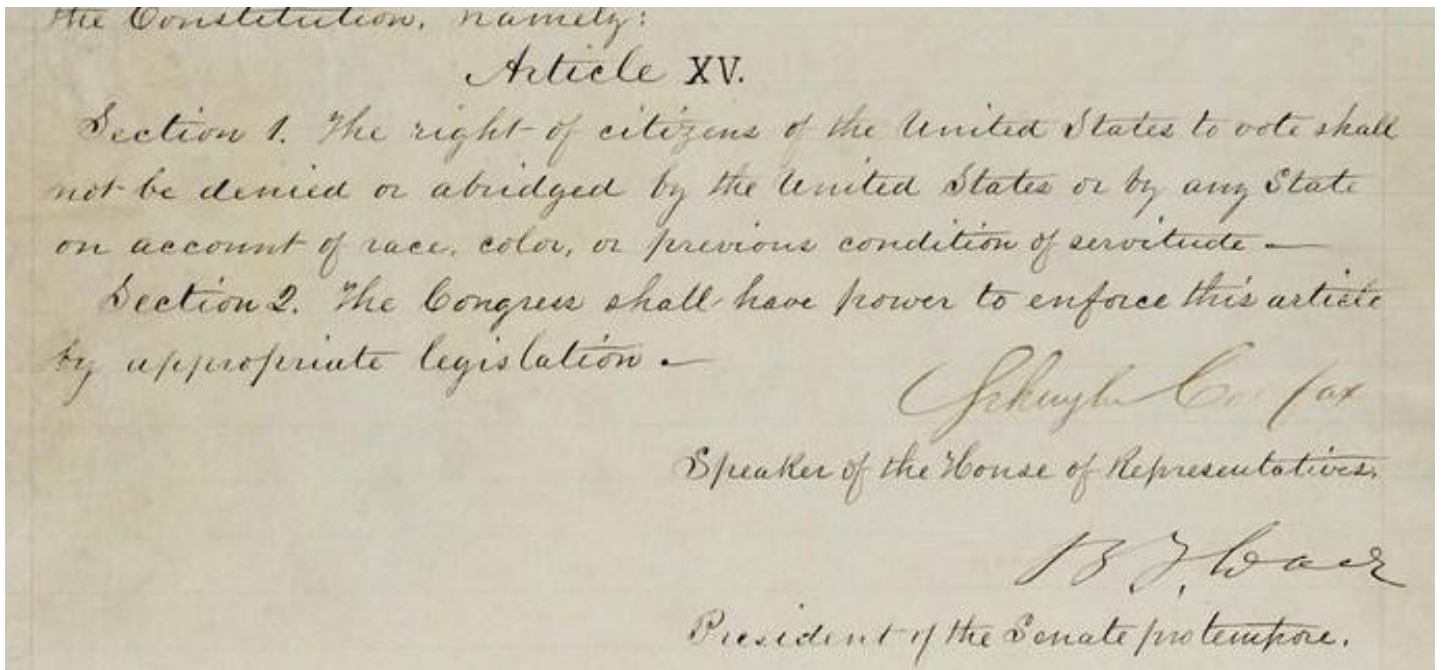


GOP: On the Right Side of History



15th Amendment – Right to Vote

The Fifteenth Amendment (Amendment XV) to the United States Constitution prohibits the federal and state governments from denying a citizen the right to vote based on that citizen's "race, color, or previous condition of servitude". It was ratified on February 3, 1870.

In the final years of the American Civil War and the Reconstruction Era that followed, Congress repeatedly debated the rights of the millions of black former slaves. By 1869, amendments had been passed to abolish slavery and provide citizenship and equal protection under the laws, but the election of Ulysses S. Grant to the presidency in 1868 convinced a majority of Republicans that protecting the franchise of black male voters was important for the party's future. On February 26, 1869, after rejecting more sweeping versions of a suffrage amendment, Congress proposed a compromise amendment banning franchise restrictions on the basis of race, color, or previous servitude. After surviving a difficult ratification fight, the amendment was certified as duly ratified and part of the Constitution on March 30, 1870.

Newly elected President Ulysses S Grant strongly endorsed the amendment, calling it "a measure of grander importance than any other one act of the kind from the foundation of our free government to the present day."

In Congress the 15th Amendment was passed entirely by the Republican Party. It received no Democrat support ... zero votes.

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