, or organizations.

Great Depression:

The economic crisis and period of minimal business activity in the United States and other industrialized nations that began in 1929 and continued through the 1930s. During the 1920s in the United States, speculation on the stock market led to changes in federal monetary policy. The subsequent decline in personal consumption and investments triggered the stock market crash of 1929, which, along with World War I debts and reparations, precipitated the Great Depression.

Oscar De Priest's successful election campaign to represent a lakeshore district in Chicago initiated the trend of black representation in northern cities, where the Great Migration sharply increased African-American populations.
Collection of U.S. House of Representatives

John Nance Garner of Texas.[28] As late as the mid-1930s, John R. Lynch, a former Republican Representative who represented Mississippi during Reconstruction and in the years immediately afterward, summed up the sentiments of older black voters and upper-middle-class professionals: "The colored voters cannot help but feel that in voting the Democratic ticket in national elections they will be voting to give their indorsement [sic] and their approval to every wrong of which they are victims, every right of which they are deprived, and every injustice of which they suffer."[29]

The Illinois First Congressional District provides a window into the process of black political realignment in northern cities. Prior to becoming solidly Democratic in 1934, the South Chicago district elected Republican Oscar De Priest in 1928, 1930, and 1932. Chicago's Republican machine was firmly established and headed by William Hale (Big Bill) Thompson, who served as mayor from 1915 through 1923 and again from 1927 through 1931. Southern blacks, who swelled the city's population during that period (giving it the second-largest urban black population nationally by 1930), encountered a Republican machine that courted the black vote and extended patronage jobs. The party offered these migrants an outlet for political participation that was unimaginable in the Jim Crow South. African Americans voted in droves for machine politicians like Thompson, who regularly corralled at least 60 percent of the vote in the majority-black Second and Third Wards. Mayor Thompson and the machine promoted black politicians such as De Priest who, in 1915, became the city's first African-American alderman (the equivalent of a city councilman). Black voters remained exceedingly loyal to the Republican ticket, both nationally and locally.[30]

Indeed, the most common political experience of African-American Members of this era came through their involvement in politics at the ward and precinct levels. The Chicago political machines run by Thompson and, later, Democrats such as Edward J. Kelly and Richard J. Daley, sent nearly one-third of the black Members of this era to Capitol Hill. Political machines awakened to and courted the growing African-American urban population long before the national parties realized its potential. At the beginning of this era, the relationship between black politicians and their sponsors was strong—and many black Members of Congress placed party loyalty above all else. But by the late 1960s, as black politicians began to assemble their own power bases, carving out a measure of independence, they often challenged the machine when party interests conflicted with racial issues that were important to the black community. Unlike earlier black Members, who relied on the established political machines to launch their careers, these Members, most of whom were native to the cities they represented, managed to forge political bases separate from the dominant party structure through long-established familial and community relations and civic engagement—and they routinely clashed with the entrenched political powers.[31]

Discontent with the Hoover administration's halting efforts to revive the Depression-Era economy also loosened African-American ties to the party. Nationally, the staggering financial collapse hit blacks harder than most other groups. Thousands had already lost agrarian jobs in the mid-1920s due to the declining cotton market.[32] Others had lost industrial jobs in the first stages of economic contraction, so blacks nationally were already in the grips of an economic depression before the stock market collapsed in October 1929. By the early 1930s, 38 percent of blacks were unemployed (compared to 17 percent of whites).[33] A Roosevelt administration study found that blacks constituted 20 percent of all

Americans on the welfare rolls, even though they accounted for just 10 percent of the total population. In Chicago, one-fourth of welfare recipients were black, although blacks made up just 6 percent of the city's total population.[34]

Political opportunity (both for personal advancement and for the improvement of the black community) in the early 1930s also convinced some African-American politicians to change their party allegiance.[35] Arthur Mitchell and William Dawson epitomized a younger cadre of African Americans who were "ambitious and impatient with the entrenched black Republican leadership, [seeking] a chance for personal advancement in the concurrent rise of the national Democratic party. . . ."[36] Paid to speak on behalf of Hoover's 1928 presidential campaign, Mitchell encountered the De Priest campaign at a Chicago engagement and shortly thereafter joined the Second Ward Regular Republican Organization; he hoped to make an intraparty challenge to the incumbent. But after evaluating De Priest's control of the machine, he switched parties to campaign for Roosevelt in 1932 and two years later successfully unseated De Priest, even though the incumbent retained the majority of the black vote. Mitchell became the first African American elected to Congress as a Democrat—running largely on a platform that tapped into urban black support for the economic relief provided by New Deal programs. "I was elected partly on the achievement of your administration . . . ," Mitchell wrote President Roosevelt shortly after starting his term in office, "and partly on the promise that I would stand [in] back of your administration."[37]

Even more telling was the defection of De Priest's protégé, William Dawson, who, with the Representative's backing, in 1932 won election as a Republican Second Ward alderman to the Chicago city council. After defeating De Priest in the 1938 GOP primary, failing to unseat Mitchell in the general election, and then losing his seat on the city council when De Priest allies blocked his renomination, Dawson seized the opportunity extended by his one time opponents. Allying with Democratic mayoral incumbent Ed Kelly, Dawson changed parties and became Democratic committeeman in the Second Ward, clearing a path to succeed Mitchell upon his retirement from the House in 1942. Dawson's case epitomized the willingness of Democratic bosses like Kelly to recruit African Americans by using patronage positions.[38]

Additionally, black voters nationwide realigned their party affiliation because of the growing perception that the interests of the black community were intertwined with local Democratic organizations. Local patronage positions and nationally administered emergency relief programs in Depression-Era Chicago and other cities proved alluring.[39] While New Deal programs failed to extend as much economic relief to Black Americans as to whites, the tangible assistance they provided conferred a sense that the system was at least addressing a few issues that were important to African Americans. For those who had been marginalized or ignored for so long, even the largely symbolic efforts of the Roosevelt administration inspired hope and renewed interest in the political process.[40] As younger black voters displaced their parents and grandparents, their electoral experiences and loyalties evolved largely alongside and within the Democratic machines that came to dominate northern city wards. By 1936, only 28 percent of blacks nationally voted for Republican nominee Alf Landon—less than half the number who had voted for Hoover just four years before.[41] Over time, the party affiliations of blacks in Congress became equally one-sided. Including Oscar De

Born in Alabama, Representative Oscar De Priest became the first African American elected from the North and the first to be elected in the 20th century.

Image courtesy of Scurlock Studio Records, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

New Deal:

A period of political, economic, and social activity spanning President Franklin D. Roosevelt's first two terms in office (1933–1941). Working with Congress, the Roosevelt administration provided an unprecedented level of emergency intervention in response to the Great Depression that was designed to revive the economy and to provide basic welfare to citizens.

Priest, just five black Republicans were elected to Congress between 1929 and 2007 (about 5 percent of the African Americans to serve in that time span).[42]

The Limits of New Deal Reform

President Franklin Roosevelt remained aloof and ambivalent about black civil rights largely because his economic policies may have been compromised had he raised racial issues, angering southern congressional leaders. During Roosevelt's first term, the administration's emphasis was squarely on mitigating the economic travails of the Depression. This required a close working relationship with Congresses dominated by racially conservative southern Democrats, including several Speakers and most of the chairmen of key committees. "Economic reconstruction took precedence over all other concerns," observes historian Harvard Sitkoff. "Congress held the power of the purse, and the South held power in Congress."[43] There were no plausible scenarios in which the President could have confronted white supremacy head-on during the Depression.

At the urging of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt (center), Mary McLeod Bethune (left), a leading African-American educator, was appointed to head the Division of Negro Affairs of the National Youth Administration.

Image courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration

However, other institutional and structural reforms implemented by the administration eclipsed the President's impassivity toward black civil rights activists.[44] Absent Roosevelt's hands-on involvement, progressive New Dealers advanced the cause of African Americans, transforming many blacks' perceptions about the Democratic Party.[45] First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt prodded her husband to be more responsive and cultivated connections with black leaders, such as educator and women's rights activist Mary McLeod Bethune. One historian describes the First Lady as an "unofficial ombudsman for the Negro."[46] Harold Ickes, a key Roosevelt appointee and Secretary of the Interior Department, was another prominent advocate for blacks. A former president of the Chicago National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and a one-time Republican, Ickes banned segregation from his department; other heads of executive agencies followed his example. As director of the Public Works Administration, Ickes also stipulated that the agency's federal contractors must hire a percentage of blacks equal to or higher than the percentage of blacks recorded in the 1930 occupational census.[47]

Members of the NAACP New York City Youth Council picketed on behalf of anti-lynching legislation in front of the Strand Theater in New York City's Times Square. In 1937, an anti-lynching bill passed the U.S. House, but died in the Senate.

Image courtesy of Library of Congress

Nevertheless, another failed attempt to push for anti-lynching legislation made it apparent that the extent of reform was limited. In this instance—unlike in the early 1920s when there were no blacks serving in Congress—an African-American Member of Congress, Arthur Mitchell, refused to endorse legislation supported by the NAACP. Moreover, Mitchell introduced his own anti-lynching bill in the 74th Congress (1935–1937), which critics assailed as a diluted measure that provided far more lenient sentences and contained many legal ambiguities. Given the choice, southerners favored Mitchell's bill, although they amended it considerably in the Judiciary Committee, further weakening its provisions. Meanwhile, Mitchell waged a public relations blitz, including a national radio broadcast, on behalf of his bill. Only when reformers convincingly tabled Mitchell's proposal early in the 75th Congress (1937–1939) did he enlist in the campaign to support the NAACP measure—smarting from the realization that Judiciary Committee Chairman Hatton Sumners of Texas had misled and used him. The NAACP measure passed the House in April 1937 by a vote of 277 to 120 but was never enacted into law. Instead, southerners in the Senate effectively buried it in early 1938 by blocking efforts to bring it to an up-or-down vote on the floor.[48] The rivalry between Mitchell and the NAACP forecast future problems while

revealing that African-American Members and outside advocacy groups sometimes worked at cross-purposes, confounding civil rights supporters in Congress and providing opponents a wedge for blocking legislation.

The Second World War

World War II marked a watershed moment in African-American history. It brought economic opportunities and opened new avenues for participation in American society. On the eve of the war, roughly 75 percent of American blacks lived in the South, two-thirds of them in rural areas. For the year 1939, 87 percent of black families were estimated to live below the federal poverty level (compared to less than half of white families), and blacks' per capita income was 39 percent that of whites. The war effort produced immense change by renewing the Great Migration, which had stalled during the Great Depression. Between 1940 and 1960, more than 4.5 million African Americans emigrated from the South to the urban North and the West. During the war years alone, approximately 700,000 black civilians left the South for destinations such as Los Angeles to take industrial jobs created by the demands of full-scale mobilization and to seek opportunities for political participation that did not exist in the South—where less than 5 percent of blacks were allowed to vote.[49]

Roughly one million blacks served in the U.S. armed forces during World War II, with approximately half serving overseas. The war effort offered more opportunities than ever for African Americans to defend their country, though discrimination and segregation circumscribed their ability to contribute. While thousands of African Americans served in combat—among them the army's 92nd and 93rd all-black divisions, as well as the famed 99th Pursuit Squadron (known as the Tuskegee Airmen)—the most common assignments for black servicemen were rear-guard mopping-up actions and menial supply and requisition roles. A lack of education among blacks generally and the prejudice of local draft boards and the military leadership accounted for much of the army's reluctance to assign African Americans to combat roles.[50] In 1942, Representative Mitchell repeatedly called attention to British military reverses in Singapore, noting that the colonial power failed "due in part to its own discriminations" against the native people, which undermined morale. "America might suffer a like fate," Mitchell warned, "if we insist upon destroying the morale of one-tenth of its fighting strength."[51] The American call to arms, Mitchell noted bitterly while reflecting on segregation in the army and the navy, "is for white people only, except where Negroes are needed to do the most menial service. Is this democracy? How long will this American practice be kept up? . . . While we are adjusting affairs the world over, we must not fail to adjust affairs in our own country and in our own hearts."[52]

Wartime experiences also mobilized black political activism. Enrollment in the NAACP, which soared from 50,000 on the eve of U.S. intervention in the war to 450,000 in 1946, constituted one measure of renewed political activity. The organization's "Double V" campaign, with its slogan "Democracy Abroad—At Home," called for victory over fascism abroad and victory over racism at home. In *A Rising Wind* (1945), influential NAACP Secretary Walter White suggested that although African Americans were maltreated and maligned even during the war effort, they were too resilient to wallow in "defeatist disillusionment." Instead, White predicted, as the United States demobilized its wartime effort against the

World War II brought women of all races out of the home and into the workplace. With millions of men serving overseas in the military, women filled many factory jobs. Above, two women worked together at the North American Aviation Company Plant.

Image courtesy of Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Hyde Park, NY

Lt. Harriet Ida Pickens and Ens. Frances Willis, the first two African-American Navy "WAVES," or "Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service," posed for a picture during World War II. Thousands of women in this and other military auxiliary units filled a range of jobs from nurses and clerical workers to parachute riggers, machinists, and even ferry pilots.

Image courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration

Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC):

Created in June 1941, this federal office was charged with enforcing Executive Order 8802, which outlawed racial discrimination in wartime industry by conducting investigations, gathering evidence, and reporting abuses. At its peak, the FEPC had 13 regional offices around the nation and was the first agency in U.S. history to appoint blacks to policy-making positions. The FEPC was disbanded in 1946.

In February 1950, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., (second from right) worked towards gaining permanent status for the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC). While Powell and others successfully shepherded a FEPC bill through the House, the measure was blocked in the Senate.

Image courtesy of Library of Congress

Axis Powers, homeward-bound African-American servicemen would enlist in the effort to conquer Jim Crow, "convinced that whatever betterment of their lot is achieved must come largely from their own efforts. They will return determined to use those efforts to the utmost."[53] In this way African Americans' wartime experiences helped foster the modern civil rights movement.

