

Wilmot Proviso (1846) During the Mexican-American War, Congressman David Wilmot of Pennsylvania added an amendment to a bill that would have prohibited slavery in any new territories gained as a result of the war. Although the Wilmot Proviso was never passed by Congress, it spurred the growth of antislavery political parties, including the Republican Party.

Compromise of 1850 In 1850, California applied for admission to the Union as a free state. To maintain the balance of power between slave and free states, Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky introduced a compromise that allowed popular sovereignty to determine the slavery issue in the other territories won from Mexico. The compromise included a Fugitive Slave Act that required all citizens to assist in the capture of fugitive slaves. The Fugitive Slave Act outraged many northerners, bolstering the anti-slavery movement.

Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854) Legislation that split the Nebraska Territory into Kansas and Nebraska and allowed popular sovereignty to determine the slavery issue in these territories. The passage of this act led to widespread violence in Kansas, as pro and antislavery forces rushed into Kansas in order to garner support for their positions.

Dred Scott Decision (1857) Supreme Court decision in the case of *Dred Scott v. Sandford* that stated that Congress had no authority to prohibit slavery in United States territories. This ruling undid the Missouri Compromise and increased antislavery sentiment in the North.