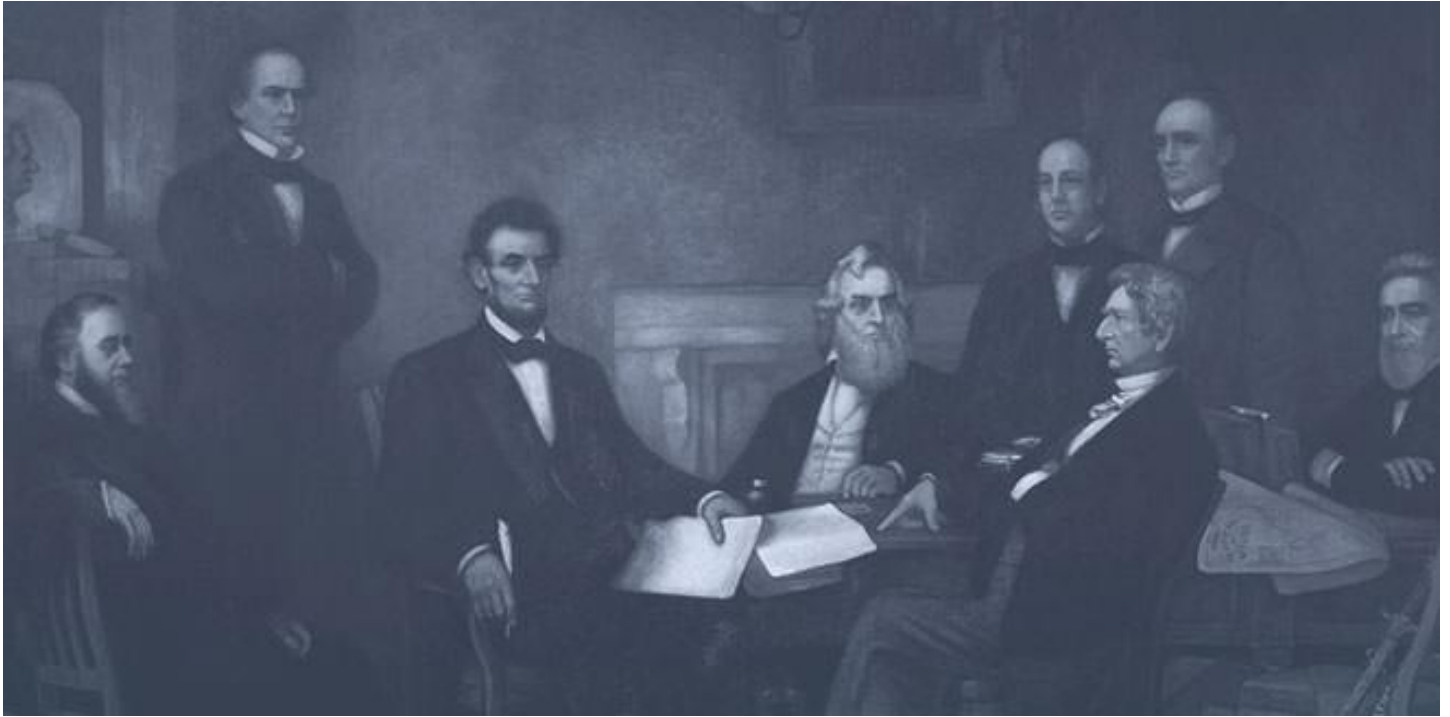


GOP: On the Right Side of History



Emancipation Proclamation

The first Republican President Abraham Lincoln issued The Emancipation Proclamation by executive order on January 1, 1863. It changed the federal legal status of more than 3 million enslaved people and designated areas of the South from slave to free. As soon as a slave escaped the control of the Confederate government, by running away or through advances of federal troops, the slave became legally free. Ultimately, the rebel surrender liberated and resulted in the proclamation's application to all of the designated slaves. It did not cover slaves in Union areas that were freed by state action (or by the 13th Amendment in December 1865). It was issued as a war measure during the American Civil War directed to all of the areas in rebellion and all segments of the executive branch (including the Army and Navy) of the United States.

The Emancipation Proclamation did more than lift the war to the level of a crusade for human freedom. It brought some substantial practical results, because it allowed the Union to recruit black soldiers. To this invitation to join the army the blacks responded in considerable numbers, nearly 180,000 of them enlisting during the remainder of the war. By August 26, 1863, Lincoln could report in a letter to James C. Conkling that “the emancipation policy, and the use of colored troops, constitute the heaviest blow yet dealt to the rebellion.”

Two months before the war ended Abraham Lincoln told portrait painter Francis B. Carpenter that the Emancipation Proclamation was “the central act of my administration and the greatest event of the nineteenth century.”