Equally significant, the war against fascism and totalitarian regimes reminded millions of Americans of democracy's shortcomings on the segregated home front. A number of southern states still used the poll tax—a fee as high as $2, earmarked for school improvements, that voters had to pay before casting their ballots. The cost was prohibitive for poor voters, who were overwhelmingly black.[54] In a brief speech on the House Floor during a 1943 debate on a bill to outlaw the poll tax, freshman Representative William Dawson recalled his meager public education as a boy in Georgia, which was supplemented by private schooling, his family "slaved" to pay for. "You know that any method used to try to keep a citizen from exercising [the right to vote] is against the true spirit of the Constitution of the United States," he told colleagues. "In the cause of the 13,000,000 patriotic and loyal Negro citizens I beseech the passage of this bill." Several hours later, the House approved the measure by a sound 265 to 110 vote. However, the bill never cleared the Senate. In 1945, 1947, and 1949, the House again passed anti-poll tax bills. Over time, the measure became less controversial because fewer states employed the poll tax. Still, southern Senators blocked the legislation from being enacted.[55]

Fair Employment Practices Committee

A critical moment in the development of black political activism came in 1941 when civil rights proponents, led by A. Philip Randolph, threatened to march on Washington, DC, to protest discrimination against blacks in the war industry. President Roosevelt consented to act only grudgingly, when his efforts to cajole and dissuade black leaders from vigorously protesting his inaction had been completely exhausted. On June 25, 1941, Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802, which declared "full participation in the national defense program by all citizens of the United States, regardless of race, creed, color, or national origin," based on "the firm belief that the democratic way of life within the Nation can be defended successfully only with the help and support of all groups within its borders." The order required that the federal government, unions, and defense industries "provide for the full and equitable participation of all workers."[56] The President intended to mollify black protest in the face of probable U.S. intervention in World War II, but in issuing his executive order, he inspired black activists, who viewed it, and widely portrayed it, as a milestone victory in bending the federal government to their cause.

Roosevelt's order also created the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) in the federal Office of Personnel Management to investigate complaints about hiring practices. Thousands availed themselves of the FEPC mechanism, though it drew harsh criticism from opponents of the administration's New Deal programs and racial conservatives. In May 1944, congressional opponents of the FEPC, led by Representative Malcolm C. Tarver of Georgia, introduced a measure to repeal the $500,000 annual appropriation for the committee, presenting arguments on several fronts. Tarver suggested that the FEPC was an executive fiat "and does not have the approval or legislative sanction of Congress."[57] Segregationist and avowed New Deal foe John Elliott Rankin of Mississippi

declared that the FEPC was "the beginning of a communistic dictatorship, the likes of which America never dreamed."[58]

Only one African American—William Dawson of Chicago—served in Congress and could defend the record of the committee. Noting that he spoke for "more than a million Negro Americans fighting today with our armed forces and more than 13,000,000 here at home," Dawson argued that the FEPC finally ensured blacks a fair part in the war production effort. "So when I hear some Members stand here and refer to it as a dictatorial committee, bent on making people do something that they do not wish to do, I know that they are not stating the facts to you. They are merely making statements in order to carry out their own purposes."[59] Later that afternoon, the House voted 139 to 95 to agree to the amendment to pull funding for the FEPC. But the Labor Committee, chaired by sympathetic Representative Mary Norton of New Jersey, held hearings on permanently establishing the FEPC—a move that was backed by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt—and funding was temporarily restored.[60] Opponents of the FEPC prevailed in 1946, when they garnered enough support in both chambers to let the FEPC lapse. Twice, proponents of creating a permanent commission—prodded by liberals like Adam Clayton Powell and California Representative Helen Gahagan Douglas, who represented a large black constituency in Los Angeles—brought an FEPC bill before the House. A version of the bill passed the House in February 1950, but southern opponents had fatally weakened its enforcement powers. The measure, which provided only for investigatory and proposal functions, died later that year when it was filibustered in the Senate.

Mary Norton of New Jersey, who chaired the House Committee on Labor from 1937 to 1947, sympathized with the goals of the Fair Employment Practices Committee. Women in Congress often served as important allies of early African-American Members.

Oil on canvas (detail), Elaine Hartley, 1935, Collection of U.S. House of Representatives

Postwar Foreign Policy and African-American Civil Rights

The Cold War, the great power rivalry that evolved between the United States and the Soviet Union in the aftermath of World War II, riveted international attention on U.S. segregation practices.[61] Discrimination against millions of African Americans at home prompted criticism from allies and provided Kremlin propagandists with ample public relations opportunities. Members of the U.S. policymaking elite, who tended to cast the Soviet–American rivalry in terms of good versus evil, were keenly aware of the gap between their rhetoric about defending the "Free World" from communist "aggression" and democratic shortcomings at home, such as the Little Rock crisis of September 1957, when the Dwight D. Eisenhower administration was compelled to dispatch federal troops and marshals to integrate the city's Central High School. Surveying the episode, widely respected foreign policy commentator Walter Lippmann noted, "the work of the American propagandist is not at present a happy one." Segregation "mocks us and haunts us whenever we become eloquent and indignant in the United Nations. . . . The caste system in this country, particularly when as in Little Rock it is maintained by troops, is an enormous, indeed an almost insuperable, obstacle to our leadership in the cause of freedom and human equality."[62]

U.S. officials viewed domestic civil rights through an ideological lens shaped by the Cold War that at times produced contrarian impulses.[63] In some measure, American officials' increasing receptiveness to calls for civil rights at home in the 1950s and 1960s must be examined within the context of their desire to promote a positive image of America abroad, particularly in the contest for support in developing, decolonized countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America—principal

On September 24, 1957, President Dwight D. Eisenhower addressed the nation concerning the integration of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. The President dispatched the 101st Army Airborne Division and U.S. Marshals to protect the students and to maintain order in Little Rock.

Image courtesy of National Park Service, provided by Dwight David Eisenhower Presidential Library

The historic 1954 Supreme Court case, Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka (KS), *desegregated the nation's public schools. In September 1957, nine African-American students enrolled at the whites-only Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Students were escorted to school by 101st Airborne Division soldiers. More than 40 years later, Congress recognized the bravery of the "Little Rock Nine" by awarding them the Congressional Gold Medal.*

Image Courtesy of Library of Congress

Decolonization:

A process that took place from 1945 to 1993 characterized by the dissolution of European colonial institutions in Africa and Asia and the emergence of postcolonial indigenous governments.

proxy arenas for the Cold War.[64] As historian Thomas Borstelmann observes, U.S. officials often sought "to try to manage and control the efforts of racial reformers at home and abroad. . . . They hoped effectively to contain racial polarization and build the largest possible multiracial, anti-Communist coalition under American leadership."[65] Conversely, opponents of civil rights—often to great effect—labeled progressive reforms as communist-inspired. Moreover, investigatory panels such as the communist-hunting House Un-American Activities Committee (backed by arch segregationists such as Representative John E. Rankin) called prominent African Americans to testify during this era, questioning their ties to the American Communist Party and, by inference and innuendo, calling their patriotism into question.[66]

African Americans' participation in the international dialogue about civil rights and postcolonial self-determination is noteworthy. NAACP Secretary Walter White remarked that World War II gave African Americans "a sense of kinship with other colored—and also oppressed—peoples of the world," a belief "that the struggle of the Negro in the United States is part and parcel of the struggle against imperialism and exploitation in India, China, Burma, Africa, the Philippines, Malaya, the West Indies, and South America."[67] The Cold War certainly magnified these issues. As bellwethers of this international cognizance, Representatives Powell and Diggs made significant strides inserting themselves into the foreign policy debate, suggesting a growing black influence in shaping public perceptions about racism that transcended U.S. borders.[68]

Powell emerged as a foreign policy innovator. Representing a polyglot district, the Harlem Representative catered to the many nationalist impulses of his constituency, pushing for more liberal immigration policies, which were important to the large West Indian immigrant community in his district. He often met with visiting African heads of state and, as a freshman Member of the House, introduced legislation that allowed for the naturalization of Filipinos and South Asian Indians.[69] A critic of the containment policy adopted by the Eisenhower administration, and particularly of the emphasis of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles on the need for allies to conform to liberal democratic ideals, he was stingingly critical of racial discrimination in the U.S. foreign policy apparatus. Noting in 1953 that the U.S. was "the most hated nation in the world today," Powell called for immediate civil rights reforms, warning that otherwise "communism must win the global cold war by default."[70]

In April 1955, Powell attended the Bandung, Indonesia, Afro-Asian Conference, a gathering of developing nations which opposed the "neocolonialism" of the superpowers and included representatives from India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Egypt, Ceylon, and Burma. U.S. officials refused to send an official representative to the conference, so Powell went as a private citizen even though the government asked him not to attend. His mere presence, he later told President Eisenhower, was "living proof to the fact that there is no truth in the Communist charge that the Negro is oppressed in America."[71] Powell, however, also powerfully endorsed the notion that smaller nations could remain unaligned and neutral in the larger Cold War struggle and questioned Washington's embrace of the containment strategy and its missionary zeal for promoting free market trade. His efforts prodded the administration to install several African Americans as United Nations delegates and alternates in 1956.[72]

Diggs and Powell also became the first black Members of Congress to visit Africa. Diggs was part of an official U.S. delegation led by Vice President Richard M. Nixon in 1957 that participated in Ghana's celebration of independence from British rule and the inauguration of Kwame Nkrumah as prime minister. Powell, who had a longtime connection with Nkrumah—an attendee of his Abyssinian Baptist Church in the 1930s as a merchant seaman and as a foreign student—joined Diggs in an unofficial capacity in Ghana's capital, Accra.[73] Diggs recalled that he and Powell "stood out there with tears coming down our cheeks" as the Union Jack (the British flag) was lowered and the new Ghanaian flag was raised in its place.[74] Diggs later attended the All-African Peoples Conference in Accra, organized by Nkrumah, as a show of Third World solidarity. Diggs returned from that visit convinced that the United States was "in danger of losing the present advantage it holds in Africa to the Soviet Union." He added, "our Nation needs to be educated on the tremendous significance of the development of Africa."[75] Believing he "could make a contribution" to improve relations between Washington and postcolonial African governments, Diggs requested and was awarded a spot on the Foreign Affairs Committee in January 1959.

American intervention in the Vietnamese civil war—between the communist regime in Hanoi and the U.S.-backed government in Saigon—was another key foreign policy issue for black Members of Congress. Representative Gus Hawkins opposed the war, based partly on impressions he formed while visiting South Vietnam in 1970 that the government routinely violated prisoners' human rights. Others, such as Representative Robert Nix, supported the foreign policies of the two Democratic presidents—John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson—who broadened the U.S. military commitment and mission in Southeast Asia. As a Senate candidate in 1966, Edward Brooke was initially skeptical about the war. After an official visit to Vietnam, he asserted that the military policy of the Johnson administration was prudent because there was no prospect of meaningful negotiations with the North Vietnamese. Brooke tacked back toward a dissenting position when, in 1970, he opposed the Nixon administration's policy of attacking communist sanctuaries in Cambodia. He eventually voted for the Cooper–Church Amendment of 1970, which prohibited the deployment of U.S. forces outside Vietnam.

In this 1966 photo, Education and Labor Committee Chairman Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., (left) walked down a hallway of the Rayburn House Office Building accompanied by his administrative assistant, Chuck Stone.

Image courtesy of Library of Congress

The Civil Rights Movement and the Second Reconstruction, 1945–1968

The broad period from the end of World War II until the late 1960s, often referred to as the "Second Reconstruction," consisted of a grass-roots civil rights movement coupled with gradual but progressive actions by the Presidents, the federal courts, and Congress to provide full political rights for African Americans and to begin to redress longstanding economic and social inequities. While African-American Members of Congress from this era played prominent roles in advocating for reform, it was largely the efforts of everyday Americans who protested segregation that prodded a reluctant Congress to pass landmark civil rights legislation in the 1960s.[76]

During the 1940s and 1950s, executive action, rather than legislative initiatives, set the pace for measured movement toward desegregation. President Harry S. Truman "expanded on Roosevelt's limited and tentative steps toward racial moderation and reconciliation."[77] Responding to civil rights advocates,

Shortly after becoming the first Black American to serve in the U.S. Senate in nearly a century, Edward Brooke of Massachusetts met with President Lyndon B. Johnson in the Oval Office in January 1967.

Photograph by Yoichi R. Okamoto, courtesy of the LBJ Library

A Herblock cartoon from March 1949 depicts a glum-looking President Harry S. Truman and "John Q. Public" inspecting worm-ridden apples representing Truman's Fair Deal policies such as civil rights and rent controls. The alliance of conservative southern Democrats and Republicans in Congress who successfully blocked many of Truman's initiatives is portrayed by the worm labeled "Coalition."

Image courtesy of Library of Congress

Truman established the President's Committee on Civil Rights. Significantly, the committee's October 1947 report, To Secure These Rights, provided civil rights proponents in Congress a legislative blueprint for much of the next two decades. Among its recommendations were the creation of a permanent FEPC, the establishment of a permanent Civil Rights Commission, the creation of a civil rights division in the U.S. Department of Justice, and the enforcement of federal anti-lynching laws and desegregation in interstate transportation. In 1948, President Truman signed Executive Order 9981, desegregating the military. Truman's civil rights policies contributed to the unraveling of the solid Democratic South. Alienated by the administration's race policies, a faction of conservative southerners split to form the Dixiecrats, a racially conservative party that nominated South Carolina Governor (and future U.S. Senator) Strom Thurmond as its presidential candidate in 1948.[78] President Dwight D. Eisenhower, though more cautious, also followed his predecessor's pattern—desegregating Washington, DC, overseeing the integration of blacks to the military, and promoting minority rights in federal contracts.[79]

The federal courts also carved out a judicial beachhead for civil rights activists. In *Smith v. Allwright* (321 U.S. 649, 1944), the U.S. Supreme Court, by an 8 to 1 vote, outlawed the white primary, which by excluding blacks from participating in the Democratic Party primary in southern states had effectively disfranchised them since the early 1900s. A decade later, the high court under Chief Justice Earl Warren handed down a unanimous decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (347 U.S. 483, 1954), a case that tested the segregation of school facilities in Topeka, Kansas. Brown sparked a revolution in civil rights with its plainspoken ruling that separate was inherently unequal. "In the field of public education, separate but equal has no place," the Justices declared. Then, in the early 1960s, the Supreme Court rendered a string of decisions known as the "reapportionment cases" that fundamentally changed the voting landscape for African Americans by requiring that representation in the federal and state legislatures be based substantially on population. *Baker v. Carr* (369 U.S. 186,

Democratic governors met in February 1948 to protest President Harry S. Truman's civil rights reforms and the desegregation of the military. In this picture Senator J. Howard McGrath (seated) of Rhode Island, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, rejected the demands to dismantle President Truman's civil rights program presented by governors (from left to right) Ben T. Laney of Arkansas, R. Gregg Cherry of North Carolina, William P. Lane, Jr., of Maryland, J. Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, and B. H. Jester of Texas.

