

Racial Inequality

Racial Inequality has plagued the United States for centuries. Segregation was still prevalent in the south even after the civil war between the north and the south. This included schools, buses, restaurants and more. While on paper people of color were given similar if not the same rights as whites they were executed disgracefully. Poll taxes, literacy rates and intimidation were tactics preventing African Americans from having a say in voting. In 1940 only 3% of black people eligible to vote were registered. Poll taxes prevented African Americans from voting because they could not afford to financially. By 1947 the number increased to 12% percent but it was still significantly slow. Literacy rates also barred them from voting because schools in wealthier financial districts got more funding. These districts were very often dominated by white people. In northern and western states however these rules did not apply. Black people looking for employment were discriminated against when looking for jobs and houses even outside the south.

Unlike many democrats Truman pushed for civil rights and made it a key argument in his presidential campaign. He created the Presidents committee on Civil Rights which aimed to secure and push for the rights of black Americans all over the country. In 1948 he issued executive orders such as 9980 which stated the desegregation of the federal workforce. Truman strongly supported the protection of voting rights by planning to remove poll taxes and literacy examinations. Southern voters were not pleased with this causing Truman to loose votes in the south. Dewey (Republican) had fought for equal rights between blacks and white however this was not at the forefront of his campaign. As former governor of New York Dewey had made several improvements. Some of them included one of the nation's first fair employment laws as well as promoting anti discrimination laws. While Dewey promoted civil rights he was more cautious about spotlighting the issue while Truman made it one of the forefronts of his campaign.