

Day One

A Messy Business

➔ President Lyndon B Johnson compared making laws to killing pigs. Read silently.

The National Archives has an iconic photograph of President Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ). In the photo, LBJ is face to face with Senator Richard Russell. Russell led the opposition to the civil rights bill. LBJ looms over Senator Russell in an obvious display of intimidation. Their noses are mere inches apart.

This photo shows LBJ's determination to pass civil rights legislation. He was known for doing whatever was necessary to make his bills, or laws, happen. LBJ debated, bargained, pressured, and manipulated to get bills passed. LBJ knew that getting new bills passed was a messy business. He once told an assistant, "never to watch hogs slaughtered before breakfast and never ever show young children how legislation gets enacted."

LBJ's decades of experience in Congress prepared him to succeed as President. He knew every lawmaker and every reporter. When the civil rights bill was stuck, LBJ convinced the *Washington Post* to run a series of articles. These articles criticized the men opposing the civil rights bill. This helped get the bill moving through Congress again.

LBJ was incredibly successful at getting his bills passed. During his presidency, he managed to get nearly 200 bills signed into law. These new laws covered civil rights, healthcare, consumer protections, air quality, and more. However, President Johnson's popularity had waned by 1968. He decided not to run for president again. Republican candidate, Richard Nixon, eventually won the election.