Image courtesy of Library of Congress

1962) upheld the justiciability of lawsuits that challenged districts apportioned to enforce voting discrimination against minorities. *Gray v. Sanders* (372 U.S. 368, 1963) invalidated Georgia's county unit voting system, giving rise to the concept "one man, one vote." Two decisions in 1964, *Wesberry v. Sanders* (376 U.S. 1) and *Reynolds v. Sims* (377 U.S. 533), proved seminal. The court nullified Georgia's unequal congressional districts in *Wesberry* while validating the 14th Amendment's provision for equal representation for equal numbers of people in each district. In *Reynolds*, the Supreme Court solidified the "one man, one vote" concept in an 8 to 1 decision that expressly linked the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause to the guarantee that each citizen had equal weight in the election of state legislators.

However, Congress lagged behind the presidency, the judiciary, and, often, public sentiment during much of the postwar civil rights movement.[80] Southern conservatives still held the levers of power. Southerners continued to exert nearly untrammeled influence as committee chairmen (coinciding with the apex of congressional committee influence in the House and the Senate), in an era when Democrats controlled the House almost exclusively. In the 84th Congress (1955–1957), for instance, when Democrats regained the majority after a brief period of Republican control and embarked on 40 consecutive years of rule, 12 of the 19 House committees, including some of the most influential panels—Education and Labor, Interstate and Foreign Commerce, Rules, and Ways and Means—were chaired by southerners, who were largely unsympathetic to black civil rights.[81] The powerful coalition of southern Democrats and northern Republicans that had arisen during the late 1930s as a conservative bloc against the economic and social programs of the New Deal continued for various reasons to impede a broad array of social legislation.

Several factors prevented the few African Americans in Congress from playing prominent legislative roles in institutional efforts to pass the major acts of 1957, 1964, and 1965. Black Members were too scarce to alter institutional processes or form a consequential voting bloc. Until the fall 1964 elections, there were only five African Americans in Congress: Dawson, Powell, Diggs, Nix, and Hawkins. John Conyers joined the House in 1965 and Brooke entered the Senate in 1967. These new Members had a limited amount of influence, although Hawkins scored a major success as a freshman when he helped shape the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as a member of Powell's Education and Labor Committee, and Brooke helped secure the housing anti-discrimination provision of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 during his first term in the Senate. Yet while they were determined, energetic, and impassioned, there were too few African Americans in Congress to drive a policy agenda. Moreover, black Members themselves disagreed as to the best method to achieve civil rights advances, and individual legislative styles, conflicting loyalties (party versus activist agendas), and personality differences circumscribed their ability to craft a black issues agenda. Consequently, their uncoordinated and sporadic actions mitigated their potential effect. At key moments, some were excluded from the process or were inexplicably absent. Their symbolic leader, Powell, was too polarizing a figure for House leaders to accord him a highly visible role in the process. This perhaps explains why the Harlem Representative, despite his public passion for racial justice and his ability to deliver legislation through the Education and Labor Committee, was sometimes unusually detached from the legislative process.[82]

Sworn in to the United States Senate on January 3, 1967, Edward Brooke of Massachusetts (second from right) became the first black Senator since 1881. Vice President Hubert Humphrey administered the oath of office, while Senators Mike Mansfield of Montana, Everett Dirksen of Illinois, and Edward M. (Ted) Kennedy of Massachusetts observed.

Image courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration

Howard Smith of Virginia, chairman of the House Rules Committee, routinely used his influential position to thwart civil rights legislation. Smith often shuttered committee operations by retreating to his rural farm to avoid deliberations on pending reform bills.

Oil on canvas (detail), Victor L'Allier, ca. 1974, Collection of U.S. House of Representatives

With few well-placed allies, civil rights initiatives faced an imposing gauntlet in a congressional committee system stacked with southern racial conservatives. Under the leadership of Chairman Emanuel Celler for most of this period, the House Judiciary Committee offered reformers a largely friendly and liberal forum. On the House Floor, a group of progressive liberals and moderate Republicans, including Celler, Clifford Case of New Jersey, Jacob Javits of New York, Hugh D. Scott of Pennsylvania, Frances Bolton of Ohio, and Helen Gahagan Douglas, emerged as civil rights advocates. Case (1954), Javits (1956), and Scott (1958) were elected to the Senate and would influence that chamber's civil rights agenda. But no matter how much support the rank-and-file membership provided, any measure that passed out of Judiciary was sent to the House Rules Committee, which directed legislation onto the floor and structured bills for debate. Chaired by arch segregationist Howard Smith of Virginia, this hugely influential panel became the killing ground for a long parade of civil rights proposals. Measures were watered down or were never considered. Smith often shuttered committee operations, retreating to his farm in Virginia's horse country to stall deliberations. When he explained one of his absences by noting that he needed to inspect a burned-down barn, Leo Allen of Illinois, the ranking Republican on the Rules Committee, remarked, "I knew the Judge was opposed to the civil rights bill. But I didn't think he would commit arson to beat it."[83]

The Senate's anti-majoritarian structure magnified the power of southern racial conservatives. In contrast to the rules of the House, which strictly limited Members' ability to speak on the floor, the Senate's long-standing tradition of allowing Members to speak without interruption played into the hands of obstructionists. The filibuster, a Senate practice that allowed a Senator or a group of Senators to prevent a vote on a bill, became the chief weapon of civil rights opponents. In this era, too, Senate rules were modified, raising the bar needed to achieve cloture, i.e., to end debate and move to a vote on legislation. From 1949 to 1959, cloture required the approval of two-thirds of the chamber's entire membership, rather than two-thirds of the Members who were present. Influential southern Senators held key positions in the upper chamber and, not surprisingly, were among the most skilled parliamentarians. Richard Russell of Georgia, a master of procedure, framed the opposition's defense on constitutional concerns about federal interference in states' issues, making him a more palatable figure than many of the Senate's earlier racial conservatives such as Mississippi's James K. Vardaman or Theodore Bilbo.[84] Russell attracted northern and western Republicans to his cause based on their opposition to the expansion of federal powers that would be necessary to enforce civil rights in the South. Mississippi's James Eastland, another procedural tactician, who presided over the Judiciary Committee beginning in March 1956, bragged that he had special pockets tailored into his suits where he stuffed bothersome civil rights bills. Between 1953 and 1965 more than 122 civil rights measures were referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee, but only one was reported back to the full Senate.[85]

Cloture:

A parliamentary procedure in the U.S. Senate requiring the approval of a super-majority of Senators to end debate on a pending proposal and bring legislation to final consideration and a vote.

Despite such official intransigence, the nonviolent civil rights movement—contrasting sharply with the vicious southern backlash against it—transformed public opinion. Driven increasingly by external events in the mid-1950s—the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and the rise of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)—support for the passage of major civil rights legislation grew in Congress. In Montgomery, Alabama, local activists led

by King (then a 27-year-old Baptist preacher), had launched a boycott against the city's segregated bus system. The protest began after the arrest of Rosa Parks, a seamstress and a member of the NAACP who defied local ordinances in December 1955 by refusing to yield her seat on the bus to a white man and move to the rear of the vehicle.[86] The year-long—and, ultimately, successful—boycott forged the SCLC, brought national attention to the struggle, and launched King to the forefront of a grass-roots, nonviolent humanitarian protest movement that, within a decade, profoundly changed American life.

Racial violence in the South, which amounted to domestic terrorism against blacks, continued into the middle of the 20th century and powerfully shaped public opinion. Though more sporadic than before, beatings, cross burnings, lynchings, and myriad other forms of white-on-black intimidation went largely unpunished. Nearly 200 African Americans are thought to have been lynched between 1929 and 1964, but that figure likely underrepresents the actual number.[87] In August 1955, a particularly gruesome killing galvanized activists and shocked a largely complacent nation. Emmett Till, a 14-year-old from Chicago who was visiting family in Mississippi, was shot in the head, and his lifeless body was dumped off a bridge, for the alleged "crime" of whistling at a white woman. Determined to expose the brutality of the act, his mother allowed the national press to photograph the boy's remains, and thousands of mourners streamed past the open casket.

Charles Diggs's visible role in the wake of the Till lynching "catapulted" him into the "national spotlight."[88] At considerable personal risk, Diggs accompanied Till's mother to the September 1955 trial at which the two accused murderers were acquitted in kangaroo court proceedings. Diggs's presence in Mississippi demonstrated solidarity with (and hope for) many local African Americans. A black reporter covering the trial recalled that Diggs "made a difference down there . . . people lined up to see him. They had never seen a black member of Congress. Blacks came by the truckloads. Never before had a member of Congress put his life on the line protecting the constitutional rights of blacks."[89] Diggs, who earlier had pushed for a U.S. Justice Department probe of the defrauding of black Mississippi voters, proposed to unseat the Members of the Mississippi delegation to the U.S. House on the grounds that they were elected by only a fraction of the state's voters.[90] Diggs's performance contrasted sharply with that of William Dawson, who represented the Chicago district where Till's mother lived. In an open 1956 letter to Dawson, the NAACP questioned his failure to comment publicly on the Till lynching. Expressing further disappointment with Dawson's support for reform legislation as a member of the Democratic committee writing the civil rights plank for the national party, the NAACP denounced him for "silence, compromise, and meaningless moderation" on civil rights matters.[91]

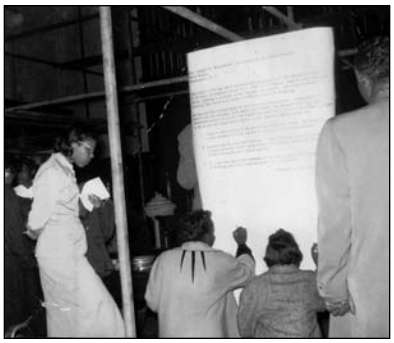
Adam Clayton Powell, dubbed "Mr. Civil Rights," garnered national headlines during the 1940s and 1950s for his "Powell Amendment," a rider prohibiting federal funds for institutions that promoted or endorsed segregation. Powell attached his amendment to a variety of legislative measures, beginning with a school lunch program bill that passed the House on June 4, 1946. "From then on I was to use this important weapon with success," Powell recalled, "to bring about opportunities for the good of man and to stop those efforts that would harm democracy's progress forward." Beginning in 1955, Powell vowed to attach his rider to all education bills, starting with appropriations for school construction.[92] His actions riled

As an NAACP activist in Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks famously refused to give up her seat to a white rider on a public bus in 1955. Her act of civil disobedience galvanized the U.S. civil rights movement. Congress later honored Parks with a Congressional Gold Medal and by making her the first woman to lie in honor in the Capitol Rotunda after her death. Above, Parks rides on a desegregated bus.

Image courtesy of Library of Congress

In September 1963, the African-American community in Birmingham, Alabama, mourned the deaths of four young girls killed by a bomb at the 16th Street Baptist Church. The city experienced such a dramatic rise in violence that it earned the nickname "Bombingham."

Image courtesy of Library of Congress



In August 1955, a Chicago teenager, Emmett Till, was brutally murdered in Mississippi while visiting family. Till was lynched for the alleged "crime" of allegedly whistling at a white woman. The episode riveted national attention on violence against blacks in the South. Across the nation, groups like the Metropolitan Community Church of Chicago, pictured here, signed petitions to President Dwight D. Eisenhower condemning the violence.

Image courtesy of Library of Congress

southern racial conservatives and stirred unease among otherwise liberal allies concerned that the amendment jeopardized social legislation.

Southern defiance, on display on Capitol Hill, crystallized in a bold proclamation conceived by Senators Russell, Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, and Harry Flood Byrd, Sr., of Virginia. Titled the "Declaration of Constitutional Principles" and known colloquially as the Southern Manifesto, it attacked the Supreme Court's Brown decision, accusing the Justices of abusing judicial power and trespassing upon states' rights. Signed on March 12, 1956, by 82 Representatives and 19 Senators (roughly one-fifth of Congress), it urged southerners to exhaust all "lawful means" in the effort to resist the "chaos and confusion" that would result from school desegregation.

Civil Rights Act of 1957

In 1956, partly at the initiative of outside advocacy groups such as the NAACP, proposals by Eisenhower's Justice Department under the leadership of Attorney General Herbert Brownell, and the growing presidential ambitions of Senate Majority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson, a civil rights bill began to move through Congress. Southern opponents such as Senators Russell and Eastland, realizing that some kind of legislation was imminent, slowed and weakened reform through the amendment process. The House passed the measure by a wide margin, 279 to 97, though southern opponents managed to excise voting protections from the original language. Adam Clayton Powell and Charles Diggs argued passionately on the House Floor for a strong bill. Powell particularly aimed at southern amendments that preserved trials by local juries because all-white juries (since blacks were excluded from the voting process, they were also barred from jury duty) ensured easy acquittals for white defendants accused of crimes against blacks. "This is an hour for great moral stamina," Powell told colleagues. "America

On October 11, 1956, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., announced to reporters his decision to support incumbent Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Known as a political maverick, Powell had backed Democratic candidate Adlai Stevenson in 1952, but broke with Stevenson in 1956 because of his ambivalent position on civil rights. Powell noted Eisenhower's "great contribution in the civil rights field."

