President Lyndon Baines Johnson, a civil rights reformer

On June 2, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, which was the most sweeping civil rights legislation since Reconstruction. The Act prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin, in public places, provided for the integration of schools and other public facilities, and made employment discrimination illegal.

Congress expanded the act in subsequent years, passing additional legislation in order to move toward more equality for African-Americans, including the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The end of the Civil War in 1865 brought three constitutional amendments which abolished slavery, made former slaves citizens of the United States, and gave all men the right to vote, regardless of race. However, measures such as literacy tests and poll taxes were used by many states to continue the disenfranchisement of African-Americans and Jim Crow laws helped those same states to enforce segregation and condone race-based violence from groups like the Ku Klux Klan.

Many years passed with minimal action taken to enforce civil rights. In 1963, President John F. Kennedy decided it was time to act, proposing the most sweeping civil rights legislation to date. After the assassination of President Kennedy later that same year, his successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, continued to press Congress to pass comprehensive civil rights legislation.

After fighting multiple hostile amendments, the House [of Representatives] approved the bill with bipartisan support. In the Senate, Southern Democrats waged the longest filibuster in history, 75 days, in an attempt to kill the bill. Eventually, supporters were able to gain the necessary two-thirds majority to end the filibuster and successfully pass the bill.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, more than 100 years after the end of the Civil War, sought to finally guarantee the equality of all races and creeds in the United States. Segregation on the basis of race, religion or national origin was banned in all public places, including parks, restaurants, churches, courthouses, theaters, sports arenas, and hotels. The act also authorized the Office of Education (today the Department of Education) to desegregate public schools and prohibited the use of federal funds for any discriminatory programs. The act created the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission while discrimination based on race, religion, national origin, or gender was banned for employers and labor unions. Finally, the act prohibited the unequal application of voting requirements.

The Civil Rights Act was later expanded to include provisions for the elderly, the disabled, and women in collegiate athletics. Its passage also paved the way for two other major pieces of legislation: the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. The VRA prohibited discriminatory voting practices like literacy tests and poll taxes. The FHA prohibited discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of property. Legal segregation had been fully stamped out, though the struggle against racism and other forms of discrimination continues today.

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**Questions:
1/ Find in the text the two main laws that President Johnson ratified.**

**2/ Why does the title describe LBJ as “a civil rights reformer”?**

**3/ What are the two congressional Chambers in which a bill must go through before being voted?**

**4/ True or False ? Justify by quoting the text.**
*a] As soon as the Civil War ended, the three Constitutional Amendments which followed gave everybody voting rights without any restriction.*

*b] In the Congress, the whole Senate fully agreed with the 1964 law.*

*c] LBJ was not the only President who desired to enact desegregation laws.*

*d] The Fair Housing Act only concerns lodgings and accommodation*.

**5/ Find in the text the equivalents for:**

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| deprivation of voting rights: |  to exert pressure on: |
| to accept, to tolerate, to put up with: |  to obstruct: |