

“The most significant civil rights problem is voting. Each citizen’s right to vote is fundamental to all the other rights of citizenship and the Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1960 make it the responsibility of the Department of Justice to protect that right.”



Robert Kennedy, U.S. Attorney General (1963)

The Civil Rights Act of 1960 established federal inspection of local voter registration polls and introduced penalties for anyone who obstructed someone’s attempt to register to vote. Serving as the U.S. Attorney General during his brother, John F. Kennedy’s, presidency, Robert Kennedy was responsible for those inspections and enforcement of the law.

State and local governments have the responsibility for administering elections in the United States. The Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Justice Department enforces the federal voting rights laws that protect the constitutional rights of all citizens to access the ballot. This group, led by the U.S. Attorney General, is also responsible for investigating and prosecuting instances of voter fraud.

Look for news about how the U.S. Attorney General and the Justice Department are defending the constitutional rights of American citizens. Are any related to voting and elections?

This is one of 15 features created to educate and celebrate Law Day, May 1, 2020. Sponsored by the New York Bar Foundation, the New York Newspapers Foundation and produced by the NYNPA News Media Literacy/ Newspaper In Education Program. Copyright 2020. All rights reserved.