Image courtesy of National Park Service, provided by Dwight David Eisenhower Presidential Library

stands on trial today before the world and communism must succeed if democracy fails. . . . Speak no more concerning the bombed and burned and gutted churches behind the Iron Curtain when here in America behind our 'color curtain' we have bombed and burned churches and the confessed perpetrators of these crimes go free because of trial by jury."[93] In the Senate, Paul H. Douglas of Illinois and Minority Leader William F. Knowland of California circumvented Eastland's Judiciary Committee and got the bill onto the floor for debate. Lyndon Johnson played a crucial role, too, discouraging an organized southern filibuster while forging a compromise that allayed southern concern about the bill's jury and trial provisions.94 On August 29 the Senate approved the Civil Rights Act of 1957 (P.L. 85-315) by a vote of 60 to 15.

The resulting law, signed by President Eisenhower in early September 1957, was the first major civil rights measure passed since 1875. The act established the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (CCR) for two years and created a civil rights division in the Justice Department, but its powers to enforce voting laws and punish the disfranchisement of black voters were feeble, as the commission noted in 1959. A year later, the Civil Rights Act of 1960 (P.L. 86-449)—again significantly weakened by southern opponents—extended the life of the CCR and stipulated that voting and registration records in federal elections must be preserved. However, southerners managed to strike a far-reaching provision to send registrars into southern states to oversee voter enrollment.

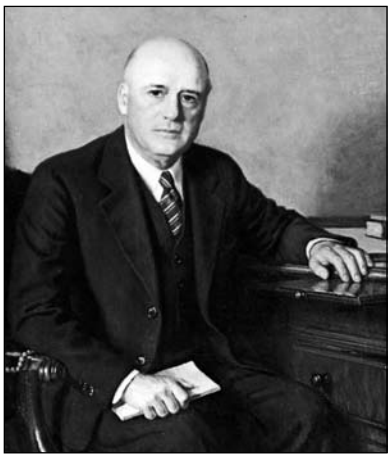
Though southern Members were heartened by these successes, consequential internal congressional reforms promised to end obstructionism. In 1961, Speaker Sam Rayburn of Texas challenged Chairman Howard Smith directly by proposing to expand the Rules Committee by adding three more Members to the roster, a move that was intended to break Smith's stranglehold over social legislation. Rayburn recruited a group of roughly two dozen northern Republicans who supported the reform and declared their intention to "repudiate" a GOP alliance with southern Democrats "to attempt to narrow the base of our party, to dull its conscience, to transform it into a negative weapon of obstruction."[95] The forces of reform prevailed by a margin of 217 to 212. The support of moderate Republicans presaged the development of a coalition that would undercut the power of southern racial conservatives and pass sweeping civil rights laws.

Civil Rights Act of 1964

Pressure for change, as it did throughout the Second Reconstruction, came from outside the institution. By 1963, the need for a major civil rights bill weighed heavily on Congress and the John F. Kennedy administration. Protests at lunch counters in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1960 were followed in 1961 by attempts to desegregate interstate buses by the Freedom Riders, who were arrested in Jackson, Mississippi. In April 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr., led a large protest in Birmingham, Alabama, that was greeted with brutality. Birmingham Police Commissioner Eugene (Bull) Connor unleashed police dogs, and high-powered hoses on protesters. The images coming out of the Deep South horrified Americans from all walks of life. In August 1963, King and other civil rights leaders organized the largest-ever march on Washington, DC. Addressing hundreds of thousands of supporters from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, the world-renowned leader of a movement that rivaled that of his model, Mahatma Gandhi, delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

African-American demonstrators occupied a lunch counter after being refused service in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1960. Sit-ins like this one took a toll on segregated businesses across the South. Many establishments relented and ended segregation practices because of the ensuing loss of business.

Image courtesy of Library of Congress



House Speaker Sam Rayburn of Texas spearheaded the successful effort in 1961 to expand the membership of the House Rules Committee. Rayburn's actions undercut the power of southern conservatives, including Rules Committee Chairman Howard Smith of Virginia.

Oil on canvas, Douglas Chandor, 1941, Collection of U.S. House of Representatives

In 1963, Birmingham, Alabama, became the focal point of the civil rights movement. Throughout the spring and summer, protesters challenged segregation practices. Images such as this one, showing Birmingham firefighters turning powerful hoses on nonviolent protesters, convinced many average Americans of the need to end Jim Crow in the South.

Image courtesy of AP/ Wide World Photos

As the finale to the massive August 28, 1963, March on Washington, Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. This photograph showed the view from over the shoulder of the Abraham Lincoln statue while marchers gathered along the length of the Reflecting Pool.

Image courtesy of Library of Congress

A reluctant Kennedy administration began coordinating with congressional allies to pass a significant reform bill. Freshman Representative Gus Hawkins observed in May 1963 that the federal government had a special responsibility to ensure that federal dollars did not underwrite segregation practices in schools, facilities for vocational education, libraries, and other municipal entities, saying, "those who dip their hands in the public treasury should not object if a little democracy sticks to their fingers." Otherwise "do we not harm our own fiscal integrity, and allow room in our conduct for other abuses of public funds?"[96] After Kennedy's assassination in November 1963, his successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, invoked the slain President's memory to prod reluctant legislators to produce a civil rights measure.

In the House, a bipartisan bill supported by Judiciary Chairman Celler and Republican William McCulloch of Ohio worked its way to passage. McCulloch and Celler forged a coalition of moderate Republicans and northern Democrats while deflecting southern amendments determined to cripple the bill. Standing in the well of the House defending his controversial amendment and the larger civil rights bill, Representative Powell described the legislation as "a great moral issue . . . what we are doing [today] is a part of an act of God."[97] On February 10, 1964, the House, voting 290 to 130, approved the Civil Rights Act of 1964; 138 Republicans helped pass the bill. In scope and effect, the act was among the most far-reaching pieces of legislation in U.S. history. It contained sections prohibiting discrimination in public accommodations (Title II); state and municipal facilities, including schools (Titles III and IV); and—incorporating the Powell Amendment—in any program receiving federal aid (Title V). The act also prohibited discrimination in hiring and employment, creating the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to investigate workplace discrimination (Title VII).[98]

Having passed the House, the act faced its biggest hurdle in the Senate. President Johnson and Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield of Montana tapped Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota to build Senate support for the measure and fend off the efforts of a determined southern minority to stall it. One historian notes that Humphrey's assignment amounted to an "audition for the role of Johnson's running mate in the fall presidential election."[99] Humphrey, joined by Republican Thomas Kuchel of California, performed brilliantly, lining up the support of influential Minority Leader Everett Dirksen of Illinois. By allaying Dirksen's unease about the enforcement powers of the EEOC, civil rights proponents then co-opted the support of a large group of midwestern Republicans who followed Dirksen's lead.[100] On June 10, 1964, for the first time in its history, the Senate invoked cloture on a civil rights bill (by a vote of 71 to 29), thus cutting off debate and ending a 75-day filibuster—the longest in the chamber's history. On June 19, 1964, 46 Democrats and 27 Republicans joined forces to approve the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 73 to 27. President Johnson signed the bill (P.L. 88-352) into law on July 2, 1964.

Voting Rights Act of 1965

Passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 dealt the deathblow to southern congressional opposition. Momentum for tougher voting rights legislation—expanding on the provisions of Section I of the 1964 act—built rapidly because of President Johnson's continued determination and unfolding civil rights protests. On March 7, 1965, marchers led by future U.S. Representative John R. Lewis of Georgia were savagely beaten at the foot of the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma,

On July 2, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law. Those gathered behind President Johnson at the bill signing included civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., and future District of Columbia Delegate Walter Fauntroy. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a landmark piece of legislation, prohibiting segregation in public accommodations, facilities, and schools, and outlawing discrimination in federally funded projects.

Image courtesy of AP/ Wide World Photos

Alabama. Many of the protestors were kneeling in prayer when state troopers clubbed and gassed them on what would later be known as "Bloody Sunday." Television cameras captured the onslaught and beamed images into the homes of millions of Americans. As with the brutality in Birmingham, public reaction was swift and, if possible, even more powerful. "The images were stunning—scene after scene of policemen on foot and horseback beating defenseless American citizens," Lewis wrote years later. "This was a face-off in the most vivid terms between a dignified, composed, completely nonviolent multitude of silent protestors and the truly malevolent force of a heavily armed, hateful battalion of troopers. The sight of them rolling over us like human tanks was something that had never been seen before."[101]

After President Johnson addressed a Joint Session of Congress to speak about the events in Selma, legislative action was swift. A bill moved through both chambers that suspended the use of literacy tests for a five-year period and provided for sending federal poll watchers and voting registrars to states with persistent patterns of voting discrimination. It required Justice Department pre-clearance of any change to election statutes. Finally, the bill made obstructing an individual's right to vote a federal crime. On May 26, 1965, the Senate passed the Voting Rights Act by a vote of 77 to 19. Among the African-American Members who spoke on behalf of the bill on the House Floor was freshman John Conyers, Jr. Joined by Representatives Diggs, Hawkins, and Powell, Conyers had visited Selma in February 1965 as part of a 15-Member congressional delegation that investigated voting discrimination.[102] The experience convinced him that there was "no alternative but to have the federal Government take a much more positive and specific role in guaranteeing the right to register and vote in all elections . . . surely this Government cannot relax if even one single American is arbitrarily denied that most basic right of all in a democracy—the right to vote."[103] The House passed the act by a vote of 333 to 85 on July 9, 1965. An amended conference report passed both chambers by wide margins and President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (P.L. 89-110) into law on August 6, 1965.[104]

As chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Emanuel Celler of New York was a prime mover behind the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Image courtesy of Library of Congress

On August 6, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol. The legislation suspended the use of literacy tests and voter disqualification devices for five years, authorized the use of federal examiners to supervise voter registration in states that used tests or in which less than half the voting-eligible residents registered or voted, directed the U.S. Attorney General to institute proceedings against use of poll taxes, and provided criminal penalties for violations of the act.

Photograph by Frank Wolfe, courtesy of the LBJ Library

The measure dramatically increased voter registration in the short term. By 1969, 60 percent of all southern blacks were registered. Predictably, the bill's impact was most dramatic in the Deep South. In Mississippi, for instance, where less than 7 percent of African Americans qualified to vote in 1964, 59 percent were on voter rolls by 1968.[105] By 1975, approximately 1.5 million African Americans had registered to vote in the South.[106]

Coupled with the "one man, one vote" standard, which set off a round of court-ordered redistricting, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 reshaped the electoral landscape for African Americans. In southern states, particularly in cities such as Atlanta, Houston, and Memphis, the creation of districts with a majority of African-American constituents propelled greater numbers of African Americans into Congress by the early 1970s. In northern urban areas, too, the growing influence of black voters reshaped Congress. Blacks constituted a growing percentage of the population of major U.S. cities (20 percent in 1970 versus 12 percent in 1950), partly because in the 1960s whites left the cities in droves for the suburbs.[107] In 1968, Louis Stokes (Cleveland), Bill Clay (St. Louis), and Shirley Chisholm (Brooklyn) were elected to Congress from redrawn majority-black districts in which white incumbents chose not to run.[108] By 1971, the number of African-American Members in the House was more than double the number who had served in 1965.

Baton-wielding Alabama state troopers waded into a crowd of peaceful civil rights demonstrators led by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Chairman John Lewis (on ground left center, in light coat) on March 7, 1965, in Selma, Alabama. Known later as "Bloody Sunday," images of the violent event shocked millions of Americans from all walks of life and built momentum for the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Image courtesy of Library of Congress

Civil Rights Act of 1968

The era's final major piece of civil rights legislation reflected the changing emphasis of the civil rights movement itself: Having secured a measure of political rights, black leaders now emphasized the importance of equal economic and educational opportunity. Congressional action in this area was measured; the national mood and major events had begun to turn against reform. The ambitious agenda of federal programs known as the Great Society had begun to wane. Initiated by President Johnson in the mid-1960s, these programs were in many ways conceived of as an extension of New Deal reforms. Great Society legislation marked the zenith of federal activism—addressing civil rights, urban development,

President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1968 on April 11, 1968. The act prohibited discrimination in the sale or rental of approximately 80 percent of the housing in the U.S. Newly elected Senator Edward Brooke of Massachusetts (fourth from left) attended the signing.

Photograph by Yoichi R. Okamoto, courtesy of the LBJ Library

the environment, health care, education, housing, consumer protection, and poverty. With Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress, the administration won the enactment of a number of far-reaching programs, among them several that exist today, such as Medicare, which provides health coverage for the elderly, and Medicaid, which provides the poor with access to hospitalization, optional medical insurance, and other health care benefits.[109]

But the cost of the deepening U.S. military commitment in Vietnam rapidly bled dry Great Society programs that, in part, addressed concerns about economic equality raised by black leaders. Moreover, middle-class whites in northern and western states who had empathized with the nonviolent protests of southern blacks were far more skeptical of the civil rights militants who were bent on bringing the movement to their doorsteps, typified by Stokely Carmichael, the Black Panthers, and the Black Power movement. Major urban rioting, particularly the devastating 1965 riot in Watts, Los Angeles (in Representative Gus Hawkins's district) turned mainstream white opinion even further from the cause. Widespread rioting in April 1968 after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.—federal troops were deployed even in Washington, DC—reinforced white alienation. Nevertheless, in early March 1968, the Senate approved the Civil Rights Act of 1968 by a 71 to 20 vote. The measure outlawed discrimination in the sale and rental of roughly 80 percent of U.S. housing (the proportion handled by agents and brokers) by 1970 and meted out federal punishment to persons engaged in interstate activities to foment or participate in riots. The bill also extended constitutional rights to Native Americans. Days after King's murder in Memphis, Tennessee, the House followed the Senate's lead by a vote of 250 to 172.

Black Panthers (or Black Panther Party for Self-Defense):

An organization formed in 1966 by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale to monitor police activity and brutality against residents in Oakland, California. In contrast to the southern civil rights movement's advocacy of nonviolent resistance, the Black Panthers promoted local self-help, community activism, and armed defense against the use of excessive force by police. The Black Panthers also called for the restructuring of American society to ensure social, political, and economic equality for all races.

