

## The Civil Rights Act of 1875 Debate Simulation

### *Group and Role Descriptions*

#### **Democrats**

“After the Civil War, most white Southerners opposed Radical Reconstruction and the Republican Party’s support of black civil and political rights. The Democratic Party identified itself as the “white man’s party” and demonized the Republican Party as being “Negro dominated,” even though whites were in control. Determined to recapture the South, Southern Democrats ‘redeemed’ state after state – sometimes peacefully, other times by fraud and violence. By 1877, when Reconstruction was officially over, the Democratic Party controlled every Southern state.”

From: [https://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories\\_org\\_democratic.html](https://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories_org_democratic.html)

#### **Republicans**

##### Radical Republicans

Although you never constituted a majority of the Republican Party, your influence in Reconstruction policies is undeniable. With congressional titans like Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner, for a short time your faction was able to direct the trajectory of Reconstruction. For you, the Civil War was fought to end slavery, and Reconstruction is an effort to provide full citizenship for black Americans. You also want to provide them with equal protection under the law, adequate resources to begin their new lives, and suffrage. Although your agenda often put you at odds with those within your own party, you are much more concerned with your ideology than the party’s status quo.

##### Moderate Republicans

While you may have been committed to Radical Republican ideology in the earlier years of Reconstruction, your interests pivoted by the 1870s. Today, you are more loyal to the party than you are to its principles – which had always been contested. While you are sympathetic to the cause of equality for African American citizens, it is by no means your primary concern. With economic development and games of organized party politics to play, there are other topics to address. For you, it may be time to move on from the civil rights agenda of Reconstruction.

Adapted from Eric Foner’s, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*, p. 484-485

## Liberal Republicans

While you are part of the Republican Party, you have become disillusioned with President Grant and the rest of the party's leadership. You have begun to associate Reconstruction with the growing corruption exhibited by Northern Republicans and Grant's Administration. Therefore, you are interested in seeing Reconstruction come to an end so that federal overreach may cease, and by extension, prevent the spread of corrupt rule.

Adapted from Eric Foner's, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*, p. 484-534