

# The expansion of the right to vote throughout history

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Throughout history, the right to vote has expanded and expanded. There are several examples of this in history, such as African Americans and women earning the right to suffrage. All of these movements stem down to the formation of the National Republicans, or Democrats. During Andrew Jackson's presidency, this party made it possible for even the poorest man to gain the right to vote. However, this movement was the subject of much controversy, as many doubted the abilities of the "common man".

One side in this argument was the supporters of the Democrats. They argued that ownership of property should not determine the right to vote. In document one of the DBQ paper, Nathan Sanford, who supported Jackson, argued that not ownership of property, but a man's morality, should give him the right to vote. A different perspective, but the same basic agreement, is that of a French nobleman named Alexis de Tocqueville. He stated that the heads of government were often completely talentless, and seemed to end up in their positions from wealthiness alone.

These supporters definitely had their reasons to be for this movement, but there were many who had reasons to oppose it. In her cynical and brutally honest book "Domestic Manners of the Americans", Frances Trollope recalls the election of 1828. She states that most people were overlooking that he was "in every way calculated to do honour to the office" and simply opposing him because Jackson represented a less wealthy, more realistic portion of America. She even went as far to say that Jackson won the election of 1828 solely for that reason.

James Kent of New York stated that the property requirement was simply the price to pay for the privilege of voting. He called the poor lazy, and stated that the movement was just a way for the poor to “ share the plunder of the rich”. Both sides definitely had their reasons, as these opinions show. As for my opinion, I definitely support the movement. As for the supporters, I find next to no valid arguments against them other than “ everyone’s poor for a reason”.

And as I may agree with that statement to a certain extent, it does not validate the ignorant generalizations made by James Kent, calling the poor lazy and greedy (from what I’ve seen, it seems to be the other way around). As for Trollope, while it may be true that the reasons for Jackson’s support were unjust, it seems to happen on the wealthy party’s side just about as much as vice versa. However, as it has become clear by giving suffrage to blacks, women, and 18, 19, and 20 year olds, this movement still continues today, and isn’t ending anytime soon.