Crafting an Institutional Identity

Confronting Racism

Across the decades, African-American Members' encounters with institutional racism and segregation on Capitol Hill, though gradually declining in intensity, provided a common and uniting experience. In the years leading up to the

Depression and World War II, Washington had the feel of a slow, sleepy, southern town in contrast to the bustle and cultural multiplicities of northern metropolitan cities like New York, Boston, and Chicago. Washington also embraced southern segregationist practices. Southbound travelers embarking on journeys at the Union Station terminal boarded segregated train cars. Formal as well as informal racial codes also existed in the city's restaurants, department stores, movie theaters, and boarding houses well into the 1950s. Washington's legion of federal civil servants were separated according to race; until the eve of World War II, applicants for federal jobs were required to submit a personal photograph, providing a de facto method of racial discrimination. Even after the Eisenhower administration officially desegregated the capital city, blacks and whites remained separate, living in distinct neighborhoods, attending separate churches, and enrolling in separate schools.[110]

Congress itself practiced latent and blatant institutional racism, ranging from the denial of prominent committee assignments and any real voice in the leadership to segregated barbershops and dining facilities and the open disparagement of black Members by their colleagues. For instance, in 1929 southern Members objected to being sworn in on the House Floor with Representative De Priest, occupying an office next to his, or serving on a committee with him.[111] Capitol Hill associations and social clubs with congressional ties were uneasy welcoming black Members or their families. The Congressional Club—an organization chartered in the early 1900s initially for spouses and daughters of Representatives and Senators, Supreme Court Justices, and Cabinet members—considered a bylaw that would deny membership to De Priest's wife, Jessie, but rejected it due to the scrutiny of the national press.[112]

In 1929, Jessie De Priest, the wife of Representative Oscar De Priest of Illinois, received an invitation to a tea hosted by First Lady Lou Hoover. The invitation roiled southern Members of Congress and their wives. The Mississippi state legislature passed a resolution imploring the Herbert Hoover administration to give "careful and thoughtful consideration to the necessity of the preservation of the racial integrity of the white race." Mrs. De Priest attended a specially scheduled tea with Lou Hoover, but the episode underscored pervasive segregation practices in the U.S.

Image courtesy of Scurlock Studio Records, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

Despite the segregation prevalent on Capitol Hill during this era, growing numbers of African Americans were employed there. In 1949, Alice Dunnigan of the Associated Negro Press—one of the first black journalists credentialed to work in both the Senate and the House press galleries—wrote a four-part series titled "A Visit to the Nation's Capitol" that appeared in the Tuskegee Institute's Service magazine. Dunnigan interviewed dozens of African Americans, some of whom had been employed on Capitol Hill for three decades or more in a variety of capacities: barber, messenger, library assistant, doorkeeper, guard, head waiter, chef, filing clerk, driver, carpenter, secretary, guard, and committee clerk. According to Dunnigan, one-third of the 1,500 persons employed by the Office of the Architect of the Capitol in 1949 were African Americans. Among the individuals Dunnigan interviewed were Jesse Nichols, a document clerk and librarian who was one of the first blacks to hold a clerical position in the Senate.[113] Dunnigan also chronicled the story of Christine Ray Davis, the first African-American chief clerk of a congressional committee—a position she assumed in 1949 when William Dawson became chairman of the House Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Department. As chief clerk, Davis was the highest-paid black woman in the federal government and, Dunnigan noted, the first African-American congressional aide with unrestricted access to the House Floor.[114]

Speaking Out Against Segregation

Black Members of Congress facing segregation were left with two alternatives that were less than ideal: meet institutional segregation frontally to publicize the folly of racist practices, or minimize its significance by gaining positions of influence, thereby ameliorating segregation from within the institution. Individuals'

personalities often governed that choice, though just as often, purposeful legislative calculations factored into black Members' response to racism in the House and the Senate. There was little middle ground. Those who confronted racism openly suffered the wrath of white supremacists, and those perceived as less than zealous in the pursuit of civil rights were scorned by black activists.

Oscar De Priest chose to combat segregation in Congress directly by addressing the issue on the House Floor and by using the power of the press.[115] His arrival on Capitol Hill was met with outright contempt. One well-publicized episode involved an invitation to his wife, Jessie, to a traditional White House tea hosted by First Lady Lou Henry Hoover. Southern legislators howled in indignation, and the Mississippi legislature passed a resolution calling on President Herbert Hoover to give "careful and thoughtful consideration to the necessity of racial preservation of the racial integrity of the white race," because "such an exhibition of social equality at the White House tends to destroy such racial integrity."[116] The First Lady divided the party into sessions, carefully selecting invitees to Jessie De Priest's group and providing the wives of southern Members an alternative time to attend. Undeterred, Jessie De Priest attended the event while her husband dismissed critics as "cowards."

De Priest became an advocate for desegregation because of the environment he encountered, not because of his political background. During a tough re-election bid in 1934, his anti-segregationist rhetoric increased as Election Day approached. Initially inclined to win over his House colleagues by his example as a Member, he later declared, "but if securing their respect means sacrificing my race, that respect I do not seek any longer." De Priest continued, "I am sorry I have to devote my time trying to watch the needs of the American Negro. I wish I could devote my time, like you gentlemen devote your time, trying to watch the interests of all the American people instead of just 12,000,000 of them."[117] In 1934, the Illinois Representative waged a public campaign to stop segregation in the House Restaurant. "If we allow segregation and the denial of constitutional rights under the Dome of the Capitol, where in God's name will we get them?" De Priest demanded. Though De Priest shamed the House into creating a special investigatory committee, the majority of its members were Democrats who acceded to the wishes of southern racial conservatives by refusing to recommend reforms.[118] De Priest also protested efforts to segregate other House facilities, such as the barbershop, and pressured Speaker Henry T. Rainey of Illinois to permit a black minister to offer an opening session prayer in the House.[119]

Despite his raw personal courage, De Priest failed to achieve any lasting reform—a setback that made him look ineffective in the eyes of his Chicago-area constituents and left him vulnerable to political attack. His lack of legislative influence also diminished his national status as a hero among African Americans. Some even implied that he lacked familiarity with the larger black community and the resolve to pursue and achieve substantive legislative victories. Even after De Priest had begun advocating federal pensions for former slaves, the African-American *Atlanta Daily World* complained he was "conspicuous by his silence on important questions. As a legislator, as a statesman, as a student of those things affecting the Negro's welfare, he has been a grand and glorious flop."[120]

The role of agitator and public advocate for civil rights suited Adam Clayton Powell. Charismatic, flashy, and photogenic, Powell developed a national following based as much on his style as on his legislative substance. In an era in

Representative William L. Dawson of Illinois chaired the Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments, later Government Operations, beginning in the 81st Congress (1949–1951). Dawson was the first African American to chair a House standing committee.

Image courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration

which the press proved exceedingly forgiving of politicians' personal eccentricities, Powell stood out: driving a blue Jaguar, dressing impeccably, smoking cigars, and enjoying the company of beautiful women. He was as much at home on the French Riviera as he was in Harlem. "For years his life was so flamboyant that it verged on caricature, yet he got away with it, not only politically but somehow esthetically," noted one observer. While others advocated Black Power, Powell "stood for Black Pleasure."[121]

Substantively, Powell served as a prototype of the new, activist African-American politician. His loyal Harlem constituency provided a solid base of support that allowed him to pursue issues affecting the black community nationwide. Some anticipated his arrival on Capitol Hill, others dreaded it. But no one doubted it would be eventful. Speaker Sam Rayburn, who often counseled new Members on the folkways of the institution, called Powell into his office and lectured him from behind his desk. "Adam, everybody down here expects you to come with a bomb in both hands. Now don't do that, Adam. . . . Just see how things operate here. Take your time. Freshmen members of Congress are not supposed to be heard and not even to be seen too much. There are a lot of good men around here. Listen to what they have to say, drink it all in, get reelected a few more times, and then start moving. But for God's sake, Adam, don't throw those bombs." Powell replied, "Mr. Speaker, I've got a bomb in each hand, and I'm going to throw them right away." Rayburn burst into jovial laughter, and according to Powell, the exchange marked the beginning of a long friendship.[122]

On multiple fronts, Powell waged a direct, combative campaign against segregation on Capitol Hill. He helped to desegregate the House Press Gallery and to make available more opportunities for black reporters. He repeatedly challenged House Restaurant policy by bringing black staffers and guests to the segregated dining room. He also publicly confronted some of the most ardent segregationists in the House. His long-standing feud with Representative John E. Rankin often spilled out onto the House Floor. At one point Powell said he planned "to baptize Rankin or drown him." Rankin, who called Powell's election to the House a "disgrace," refused to sit near him on the floor, but Powell stalked Rankin and sat as close to him as possible (forcing him one day to move five times).[123] Powell used his personal charisma calculatingly, providing the black community with an unflinching, activist political hero. "I've always got my mouth open, sometimes my foot is in it, but it is always open," Powell said. "It serves a purpose; it digs at the white man's conscience."[124] But it also incurred substantive legislative costs. Whereas Powell's flamboyance and public refusals to brook racist policies won him many supporters, they also limited his effectiveness as a legislator; a growing contingent of politicians found it impossible to work with such a militant Member.

Taking note of the experiences of Members such as De Priest and Powell, other black Members of Congress purposefully pursued an institutionalist strategy. But by seeking to advance within the institutional power structure or to remain loyal to the party and/or the local political machine that propelled them into office, they often attracted the enmity of fellow blacks and civil rights advocates who believed they were subordinating the interests of the black community for their own aggrandizement. Representative Arthur Mitchell, the first black Democrat elected to Congress, chose to work within the power structure of the Democrat-controlled House. During his four terms in Congress,

In 1967, cartoonist Gib Crockett depicted the growing controversy in Congress over Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. In January 1967, the House of Representatives removed Powell from his position as Chairman of the Committee on Education and Labor and refused to seat the New York Representative in the 90th Congress (1967–1969). The House approved a measure to deny Powell his seat for five weeks while a nine-member bipartisan special committee examined ethics charges against him. After the special committee recommended several punishments for Powell, including censure, the House voted 307 to 116 to exclude him from the 90th Congress.
Image courtesy of Library of Congress

the Chicago Representative worked closely with many white colleagues, adopting the philosophy of patient cooperation and accommodation that was advocated by his mentor, Booker T. Washington, whom Mitchell hoped to honor by establishing a national shrine.[125] Mitchell watched the futile battle of his predecessor, De Priest, against segregationist practices in the Capitol and calculated another course. In a pointed remark aimed at De Priest, Mitchell informed constituents shortly after his first election, "I think the people are tired of bombast, ballyhoo, and noise, where we should have constructive thought, honest action and real statesmanship."[126] But Mitchell's reluctance to push issues important to the African-American community soon disappointed black civil rights activists. Particularly galling to the black press and the NAACP were his apparent lack of interest in an assignment on the District of Columbia Committee—with oversight of the capital and its large black population—and his refusal to address the poor treatment of black journalists covering Capitol Hill.[127] Yet, over time and after taking stock of the depth of segregationist sentiment in the House, Mitchell became more committed to civil rights reform, particularly legislation to curb discrimination in the federal civil service.

Other black Representatives drew similar criticism. The NAACP excoriated William Dawson, Mitchell's successor, arguing that he did not adequately support reforms. Dawson's loyalty to the Daley political machine in Chicago created constant tension with his black House colleagues because he rarely took a public stance regarding race relations. But Dawson's association with Daley accorded him tangible power in the House. For these reasons, his career often is juxtaposed with that of Powell's in analyses of the legislative styles and strategies of black Members of Congress.[128] Unlike Dawson, Powell forswore machine politics, promising to "never be a machine man."[129] The Harlem Representative typically backed Democratic legislation and leaders, but his primary allegiance resided with his constituents and the advancement of African-American rights, not with the party.[130]

Powell's style was the exception rather than the rule. Ideological approaches and legislative strategies disposed most black Members of Congress from this era to a less confrontational style. Robert Nix rebuffed activist critics who demanded he become more vocal on race issues, suggesting that his role as an insider who rose to chair a full committee produced more tangible results for blacks. "I've seen people come into this Congress feeling it was incumbent upon them to give everybody hell, talking about the wrongs and fancied wrongs that happen every day," Nix observed. "They didn't correct a damn thing. . . . The legislation they sought to present to the House later on received little interest from any source."[131] Los Angeles Representative Gus Hawkins, who eventually chaired two full House committees, was highly successful at exerting insider influence but rarely sought the limelight. Reacting to criticism that he should do more to publicize the cause of racial equality, Hawkins said, "I've always felt, why yell if you can get the same result by being mild? . . . The loudmouths are well known, but they're not very effective."[132] Hawkins never deviated from his conviction that the best way to help African Americans and other minorities was to focus on economic issues rather than on race.[133]

Senator Brooke, who opposed the glorification of black militants, also conformed easily to the Senate traditions that rewarded moderation and collegiality.[134] By the late 1960s, many African-American politicians found themselves in an uncomfortable middle ground between an entrenched and

Machine Politics:

A term used to refer to tight political organizations under the control of party regulars, often under the authority of a regional leader or "boss." In the 19th and early 20th centuries, political parties in northern urban areas used this system to disburse patronage rewards, turn out votes, and enforce party discipline.

Serving 14 terms in the House of Representatives, Augustus (Gus) Hawkins of California chaired four committees: the Committee on House Administration, Committee on Education and Labor, Joint Committee on Printing, and Joint Committee on Library.

Collection of U.S. House of Representatives

A 13-term Representative, Charles Diggs of Michigan was the first black Representative to serve on the Committee on Foreign Affairs and was a leading critic of apartheid in South Africa.
Collection of U.S. House of Representatives

unrepentant white power structure and younger, assertive black activists who promoted the Black Power movement, which appealed to racial pride and called for the creation of distinctive cultural and political organizations.[135] Adopting the approach that blacks "must win allies, not conquer adversaries," Brooke drew harsh criticism from more-radical black politicians, who advocated confrontational action as an answer to racial discrimination.[136] Brooke blamed the press for focusing too much attention on radical activists, arguing that "the emphasis should be placed on the great, great majority of people in the Negro community who merely want improved conditions, who want government to respond responsibly to their needs and who at the same time recognize the need to help themselves."[137]

Of this group of contemporaries, Charles Diggs emerged as a unique figure, able to blend Powell's activism with the institutional effectiveness of other well-placed cohorts. Like Powell, Representative Diggs often sought out the limelight to publicize civil rights issues, for instance, when he visited Selma, Alabama, and interviewed local blacks in the spring of 1965. But he possessed a measure of pragmatism Powell sometimes lacked. In addition to crafting a foreign policy agenda for future generations of black Members, Diggs was instrumental as chairman of the District of Columbia Committee in establishing home rule for the nation's capital and in addressing the needs of its majority-black population. Diggs also displayed organizational prowess by creating in 1969 the Democratic Select Committee (DSC), a group of black Members who championed legislation important to African Americans nationally and a precursor to the Congressional Black Caucus.

