

## Landing Page for Legislative Insight: Major Laws



### PL 88-352 - CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

Considered a piece of landmark legislation, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was enacted to enforce the constitutional right to vote, confer jurisdiction upon the district courts of the United States to provide injunctive relief against discrimination, authorize the Attorney General to institute suits to protect constitutional rights, and for other purposes. Outlawing major forms of discrimination against race, religion, national origin, ancestry, and gender the law aimed to end unequal application of voter registration requirements as well as racial segregation in schools, workplaces, and facilities that served the public.

In June of 1963, following civil rights protests and demonstrations, President John F. Kennedy called for civil rights legislation to be enacted by Congress. However, the law's history did not begin in 1963 but spanned many congresses, involving hearings, reports, related bills, and long days of debate — including notorious filibustering by Southern members of the Senate attempting to prevent the bill's passage. Click on PL 88-352 to bring you to the legislative history record which will allow you to search the full text of all the documentation.

## RESEARCH TIPS:

Use the 'Select a pub type' box at the top of each legislative history record to jump to bills, Congressional Record excerpts, reports, documents, hearings or Congressional Research Service (CRS) reports.

The screenshot shows the ProQuest Legislative Insight Major Laws interface. At the top right, there are links for 'Historical Context | Help | Quick Start' and a 'Related Subscriptions' dropdown menu. Below the header, there are navigation links: 'Home', 'Quick Search', 'Guided Search', 'Search by Number', and 'Legislative Process'. The main search area includes a 'PDF | Print | Export | Legislative Process' bar, and search options: 'Sort by pub type' (dropdown), 'Publication Filter: Show all' (dropdown), and 'Go to: Select a pub type' (dropdown). Below the search bar, it states 'PL88-352 contains 501 publications.' and has a 'Search publications' checkbox. A tip reads: 'Tip: Begin your research with reports marked with ★ ... or click here'. The main content area is titled 'Civil Rights Act of 1964' and has a blue bar indicating 'Publication Type: Legislative History'. Below this, the following details are listed: DIGITAL-PDF ID: PL88-352, PUBLIC LAW PDF ID: PL88-352FT, DATE: July 2, 1964, ENACTED-BILL: 88 H.R. 7152, STATUTE AT LARGE: 78 Stat. 241, and CONG-SESS: 88-2.

Examples of different types of publications included in the history of the Civil Rights Act of 1964:

### BILLS

If you are interested in the way the actual wording of bills changed during the legislative process, you might compare the texts of different bill versions. For instance, to research the desegregation of public education enacted in Title IV of the law, you could compare the version of bill 88 H.R. 7152 as it was originally introduced with the final enacted version and note the amendments. To consider this topic further, you could also compare these bills to a bill from an earlier Congress, such as 86 S.958, which deals solely with the desegregation of schools.

### CONGRESSIONAL RECORD

Search the official proceedings of Congress from June 9, 1964 to read the infamous filibuster by Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia, which lasted 14 hours and 13 minutes, and was the last of the speeches to block the bill's passage in the Senate. On June 10, 1964, after Byrd took his seat, the Senate voted 71 to 29 to invoke cloture and end the debate. Only once in 37 years had the Senate been able to muster enough votes to cut off a filibuster and agree to cloture, and never had this been achieved on a civil rights bill. Read the Congressional Record from June 10, 1964 to locate this historic vote.

## **REPORTS**

As early as 1944 a bill was introduced to prohibit discrimination in employment because of race. During the 78th Congress, on Dec. 4, 1944, the House Labor Committee submitted a report recommending passage of a bill to establish a Fair Employment Practice Commission and prohibit discrimination in employment. The report states a need for Federal legislation because of the extent of discrimination in the United States, the inadequacy of State action, the lack of sufficient power by the current Fair Employment Practice Committee and necessary affirmation of the existing national policy. Compare this original recommendation to the enacted Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

## **DOCUMENTS**

On Feb. 28, 1963, the President John F. Kennedy transmitted to Congress a message laying out recommendations pertaining to civil rights. Beginning with the quote "Our Constitution is colorblind," Kennedy outlined civil injustices in areas such as voting, education, and employment. Subsequently, on June 19, 1963, he transmitted a second message to Congress further urging congressional action and included draft legislation for Congress's consideration.

## **HEARINGS**

Senator Strom Thurmond testified on multiple occasions against the enactment of what he viewed as "so-call civil-rights" bills. On Mar. 4, 1957 he gave a statement before the Senate Judiciary Committee, urging Congress to dismiss civil rights legislation because it was "(1) unconstitutional generally, (2) unneeded entirely, and (3) unworthy of consideration." He justified this argument by claiming the bills infringed upon State's rights.

## **COMMITTEE PRINTS**

The House Judiciary Committee issued a "committee print" on Oct. 2, 1963, printing the committee markup of the bill 88 H.R. 7152 before it was sent to the House floor for debate. Read this print to see the development of the bill which would eventually become the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

## **CRS REPORTS**

The Congressional Research Service (CRS) issued a report in Aug. 1965, laying out a legislative history and providing arguments for and against the passage of the Civil Rights Bill.