

WE INVOKE THE 13<sup>TH</sup> AMENDMENT THAT WAS RATIFIED BY 3/4THS  
WHEREBY THE 14<sup>TH</sup> AMENDMENT WAS NOT



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Home > 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Abolition of Slavery (1865)

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## 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Abolition of Slavery (1865)

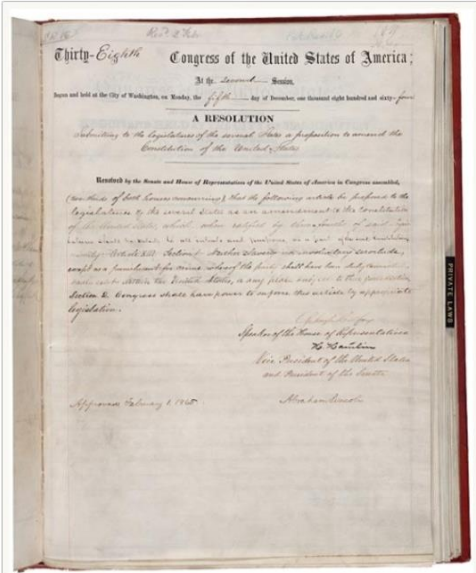
Passed by Congress on January 31, 1865, and ratified on December 6, 1865, the 13th Amendment abolished slavery in the United States.

In 1863 President Lincoln issued the [Emancipation Proclamation](#) declaring “all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free.” Nonetheless, the Emancipation Proclamation did not end slavery in the nation since it only applied to areas of the Confederacy currently in a state of rebellion (and not even to the loyal “border states” that remained in the Union). Lincoln recognized that the Emancipation Proclamation would have to be followed by a constitutional amendment in order to guarantee the abolishment of slavery.

The 13th Amendment was passed at the end of the Civil War before the Southern states had been restored to the Union, and should have easily passed in Congress. However, though the Senate passed it in April 1864, the House initially did not. At that point, Lincoln took an active role to ensure passage through Congress. He insisted that passage of the 13th Amendment be added to the Republican Party platform for the upcoming 1864 Presidential election. His efforts met with success when the House passed the bill in January 1865 with a vote of 119–56.

On February 1, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln approved the Joint Resolution of Congress submitting the proposed amendment to the state legislatures. The necessary number of states (three-fourths) ratified it by December 6, 1865. The 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution provides that “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.”

With the adoption of the 13th Amendment, the United States found a final constitutional solution to the issue of slavery. The 13th Amendment, along with the 14th and 15th, is one of the trio of Civil War amendments that greatly expanded the civil rights of Americans.



Citation: The House Joint Resolution Proposing the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, January 31, 1865; Enrolled Acts and Resolutions of Congress, 1789-1999; General Records of the United States Government; Record Group 11; National Archives.

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AMENDMENT XIII

Section 1.

Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Section 2.

Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

*Passed by Congress January 31, 1865. Ratified December 6, 1865.*

*Note: A portion of Article IV, section 2, of the Constitution was superseded by the 13th Amendment.*

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