To a considerable degree, African-American Members' approaches to racial issues on Capitol Hill were shaped by their legislative styles. Some, like Powell, preferred the "show horse" legislative style, using the press to publicize an issue or a legislative agenda to rally attention and build public support. Others, such as Dawson and Hawkins, exemplified the low-key "work horse" style, focusing on committee work, policy minutiae, and/or parliamentary procedure to cultivate their legislative agendas.[138] These styles were self-reinforcing and usually reflected Members' status within the organization. For instance, an insider often adopted the work horse style, whereas the show horse style offered a remedy for those outside the institutional circles of power and influence, who lacked the ability to introduce legislative initiatives through normal channels.

First elected in 1968, Louis Stokes of Ohio chaired two committees during his 15 terms in Congress, the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct. Stokes also led the Select Committee on Assassinations and was chairman of a key Appropriations subcommittee.
Collection of U.S. House of Representatives

Conclusion

Many of the changes that occurred during the long generation from 1929 until 1970—brought about by social movements, legal advances, and institutional evolution—profoundly altered the landscape on Capitol Hill for the post–civil rights generation of African-American Members. Compared with their 20th-century predecessors, black Members who came to Capitol Hill in the 1970s would encounter an institution that was more accessible and more favorable to their legislative interests. Court-ordered redistricting in the wake of the Supreme Court's enunciation of the "one man, one vote" principle, coupled with the Voting Rights Act of 1965, dramatically expanded the rolls of black voters and led to the creation of majority-black districts, paving the way for an increase in the number of blacks in Congress. Until 1968, men had represented the black community almost exclusively, but in the decade after Shirley Chisholm's election, black women (including some from the South and the West) won election to Congress,

portending significant changes in the gender ratio of African Americans in Congress. In 1970, George Collins became the first African American in the 20th century elected to a district that was not majority-black (it would subsequently become majority-black after redistricting). During the next decade this trend accelerated, as districts where blacks did not constitute a majority elected more black Members to the House, including Parren Mitchell of Maryland, Ronald Dellums of California, and Andrew Young of Georgia.[139] Long-simmering interest in institutional reform also benefited these newcomers as reformers sought to deprive entrenched committee chairmen of their power and distribute it more evenly among the rank and file. The assignment of a number of incoming black Members to top-tier committees derived from this decentralization of power.

Perhaps the most consequential legacy of Black Americans in Congress from the pioneer era was the drive for organizing black power and interests. By the late 1960s, although African Americans were slowly making inroads in terms of committee assignments, they had relatively little power to command public and institutional attention and sustain a legislative agenda. No African American in either of the major parties held a top elected leadership position in either chamber during this 41-year era.[140] Furthermore, the limitations to black Members' ability to drive legislation were painfully apparent. Representatives Powell and Diggs became adept at garnering publicity, but as Diggs admitted, their efforts amounted to little more than "individualistic policies."[141] The multitude of expectations held by their constituents and black voters outside their districts, doubtlessly magnified black Members' frustration and sense of isolation.[142] Within this context, Diggs's efforts to create a unified caucus acquired new importance and urgency in the subsequent decade. Diggs's DSC, which evolved into the Congressional Black Caucus in the early 1970s, provided a forum for black Members to address "black interests" and shape institutional priorities. After decades in a largely unsympathetic and sometimes-hostile political wilderness on Capitol Hill, African Americans stood on the verge of achieving unprecedented influence.

This 1965 picture of civil rights leaders includes, from left to right, future U.S. Representative Andrew Young, then-Representative William Fitts Ryan of New York, James Farmer, and future U.S. Representative John Lewis. Farmer lost a 1968 House race to Shirley Chisholm in a newly created, majority-black district in Brooklyn, New York.

Image courtesy of Library of Congress

notes

1 Thomas A. Johnson, "A Man of Many Roles," 5 April 1972, *New York Times*: 1.

2 Carol Swain, "Changing Patterns of African-American Representation in Congress," in *The Atomistic Congress: An Interpretation of Congressional Change*, Allen D. Hertzke and Ronald M. Peters, Jr., eds., (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1992): 107–140; quotation on page 118.

3 Aside from De Priest, Mitchell, and Dawson, the group included Robert Nix, Augustus Hawkins, and Edward Brooke.

4 See the discussion about the Great Migration in the preceding contextual essay, "The Negroes' Temporary Farewell." For more on black migrations in the post-Reconstruction period and the 20th century, see Nicholas Lemann, *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America* (New York: Knopf, 1991); Nell Irvin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migrants to Kansas After Reconstruction* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986); James R. Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989) and Joe William Trotter, Jr., ed., *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

5 One served in World War I, four served in World War II, one saw combat in Korea, and another was drafted into service in the 1950s. Four were officers (Dawson, Brooke, Diggs, and Conyers); the rest were enlisted men. For an overview of the black experience in the military, see Bernard Nalty, *Strength for the Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military* (New York: Free Press, 1986). For another assessment, see Robert W. Mullen, *Blacks in America's Wars: The Shift in Attitudes from the Revolutionary War to Vietnam* (New York: Monad Press, 1973).

6 "Former Congressman Diggs Enters Prison," 24 July 1980, Associated Press.

7 Harry McAlpin, "Dawson Takes Seat in House, Tells Plans," 16 January 1943, *Chicago Defender*: 9; see also Denton J. Brooks, Jr., "Fame Brings Dawson Chance to Help Race," 3 April 1943, *Chicago Defender*: 13.

8 Denton J. Brooks, Jr., "Dawson Demands Stimson's Removal," 4 March 1944, *Chicago Defender*: 1.

9 Edward Brooke, *Bridging the Divide: My Life* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007): 33.

10 William L. Clay, *Bill Clay: A Political Voice at the Grass Roots* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society, 2004): 16.

11 To put these accomplishments into perspective, by 1970 just 4.6 percent of black men and 5.1 percent of black women earned college degrees compared to 16.1 percent of white men and 9.5 percent of white women. An astounding 66.4 percent of all black males (66.7 percent of black women) in 1970 did not earn a high school diploma. These percentages were even lower in 1930 for both races and sexes and slowly increased each decade through 1970. Thus, the educational achievements of the black Representatives elected early in the period are all the more remarkable. See "College Graduation Rate, by Sex, Nativity, and Race: 1940–1997" and "High School Non-Completion Rate, by Sex, Nativity, and Race: 1940–1997," in *Historical Statistics of the United States, Volume 2: Work and Welfare*, Susan Carter et al., eds. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 469–470.

12 Former U.S. Representative Robert Elliott, a South Carolina Republican, was elected state attorney general in the 1876 election that swept Democrats back into power. He was forced from office in May 1877 under pressure from the administration of Governor Wade Hampton. For more on this episode, see Peggy Lamson, *The Glorious Failure: Black Congressman Robert Brown Elliott and the Reconstruction in South Carolina* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1973): 250–270.

13 Stokes's brother and political mentor, Carl, served in the Ohio legislature and became the first African-American mayor of a major city (Cleveland) in 1967. It was Carl who convinced Louis to run for a newly drawn majority-black district in Cleveland. Nix was appointed as a deputy attorney general in Pennsylvania and also served as a Democratic committeeman in Philadelphia for 26 years, eight as chairman. Conyers worked as a legislative aide to U.S. Representative John Dingell, Jr., of Michigan, served as counsel to labor union locals, and received gubernatorial and presidential appointments before winning election to the House. As of December 31, 2007, Conyers, first elected in 1965, was the second-longest-serving current House Member: Dingell, who succeeded his father in 1955, was the longest-serving current House Member.

14 For the impact of the women's rights movement on Representatives, see Office of History and Preservation, U.S. House of Representatives, *Women in Congress, 1917–2006* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2007): 324–343.

15 John Kifner, "G.O.P. Names James Farmer for Brooklyn Race for Congress," 20 May 1968, *New York Times*: 34; John Kifner, "Farmer and Woman in Lively Bedford-Stuyvesant Race," 26 October 1968, *New York Times*: 22. See also Shirley Washington, *Outstanding Women in Congress* (Washington, DC: U.S. Capitol Historical Society, 1995): 17. Farmer echoed the findings contained in a controversial report produced by sociologist Daniel Patrick Moynihan (later a U.S. Senator from New York) titled *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (1965). The Moynihan Report, as it was later called, argued that the deteriorating black family structure seriously impeded the advancement of the race. More pointedly, the report suggested that a matriarchal structure in the black community undercut black men's roles as authority figures.

16 Susan Brownmiller, "This Is Fighting Shirley Chisholm," 13 April 1969, *New York Times*: SM32; see also Fred L. Zimmerman, "Negroes in Congress: Black House Members Will Add to Their Ranks in the Next Few Years," 22 October 1968, *Wall Street Journal*: 1.

17 Charles Stewart III, "Committee Hierarchies in the Modernizing House, 1875–1947," *American Journal of Political Science 36* (November 1992): 835–856.

18 Stewart, "Committee Hierarchies in the Modernizing House, 1875–1947."

19 Early women Senate pioneers, including Hattie Caraway of Arkansas and Margaret Chase Smith of Maine, also benefited from this circumstance.

20 Black Members from the post-1929 era who lost primaries include Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., of New York, Robert Nix of Pennsylvania, Katie Hall of Indiana, Charles A. Hayes of Illinois, Bennett Stewart of Illinois, Alton Waldon of New York, Lucien Blackwell of Pennsylvania, Craig Washington of Texas, Gus Savage of Illinois, Barbara-Rose Collins of Michigan, Cynthia McKinney of Georgia (twice), and Earl Hilliard of Alabama. For a standard work on the power of incumbency and the low turnover rates in the 20th century, see John R. Hibbing, *Congressional Careers: Contours of Life in the U.S. House of Representatives* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

21 See Allan G. Bogue, Jerome M. Clubb, Carroll R. McKibben, and Santa A. Traugott, "Members of the House of Representatives and the Processes of Modernization, 1789–1960," *Journal of American History* 63 (September 1976): 275–302, especially 291–293. The average age of a freshman House Member from 1930 through 1950 was 45; from 1950 through 1960 it was 43.

22 For a graphic of the service dates for the black Members of this era, see the chart at the end of this essay. For more information on Member longevity averages, see, for instance, Mildred Amer, "Average Years

of Service for Members of the Senate and House of Representatives, First through 109th Congresses," 9 November 2005, Report RL32648, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, Washington, DC

23 See Appendix F, Black-American Chairs of Subcommittees of Standing Committees in the U.S. House and Senate, 1885–2007. Dawson and Powell also became the first African Americans to chair full subcommittees of permanent standing committees: the Executive and Legislative Reorganization Subcommittee of Government Operations and the Mines and Mining Subcommittee of the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, respectively. Others elected during this period who later served as full committee chairmen were Charles Diggs, Jr. (District of Columbia), Robert Nix (Post Office and Civil Service), Louis Stokes (Select Committee on Presidential Assassinations, Standards of Official Conduct, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence), Augustus Hawkins (Joint Committee on Printing, Joint Committee on the Library, House Administration, Education and Labor), William L. Clay (Post Office and Civil Service), and John Conyers, Jr., (Government Operations, Judiciary). For a complete listing of African Americans who chaired standing congressional committees, see Appendix E, Black Americans Who Have Chaired Congressional Committees, 1877–2007.

24 For personal relations between Members and their constituents, see Richard F. Fenno, *Going Home: Black Representatives and Their Constituents* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003): especially 259–261. See also Carol Swain, *Black Faces, Black Interests: The Representation of African Americans in Congress* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993): 217–222. For an analysis of redistricting and black representation generally, see Kenny J. Whitby, *The Color of Representation: Congressional Behavior and Black Interests* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997).

25 Diggs's Detroit area constituents returned him to Congress in November 1978 with 79 percent of the vote, despite his having been convicted of mail fraud and falsifying payroll forms weeks earlier. Similarly, in 1967, when the House voted to exclude Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., due to his legal and attendance issues, his Harlem constituents returned him to his vacant seat in a special election, with 86 percent of the vote.

26 See, for example, Nancy Weiss's treatment in *Farewell to the Party of Lincoln: Black Politics in the Age of FDR* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983). For "push and pull," see Michael Fauntroy, *Republicans and the Black Vote* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2007): 41, 42–55.

27 Ample literature exists on the movement of black voters from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party: Weiss, *Farewell to the Party of Lincoln*; Donald J. Lisio, *Hoover, Blacks & Lily-Whites: A Study of Southern Strategies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985); Richard Sherman, *The Republican Party and Black America from McKinley to Hoover, 1896–1933* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1973): 134–144.

28 Lisio, *Hoover, Blacks & Lily-Whites: A Study of Southern Strategies*: 260–266; Sherman, *The Republican Party and Black America from McKinley to Hoover, 1896–1933*: 134–144.

29 See Harold F. Gosnell, *Negro Politicians: The Rise of Negro Politics in Chicago* (New York: AMS Press, 1969; reprint of 1935 University of Chicago Press edition): 24–25.

30 For more on the background of the city's Republican politics during this period, see Rita Werner Gordon, "The Change in the Political Alignment of Chicago's Negroes During the New Deal," *Journal of American History* 56 (1969): 586–588.

31 See, for example, Clay, *Bill Clay: A Political Voice at the Grass Roots*: 1–6.

32 For an analysis of how the agricultural collapse in the South contributed to black political activism, see Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982): especially 65–116.

