In 1846, Northern Congressmen tried to pass the Wilmot Proviso.

This law would have outlawed all slaves from the Mexican Cession.

Rather than voting along party lines (Democrats and Whigs), Congressmen voting according to their region.

In 1848, the Free Soil Party was formed to keep slavery from spreading West.
In 1854, Congress passed Stephen Douglas’ Kansas-Nebraska Act. The law used popular sovereignty to give the residents of the territories the right to vote to determine slavery.
To do this, Congress repealed (ended) the Missouri Compromise line at 36°30’ in the western territories.
Northerners were outraged by the Kansas-Nebraska Act

Congress allowed slavery to spread into an area where slavery was already outlawed
Popular sovereignty failed to settle the slavery question in the West
When a vote was held in Kansas in 1855 to decide on slavery, thousands of Missouri residents illegally voted.

Pro-slavery Missourians voting in Kansas.

Pro-slavery Missourians sneaking across the border to vote.
This illegal vote gave Kansas slavery when its residents voted against it.
In 1856, a war began between Kansas and Missouri (known as “Bleeding Kansas")
In 1857, a slave named Dred Scott sued for his freedom after traveling with his master from Missouri to Wisconsin. The Dred Scott case presented the Supreme Court with two questions:

- Does Congress have the power to decide on slavery in the territories?
- Is the Missouri Compromise constitutional?
In *Dred Scott v. Sanford* (1857), the Supreme Court ruled that Dred Scott had no right to sue because blacks are not citizens. Congress did not have the power to stop slavery in western territories so the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional. Northern abolitionists were furious.
In 1859, abolitionist John Brown led an unsuccessful raid on a federal armory at Harper’s Ferry, VA in an attempt to free slaves in a massive slave uprising.
Brown was caught and executed

But he was seen as a martyr by many in the North

Southerners believed Northerners were using violence to end slavery