

# BBC Bitesize

**Narrator:** American society continues to change in the 1960s. Inspired by the civil rights movement and Vietnam war protests, other marginalised groups mobilise to pursue equal rights.

One such group is Native Americans, who, as a result of decades of racist and discriminatory policies, have a life expectancy well below the national average, as well as high unemployment and high poverty rates.

In 1968, a small group form the American Indian Movement – or AIM. The group grows and fights for better housing, quality education and legal protections for their land and way of life.

Decades of discrimination have also led to suffering among Mexican Americans.

The Chicano movement campaigns for better working conditions, decent housing and for land that had been promised to them by the US government.

Gay rights groups also intensify their fight for equality.

In 1969, in many states holding hands, kissing or dancing with someone of the same sex in public is illegal.

In June of that year, police carry out a raid of the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York City.

During the raid, police violently remove people from the bar, but local residents and customers step in to help those being attacked. Police respond by barricading themselves in the bar. This event, known as the Stonewall uprising, leads to six days of protests and clashes with police and is a catalyst for the gay rights movement in the US.

Women organise one of the most active movements for change at this time.

Winning the right to vote in 1920 hasn't led to wider equality for women. After World War Two, some women continue to work outside of the home.

However, they are frequently paid less than men, are often prevented from working in high paying jobs, and becoming pregnant could get a woman fired.

With more women than ever demanding change, a number of new groups form to fight for women's rights.

In 1969 women's reproductive rights hit the headlines when a woman seeks an abortion – but State law prohibits this.

Known as 'Jane Roe' she takes the District Attorney, Henry Wade, to court.

She wins her landmark legal case, Roe versus Wade, and in 1973, the Supreme Court rules that all women have a right to an abortion.

In 1963, the Equal Pay Act is passed, making gender-based wage discrimination illegal.

But this is not the turning point that women hope for. Their average pay remains far below that of men.

One campaign group, the National Organisation for Women, wants an Equal Rights Amendment (or ERA) to ensure that equality is written into the US Constitution.

But not all women believe change is necessary.

Phyllis Schlafly organises a campaign against the ERA warning it will undermine the American family. The successful campaign means the amendment is not added to the Constitution.

The 1960s and 1970s are a time when many marginalised groups take action against discrimination, paving the way for future progress. However, change does not come quickly and many groups will continue to fight for decades to come.