



## Celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Civil Rights Department of the Interior

Today is the 60th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This law was a hard-fought victory for civil rights activists and leaders. It came after years of advocacy, protest, lawsuits, and civil disobedience, marked by the blood, sweat, and tears of those who came before. In the years leading up to the passage of the Civil Rights Act, the U.S. saw many hard-fought battles for civil rights, including the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court case, which found race segregation in schools unconstitutional; and countless brave non-violent protests and actions – that were often met with violence – led by those such as Rosa Parks to Ruby Bridges to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

So many people put their words and beliefs to action and created the outcry that motivated President Kennedy to create the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity in 1961 and to introduce the Civil Rights Act of 1963, which stalled in Congress. After a lengthy and contentious debate, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which was signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. It is what created the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Commission, a bipartisan commission which oversees the EEO complaint process, through which all federal employees may seek redress for employment discrimination. It also sets forth the legal framework and authority for our office, the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Civil Rights, by which we operate and carry out our EEO functions on behalf of the Secretary.

This law has seen hundreds of amendments, hours of Congressional debate, scores of case-setting analysis and decisions, and opened the door for laws like the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act.

On this incredible and momentous day, I take note of the sacrifice and vision of those who went before us. We thank them for their leadership. We remember them and commit to a workplace here at the Department of the Interior where each employee can succeed at work, without discrimination based on their identity. Thank you for who you are and what you bring to the workplace – Happy 60th anniversary to the Civil Rights Act of 1964!