33 John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans,* 8th ed. (New York: Knopf, 2000): 421.

34 See Franklin and Moss, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*: 421–422; David M. Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 87, 164; see also Lester Chandler, *America's Great Depression* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970): 40. The national and local GOP's inability to alleviate blacks' economic distress played a role in blacks' movement away from the party, although in 1932, black Chicagoans remained loyal to the party because the new Democratic mayoral administration stripped so many blacks of patronage jobs conferred by the old Thompson machine. See Gordon, "The Change in the Political Alignment of Chicago's Negroes During the New Deal": 591–592.

35 Weiss, *Farewell to the Party of Lincoln*: 78–95. See also William J. Grimshaw, *Bitter Fruit: Black Politics and the Chicago Machine, 1931–1991* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992): 47–68.

36 Weiss, *Farewell to the Party of Lincoln:* 78.

37 Ibid., 88.

38 Ibid., 89–95.

39 Ibid., 212. Another scholar points to two "stages" of Chicago's black political realignment: the first consisting of registration at the polls in 1936 election (the response to New Deal emergency relief measures) and the latter occurring in 1944, when the national party under FDR embraced a larger civil rights reform agenda. See Grimshaw, *Bitter Fruit:* 52–53; see also Gordon, "The Change in the Political Alignment of Chicago's Negroes During the New Deal": 603.

40 Weiss, *Farewell to the Party of Lincoln*: 227.

41 Even in the South, African Americans were drawn toward supporting the national Democratic Party of Roosevelt and, later, Truman. "Now, if anybody thinks we ought to leave this Democratic ship and jump back into the Southern Republican skeleton and help put some meat on its bones, they have got some more thought coming," wrote a black newspaper editorialist in 1947. "Brethren, we had too hard a time getting on this ship and we are going to stay, sink or swim." Quoted in V. O. Key, *Southern Politics in State and Union* (Knoxville: University Press of Tennessee, 1984): 291; originally published by C. Blythe Andres, 29 November 1947, *Florida Sentinel* (Tampa). Between 1940 and 1960, Republican presidential candidates received between 23 and 40 percent of the black vote. Barry Goldwater's 1964 campaign transformed the decisive Democratic advantage into a monopoly. In appealing to southern racial conservatives, Goldwater garnered just 6 percent of the African-American vote. Fauntroy, *Republicans and the Black Vote:* 56. Since then, no GOP presidential nominee has won more than 15 percent of the black vote.

42 The other black Republicans were Edward Brooke, Melvin Evans, Gary Franks, and J. C. Watts.

43 Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue: The Depression Decade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981): 44–46; quotation on page 51.

44 For a recent study suggesting that judiciary policies pursued by the Roosevelt administration had an important effect on future Supreme Court civil rights rulings, see Kevin McMahon, *Reconsidering Roosevelt on Race: How the Presidency Paved the Road to Brown* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004): especially 177–202, 218–222. McMahon, a political scientist, maintains that Roosevelt's conclusion that southern segregation "was incompatible with his vision of a thoroughly liberal Democratic Party and with his institutional design for an executive-

dominated national government served as a mainspring for the Supreme Court's later commitment to federal civil rights protection." McMahon concedes that Roosevelt's policy toward the judiciary derived from the needs of "intraparty management and his own institutional desires" rather than "a personal commitment to the African American cause." See pages 4, 7–8.

45 For an overview, see Fauntroy, *Republicans and the Black Vote*: 45–47.

46 On Eleanor Roosevelt generally, see Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*: 58–62; quotation on page 60. For a recent, comprehensive treatment of Eleanor Roosevelt, see Allida Black, *Casting Her Own Shadow: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Shaping of Postwar Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

47 Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*: 66–69.

48 For Mitchell's motivations, see Dennis S. Nordin, *The New Deal's Black Congressman: A Life of Arthur Wergs Mitchell* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997): 210–221. For the larger anti-lynching campaign in 1936 and 1937, see Robert L. Zangrando, *The NAACP Crusade Against Lynching: 1909–1950* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980): 139–165. For the legislative actions on lynching by a southern woman in the U.S. Senate in the 1930s, see "Dixie Bibb Graves," in Office of History and Preservation,*Women in Congress, 1917–2006*: 169–171.

49 For a comparative perspective on changing African-American demographics from the 1930s to the 1980s, see Gerald D. Jaynes and Robin M. Williams, Jr., *A Common Destiny: Blacks and American Society* (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1989): 35–42, 271–287. Statistics cited in this paragraph are drawn from pages 35, 271. A contemporaneous and hugely influential account of the plight of wartime blacks in the American South is Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper Publishers, 1944). For a concise summary of African-American participation in the war and its impact on civil rights, see Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*: 761–776. For a standard account of the home front during the war, see John Morton Blum, *V Was for Victory: Politics and American Culture During World War II* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1976). For more on desegregation of the military, see Richard M. Dalfiume, *Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1969).

50 See Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*: 771–774; Franklin and Moss, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*: 481–491.

51 *Congressional Record*, Appendix, 77th Cong., 2nd sess. (18 February 1942): A607. See also *Congressional Record*, Appendix, 77th Cong., 2nd sess. (16 July 1942): A2790–2791.

52 *Congressional Record*, Appendix, 77th Cong., 2nd sess. (22 January 1942): A210; *Congressional Record*, Appendix, 77th Cong., 2nd sess. (28 January 1942): A290.

53 Walter White, *A Rising Wind* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1945): 144.

54 This was true for many southerners but especially for African Americans, the majority of whom held low-paying agricultural jobs in a tenant farmer system in the South. According to wage and salary data compiled by the U.S. Department of Commerce, the average agricultural worker in the United States earned $487 in 1940—a little more than $9 per week. See "Wage and Salary Accruals Per Full-Time Equivalent Employee, By Industry: 1929–1948," Table Ba4397–4418, Carter et al., *Historical Statistics of the United States, Volume 2*: 282.

55 *Congressional Record*, House, 78th Cong., 1st sess. (25 May 1943): 4853, 4889. In 1945, when the House again debated a measure to ban the poll tax, Dawson blasted Mississippi Representative John E. Rankin, who claimed the tax was necessary to support public schools. "Why is it then that so many of these people cannot meet the minimum educational requirement?" Dawson rebutted, calling attention to the literacy tests used to disfranchise many southern blacks. See Venice T. Sprags, "Anti-Poll Tax Bill Faces Bilbo Filibuster Threat," 23 June 1945, *Chicago Defender*: 2.

56 "Executive Order 8802: Establishing the Committee on Fair Employment Practices," 25 June 1941, published as part of the American Presidency Project, University of California, Santa Barbara, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu (accessed 1 February 2008). For a discussion of FDR's political position, see Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*: 320–323. See also Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*: 768. Kennedy observes that while the FEPC was hardly a "second Emancipation Proclamation," it provided the seed for civil rights reform. "Coming at a moment that was kindled with opportunities for economic betterment and social mobility, Executive Order 8802 fanned the rising flame of black militancy and initiated a chain of events that would eventually end segregation once and for all and open a new era for African Americans."

57 *Congressional Record*, House, 78th Cong., 2nd sess. (26 May 1944): 5053.

58 Ibid., 5054.

59 Ibid. The full debate is on pages 5050–5068, quotation on page 5059.

60 *Congressional Record*, Appendix, 78th Cong., 2nd sess. (15 June 1944): A3033–3035. In June 1944, Representative Dawson testified before Norton's committee about the "psychological attitude" of "great bitterness" felt by African Americans who had been excluded from wartime work. The FEPC promised to alleviate the despair of discrimination. "Sooner or later, here in this country, we have got to face the question and settle it right for all times in the minds of the people. And there is no better way to begin to face the problem than to assure to every people that they will have the opportunity to work, along with all the other peoples in this nation of ours."

61 For a recent and important study of the topic, see Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

62 Walter Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: The Grace of Humility," 24 September 1957, *Washington Post*: A15.

63 President Kennedy worried about Soviet propaganda arising from a horrific, May 1963 Associated Press picture of Birmingham, Alabama, officials unleashing police dogs on young civil rights protestors. "What a disaster that picture is," Kennedy moaned. "That picture is not only in America but all around the world." See Nick Bryant, *The Bystander: John F. Kennedy and the Struggle for Black Equality* (New York: Basic Books, 2006): 388, 472.

64 See Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

65 Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*: 2–8, quotation on page 2.

66 The best single source on HUAC is Walter Goodman, *The Committee: The Extraordinary Career of the House Committee on Un-American Activities* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1968). For the debate surrounding the establishment of a permanent HUAC and a synopsis, see Raymond Smock, ed., *Landmark Documents on the U.S. Congress* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1999): 367–374; *Congressional Record*, House, 79th Cong., 1st sess. (3 January 1945): 10–15. Rankin resuscitated HUAC from the brink of elimination. Established as a select committee in 1938, the panel initially investigated domestic fascist groups. Under the control of Chairman Martin Dies, Jr., of Texas, however, it rapidly became a soapbox from which New Deal programs were denounced and real and imagined communist subversives were routed out. Many Representatives resented the committee's costs and its tendency to conduct witch hunts.

Most believed it would lapse after Dies's retirement in early 1945. But Rankin, a committee member and a devout segregationist and anti-communist, outmaneuvered House leaders and introduced a resolution to confer HUAC full, standing status at the opening of the 79th Congress (1945–1947). Faced with a roll call vote, many Members were reluctant to oppose a measure voters might perceive as strengthening America against the communist threat. Rankin's amendment carried 208 to 186, with 40 Members not voting. At the height of the Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, HUAC's influence soared and contributed to a climate of domestic fear stoked by its sensational and often unsubstantiated investigations.

67 White, *A Rising Wind*: 144.

68 See, for example, Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935–1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

69 Plummer, *Rising Wind*: 249.

70 Ibid.

71 Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*: 96.

72 Plummer, *Rising Wind*: 248–253; quotation on page 251.

73 Ibid., 292.

74 Carolyn P. DuBose, *The Untold Story of Charles Diggs: The Public Figure, the Private Man* (Arlington, VA: Barton Publishing House, Inc., 1998): 62–65.

75 "Diggs Urges Better U.S. Attitude Toward Africa," 23 December 1958, *Chicago Defender*: 7.

76 The literature on the civil rights movement is vast, accessible, and well documented. Standard treatments include Taylor Branch's three-volume history, which uses Martin Luther King, Jr., as a lens through which to view the movement: *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954–63* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988); *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963–65* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998); *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965–68* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006). See also David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: William Morrow, 1986); William H. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), an account of one of the protest movement's seminal moments. For an overview of the movement and its impact on late-20th-century black America see Manning Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction and Beyond in Black America, 1945–2006,* 3rd edition (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007).

For the evolution of civil rights legislation in Congress, see Robert Mann, *When Freedom Would Triumph: The Civil Rights Struggle in Congress, 1954–1968* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007)—an abridged version of Mann's *The Walls of Jericho: Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey, Richard Russell and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1996); Hugh Davis Graham, *The Civil Rights Era: Origins and Development of National Policy, 1960–1972* (New York: Oxford, 1990): especially pages 125–176; and James L. Sundquist, *Politics and Policy: The Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson Years* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1968): 221–286. A useful overview of Congress and civil rights is Timothy N. Thurber, "Second Reconstruction," in *The American Congress: The Building of Democracy*, ed. by Julian E. Zelizer (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 2004): 529–547. Another useful secondary work, which touches on aspects of the voting rights reform legislative effort, is Steven F. Lawson's *Black Ballots: Voting Rights in the South, 1944–1969* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976).

77 Fauntroy, *Republicans and the Black Vote*: 47–49. For Truman and civil rights, see Alonzo Hamby, *Man of the People: A Life of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); and Donald R. McCoy, *The Presidency of Harry S. Truman* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1984): 106–109, 167–171.

78 For more on the Dixiecrats, see Kari Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South, 1932–1968* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001): see especially pages 67–117.

79 For a widely held critical analysis of Eisenhower and his position on civil rights, see Chester Pach, Jr., and Elmo Richardson, *The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, revised edition (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991): 137–157.

80 See Michael J. Klarman, "Court, Congress, and Civil Rights," in *Congress and the Constitution*, Neal Devins and Keith E. Whittington, eds. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005): 173–197.

81 The congressional committees system was consolidated after passage of the 1946 Legislative Reorganization Act.

82 In part, Powell's frequent absences fit the maverick image he cultivated. Nevertheless, his failure to cast a vote for the final conference report for the Civil Rights Act of 1964 while on an extended European trip under the auspices of Congress raised eyebrows. Though not crucial to the final tally, Powell's vote would have held deep symbolic importance. Moreover, the bill incorporated his long-time amendment banning federal funds to institutions that practiced segregation. It exposed the New York Representative to greater press scrutiny. Political pundit Drew Pearson noted that Powell failed to register his vote for a piece of legislation "considered the Magna Carta of Negro freedom," in order to satiate his "traveling propensities." See Drew Pearson, "Powell Absent for Rights Vote," 4 September 1964, *Los Angeles Times*: A6. Powell was present and voted for the original version of the bill, which passed the House on 10 February 1964. See *Congressional Record*, House, 88th Cong., 2nd sess. (10 February 1964): 2804.

83 Thurber, "The Second Reconstruction": 529–547. For a full-length biography of Chairman Smith, see Bruce J. Dierenfeild, *Keeper of the Rules: Congressman Howard W. Smith of Virginia* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987): Allen quotation on page 158. This quotation is often attributed to Speaker Sam Rayburn; see Thurber, "The Second Reconstruction": 531.

84 For more on Russell's position on race, see Mann, *When Freedom Would Triumph*: 22–24.

85 Thurber, "The Second Reconstruction": 531. For a perceptive summary of Eastland's career, see David Broder, "Eastland: End of an Era," 26 March 1978, *Washington Post*: C7.

86 For more on the Congressional Gold Medals awarded to Parks and other civil rights pioneers, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., and Coretta Scott King, as well as the Little Rock Nine, visit the "Congressional Gold Medal Recipients" page on the Web site of the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives available at http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/goldMedal.html.

87 "Reported Victims of Lynching, by Race: 1882–1964," *Historical Statistics of the United States, Volume 5: Governance and International Relations*, Carter et al., eds.(New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 251.

