

## BLOGS

Archives; Discrimination; Harassment; Labor & Unions; Leave; Wage & Hour

# Reflecting on the Presidents Behind Our Landmark Civil Rights and Employment Laws

Today is Presidents Day, or, as it is officially called, Washington's Birthday. We also celebrate Black History Month each February, making this month a time for reflection on the long history behind our country's efforts towards achieving equality in the workplace. In honor of both Presidents Day and Black History Month, I'm sharing the list below of Presidents who were in office when our country passed some of its landmark federal civil rights or employment laws, along with some interesting facts about each of the Presidents who played a role in the history behind our current workplace laws.

Wishing you happy reading and a happy Presidents Day!

## Related People

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### ***Abraham Lincoln, 16th President:***

Issued the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863

In office when the 13th Amendment, abolishing slavery, was passed in 1865

Born in a one room log cabin; mostly self-educated; kept goats as pets in the White House

Assassinated in 1865

### ***Andrew Johnson, 17th President:***

One of four Vice Presidents to become President due to his predecessors assassination

42 U.S.C. 1981, which prohibits race discrimination in business contracting and employment, was passed in 1866 over President Johnsons veto

A self-educated tailor; kept white mice as pets in the White House

First President to be impeached and kept his office by only one vote

### ***Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 32nd President:***

Signed the National Labor Relations Act into law in 1935



Signed the Fair Labor Standards Act into law in 1938

Forced to wear a dress until he was 5; married his cousin, Eleanor; contracted polio at the age 39; had Scottish Terriers as pets in the White House

Only President elected to four terms

First President to name a woman, Frances Perkins, Secretary of State, to his cabinet

***John F. Kennedy, 35th President:***

Signed the Equal Pay Act, prohibiting gender discrimination in pay, into law in 1963

Youngest person to become President at age 43 and first Catholic President

In office during the civil rights movement and sent federal troops to support the desegregation of the University of Mississippi

White house pets included hamsters, cats, birds, and ponies

Assassinated in November 1963

***Lyndon B. Johnson, 36th President:***

One of four Vice Presidents to become President due to his predecessors assassination

Signed Title VII of the Civil Rights Act into law in 1964, prohibiting employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, and national origin

Signed Age Discrimination in Employment Act into law in 1967

Appointed first African American, Thurgood Marshall, to the US Supreme Court

First President to appoint an African American, Robert Weaver, HUD Secretary, to his cabinet

Kept beagles, hamsters, and lovebirds as pets in the White House; liked to take visitors for 90 mph rides in his Lincoln Continental at his Texas ranch

***George H. W. Bush, 41st President:***

Signed the 1989 law that established the Martin Luther King, Jr. federal holiday

Signed the Americans with Disabilities Act into law in 1990, prohibiting disability discrimination in employment

In office when amendments were made in 1991 to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 1981, and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act

Former Director of the CIA

Asked for President Nixons resignation in the name of the Republican Party

A book was published about his White House pet, a Springer Spaniel named Millie, and there are reports that Millie had her own room at the White House

***Bill Clinton, 42nd President:***

Signed the Family Medical Leave Act into law in 1991



Youngest governor when elected as Arkansas Governor at age 32

Second President to be impeached

White House pets included Socks, a cat, and Buddy, a chocolate lab; reported to have sent only 2 emails while President; known for playing the saxophone and jogging

Only President to have his wife later run for President

***Barack Obama, 44th and Current President:***

First African-American President

Signed Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act into law in 2009, extending the time period for individuals to pursue gender-based wage discrimination claims

First President born outside the contiguous United States

Teenage dream was to play basketball, and high school nickname was Barry OBomber

White house pet is Bo, a Portuguese water dog