Pressure for Change

Randolph, federal action, and the limits of reform

USH.C.5.4.D "Assess the influence of Phillip Randolph regarding efforts to eliminate employment discrimination and the impact of President Truman's decision to desegregate the United States of America's armed forces."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two actions Randolph took, circle the two presidents' policy responses, and write 1 beside an impact and 2 beside a limit of those responses. Use your marks to assess how public pressure led to change.

Two Orders, Continuing Work

1 In 1941, factories making planes and ships needed workers, yet many Black applicants were turned away because of their race. Labor leader A. Philip Randolph argued that a nation fighting for freedom could not defend discrimination at home. He organized a proposed mass march on Washington to demand equal access to defense jobs. President Franklin D. Roosevelt faced the prospect of a major protest during wartime and issued Executive Order 8802. It banned racial discrimination in defense employment and created the Fair Employment Practice Committee to investigate complaints. Randolph called off the march, but the order did not erase hiring bias overnight.

2 After the war, Randolph turned his attention to the military. Black Americans had served in World War II, but the armed forces still separated many service members by race. Randolph pressed President Harry S. Truman to end that system and supported a campaign urging Black men to resist a segregated draft. In 1948, Truman issued Executive Order 9981, declaring equal treatment and opportunity in the armed forces regardless of race, color, religion, or national origin. The order established a presidential committee to recommend changes. Unlike Roosevelt's order about jobs in defense industries, Truman's order addressed service inside the military.

3 Truman's order did not instantly place all troops in integrated units. Military leaders had to change practices, and some resisted. During the Korean War, the armed forces increasingly assigned Black and white service members to the same units. Over time, the order helped end official segregation in military service, although it did not end racism within the ranks. Randolph's influence lay in turning protest plans and public pressure into demands presidents could not easily ignore. Together, the two orders show both the reach and the limits of federal action: a rule could open doors, but people still had to enforce it.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Randolph's planned march influence federal action on defense jobs, and what limit did that action have?

2. How did Randolph press for change after World War II, and what did Truman's response address?

3. How did the two executive orders differ in the discrimination they addressed?

4. Why would it be inaccurate to say Truman's order immediately ended segregation in the armed forces? Explain its later impact.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 90 to 110 word museum label explaining how organized pressure can change federal policy without immediately ending discrimination. Use Randolph and both executive orders as evidence, and explain one gap between a policy and its results.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.5.4.D

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two actions Randolph took, circle the two presidents' policy responses, and write 1 beside an impact and 2 beside a limit of those responses. Use your marks to assess how public pressure led to change. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Randolph's planned march influence federal action on defense jobs, and what limit did that action have?	**Randolph's proposed march put pressure on Roosevelt, who issued Executive Order 8802 to ban racial discrimination in defense employment and create a committee to investigate complaints. Hiring bias did not disappear overnight.**
2	How did Randolph press for change after World War II, and what did Truman's response address?	**Randolph pressed Truman to end military segregation and supported resistance to a segregated draft. Truman's Executive Order 9981 called for equal treatment and opportunity in the armed forces.**
3	How did the two executive orders differ in the discrimination they addressed?	**Executive Order 8802 addressed discrimination in defense employment. Executive Order 9981 addressed unequal treatment in military service.**
4	Why would it be inaccurate to say Truman's order immediately ended segregation in the armed forces? Explain its later impact.	**Some military leaders resisted changing their practices, so units did not integrate at once. Integration increased during the Korean War, and the order helped end official segregation over time.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Organized pressure can force leaders to respond, but a signed order is only a starting point. In 1941, A. Philip Randolph planned a march because Black workers faced discrimination in defense hiring. Roosevelt answered with Executive Order 8802, which prohibited discrimination in defense employment and set up a committee to investigate complaints. After World War II, Randolph challenged segregation in military service. Truman's Executive Order 9981 called for equal treatment and opportunity in the armed forces. Still, military units did not integrate at once. Leaders had to change their practices, and some resisted. Randolph helped win federal commitments, while continued enforcement turned those commitments into change.

Accept evidence-based judgments that distinguish defense employment from military service. Responses should recognize that executive orders established federal policy but did not immediately eliminate discrimination.