88 DuBose, *The Untold Story of Charles Diggs*: 46–60, quotation on page 46. For press coverage, see Mattie Smith Colin, "Till's Mom, Diggs Both Disappointed," 1 October 1955, *Chicago Defender*: 1.

89 DuBose, *The Untold Story of Charles Diggs*: 50.

90 Drew Pearson, "5 House Members," 12 January 1956, *Washington Post*:

31; Ethel L. Payne, "U.S. Probes Mississippi Vote Bias," 27 August 1955, *Chicago Defender*: 1.

91 "NAACP Criticizes Rep. Dawson," 1 September 1956, *Washington Post*: 38. For more on the Till lynching, see Stephen J. Whitfield, *A Death in the Delta: The Story of Emmett Till* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

92 Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., *Adam by Adam: The Autobiography of Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.* (New York: Dial Press, 1971): 81, 120–121.

93 *Congressional Record*, House, 85th Cong., 1st sess. (14 June 1957): 9192–9193; for Diggs's comments, see *Congressional Record*, House, 85th Cong., 1st sess. (10 June 1957): 8704–8705.

94 It was during the debate that Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina held the floor for more than 24 hours in a personal filibuster against the bill. Mann, *When Freedom Would Triumph*: 40–60. For more on the act, as well as its legal and social legacy, see Gilbert Paul Carrasco, "Civil Rights Act of 1957," in *Major Acts of Congress*, Volume 1, Brian K. Landsberg, ed. (New York: Thompson-Gale, 2004): 104–109. For more on Johnson's role in brokering the 1957 act, consult Robert A. Caro, *Master of the Senate* (New York: Knopf, 2002).

95 Julian E. Zelizer, *On Capitol Hill: The Struggle to Reform Congress and Its Consequences, 1948–2000* (New York: Cambridge University Press): 56–60.

96 *Congressional Record*, House, 88th Cong., 1st sess. (9 May 1963): 8256.

97 *Congressional Record*, House, 88th Cong., 2nd sess. (7 February 1964): 2465.

98 For a concise overview of the bill and its legal and social significance, see Melanie B. Abbott, "Civil Rights Act of 1964," in *Major Acts of Congress*, Volume 1: 109–115.

99 Mann, *When Freedom Would Triumph*: 175.

100 Ibid., 187–199.

101 John Lewis with Michael D'Orso, *Walking With the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998): 331; for the full account, see pages 323–332.

102 John D. Morris, "Johnson Pledges Alabama Action," 5 February 1965, *New York Times*: 17.

103 *Congressional Record*, House, 89th Cong., 1st sess. (9 February 1965): 2434–2435. Like other African-American colleagues, Conyers stressed the foreign policy implications of voting fraud: "We are weak before our enemies if our goals abroad are so shamelessly ignored and subverted here at home." See *Congressional Record*, House, 89th Cong., 1st sess. (8 July 1965): 16000.

104 For an overview and analysis of the legal and social effects of the act, see William D. Araiza, "Voting Rights Act of 1965," in *Major Acts of Congress*, Volume 3: 271–278.

105 Thurber, "The Second Reconstruction": 543.

106 Not only were more blacks registered to vote, but also more ran for and won state and local political office. In 1965, in the 11 original Confederate states, there were just 72 black elected officials. A decade later, 1,587 held office. From 1966 to 1967, the number of blacks serving in state legislatures essentially doubled to 152. The effect was most dramatic in states that were once the strongholds of segregation: in Georgia, African Americans went from 0 to 11 seats in the state legislature in one election cycle. See *Congressional Record*, House, 94th Cong., 1st sess. (2 June 1975): 16241; John Allan Long, "Negroes Widen Political Power," 4 November 1967, *Christian Science Monitor*: 9.

107 For a recent analysis of this phenomenon, see Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

108 See, for example, Fred L. Zimmerman, "Negroes in Congress: Black House Members Will Add to Their Ranks in the Next Few Years," 22 October 1968, *Wall Street Journal*: 1.

109 For more on the origins and history of the Great Society, see James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945–1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996): 524–592; Robert Dallek, *Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1961–1973* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

110 For more about discrimination in the federal civil service, see Desmond King's standard work *Separate and Unequal: Black Americans and the US Federal Government* (New York: Oxford, 1995). For Eisenhower and his position on civil rights, see Pach and Richardson, *The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower*: 137–157.

111 Weiss, *Farewell to the Party of Lincoln*: 81, footnote 9.

112 "Social Elite Aim Dart at Mrs. De Priest," 26 January 1929, *Chicago Defender*: 1; "Congressional Club Fails to Bar Mrs. De Priest," 16 February 1929, *Chicago Defender*: 4.

113 For more on Nichols, see his interview with the Senate Historical Office: http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/oral_history/Jesse_R_Nichols.htm (accessed 4 February 2008).

114 Dunnigan's articles appeared in four parts under the title "A Visit to the Nation's Capitol" in *Service*, the magazine of the Tuskegee Institute; see November 1949: 9–12, 30–31; December 1949: 11–16; January 1950: 17, 20–21; and February 1950: 11–12, 21–22.

115 Modern political scientists generally characterize De Priest as having provided only "modest descriptive representation." While De Priest's substantive legislative achievements were modest, it should be noted that the unsympathetic and rigidly segregationist institution in which he worked, and his service as a Member in the minority party for most of his career, severely diminished his ability to effect reform. For a standard treatment of De Priest, see Carol Swain, "Changing Patterns of African-American Representation in Congress": 119.

116 "Pass De Priest Resolution," 26 June 1929, *New York Times*: 9; "Mrs. De Priest Visit Stirs Mississippian," 26 June 1929, *Washington Post*: 2.

117 *Congressional Record*, House, 73rd Congress, 2nd sess. (21 March 1934): 5049.

118 For a detailed account, see Elliott M. Rudwick, "Oscar De Priest and the Jim Crow Restaurant in the U.S. House of Representatives," *Journal of Negro Education* 35 (Winter 1966): 77–82.

119 "De Priest Adds Racial Demand: Opening Prayer in House by Colored Minister Requested," 28 January 1934, *Washington Post*: 7.

120 "Oscar De Priest," 30 March 1932, *Atlanta Daily World*: 6. Interestingly, after De Priest's effort to change Jim Crow practices in the House Restaurant in 1934, much of the African-American press rallied to his support. *The Atlanta Daily World* noted that De Priest "has shown himself to be no compromiser. He has measured head and shoulder to the stature of the statesman." See "Let Us Help Oscar De Priest," 4 April 1934, *Atlanta Daily World*: 6; E. N. Davis, "Race Losing Out Under NRA, AAA De Priest States Asking Negro Economic Progress," 20 May 1934, *Atlanta Daily World*: 1.

121 Joyce Haber, "A Question of Style: You Have It or You Don't," 22 January 1967, *Los Angeles Times*: C8; see also Richard L. Lyons, "Adam Clayton Powell, Apostle for Blacks," 6 April 1972, *Washington Post*: B5.

122 Powell, *Adam by Adam*: 72–73.

123 Ibid.

124 Swain, "Changing Patterns of African-American Representation in Congress": quotation on page 123.

125 "Plans Booker Washington Honor," 8 September 1937, *New York Times*: 13; *Congressional Record*, House, 77th Cong., 2nd sess. (14 October 1942): 8189.

126 "De Priest's Record Is Object of Attack by New Congressman," 19 November 1934, *Atlanta Daily World*: 2.

127 Nordin, *The New Deal's Black Congressman:* 89–90, 201–207.

128 For instance, see James Q. Wilson, "Two Negro Politicians: An Interpretation," *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 5 (1960): 349–369; Carol Swain, "Changing Patterns of African-American Representation in Congress": 123–125.

129 "Powell Declares 'Negro First' Aim," 9 April 1944, *New York Times*: 25.

130 Robert Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus: Racial Politics in the U.S. Congres*s (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998): 46–47.

131 Jessie Carney Smith, ed., *Notable Black American Men* (Detroit, MI: Gale Research, 1998): 878.

132 William J. Eaton, "Hawkins Retiring—But Not Quitting," 23 December 1990, *Los Angeles Times*: 3A.

133 Eaton, "Hawkins Retiring—But Not Quitting."

134 John Henry Cutler, *Ed Brooke: Biography of a Senator* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1972): 247.

135 See, for example, Ray Rogers, "Negro Politicians Caught Between Warring Factions," 7 December 1967, *Washington Post*: H3.

136 John H. Henton, "A Dapper Mr. Brooke Goes to Washington," 2 January 1967, *New York Times*: 22.

137 Cutler, *Ed Brooke: Biography of a Senator*: 247.

138 For more on the differences between the "work horse" and "show horse" styles, see Donald R. Matthews, "The Folkways of the United States Senate: Conformity to Group Norms and Legislative Effectiveness," *American Political Science Review* 53 (December 1959): 1064–1089. The same patterns have been observed in the House. See, for example, Charles L. Clapp, *The Congressman: His Work as He Sees It* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964): 22–23; and James L. Payne, "Show Horses and Work Horses in the United States House of Representatives," *Polity* 12 (Spring 1980): 428–456.

139 Swain, *Black Faces, Black Interests*: 117; David E. Rosenbaum, "3 White Districts Choose Negroes for House Seats," 5 November 1970, *New York Times*: 28.

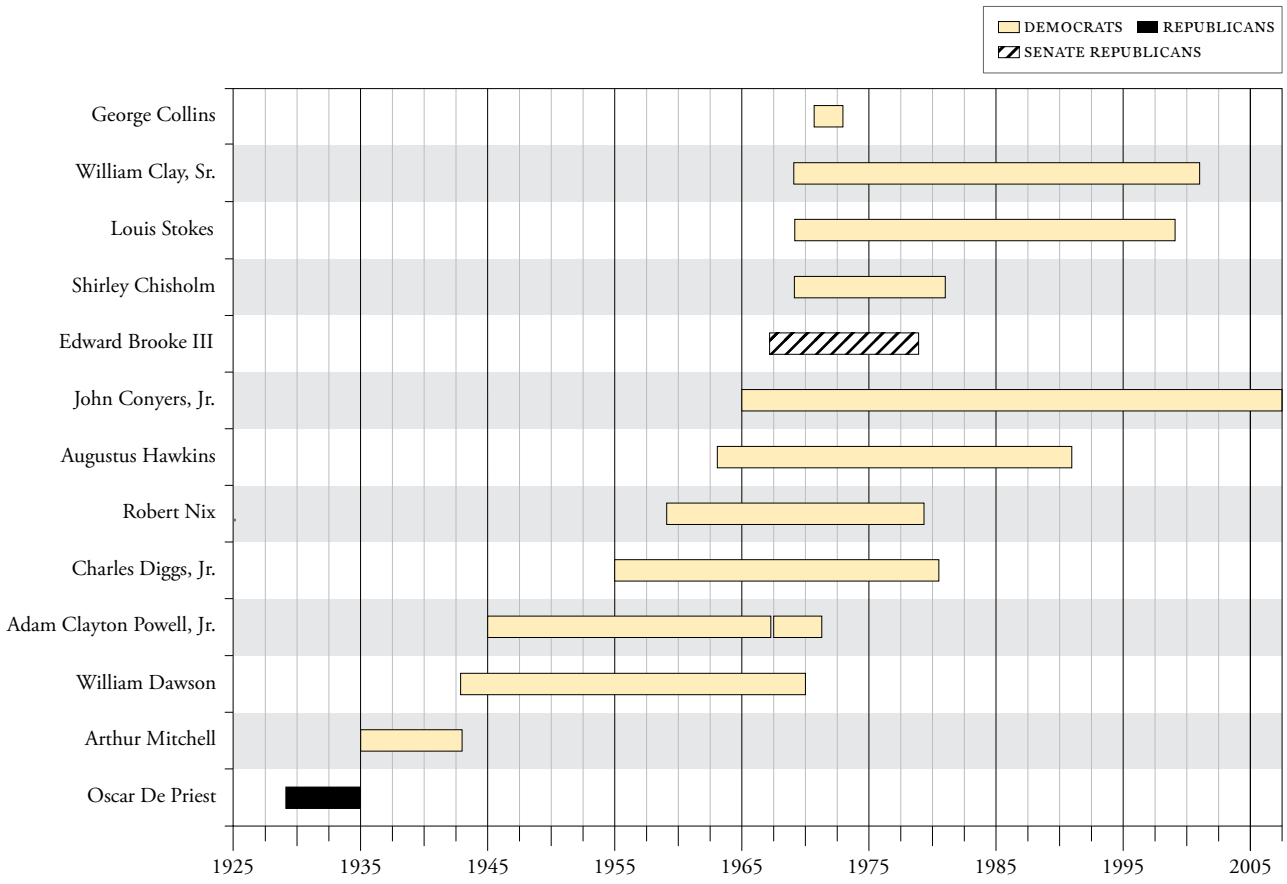
140 Shirley Chisholm, elected in 1968, would serve as secretary of the Democratic Caucus in the 1970s.

141 For more on Diggs's motivations, see Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 54–55, 73; see also DuBose, *The Untold Story of Charles Diggs*: 79–80.

142 The more individual blacks in Congress embraced such a representational strategy, the more demands were put on their finite time and resources. After decades of neglect by white officials and an indifferent if not hostile system, an avalanche of long-deferred requests, many from people residing far outside their districts, sometimes overwhelmed black officeholders. Bill Clay recalled that black constituents often demanded "the impossible from black leaders," placing exorbitant expectations on them: "personally returning all phone calls . . . attending all PTA and block unit meetings; securing jobs; cosigning personal loans; fixing traffic tickets; providing free legal service; acting as a marriage counselor, child psychologist, and medical adviser." Calls and requests from African Americans nationwide who identified with Representative Shirley Chisholm because of her gender and her race, "deluged" her congressional staff. See, for example, Clay, *Bill Clay: A Political Voice at the Grass Roots*: 7; Charlayne Hunter, "Shirley Chisholm: Willing to Speak Out," 22 May 1970, *New York Times*: 31.

Visual Statistics

Congressional Service
For Black Americans First Elected, 1929–1970



Source: *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–2005* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2005); also available at http://bioguide.congress.gov.