

# One Hundred and Sixteenth Congress

Jan. 3, 2019-Jan. 3, 2021

## Administration of Donald John Trump

---

Historical Background.....	1
War or Peace? .....	3
Economic Trends and Conditions.....	8
Landmark U.S. Supreme Court Decisions .....	10
2019 Events .....	10
2020 Events .....	12
Major Acts.....	16

---

### Historical Background

Real estate developer and television personality Donald J. Trump’s stunning upset victory in the 2016 Presidential election defied much of the received wisdom surrounding electoral politics in America. Commentators who looked to the 2018 mid-term Congressional elections to provide a sense of clarity with respect to the political mood of the country were bound to be disappointed by the apparent ambivalence of the results. Though the beleaguered Democratic Party managed to regain control of the House of Representatives, the governing Republican Party increased its narrow majority in the Senate by two seats.

Internationally, the rise of a new generation of populist political leaders continued apace. In Brazil a corruption investigation implicated former president Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, ending his candidacy in the 2018 presidential elections and clearing the way for the election of Jair Bolsonaro, a right-wing populist politician.

As Israel prepared for national elections in April 2019, the country’s four-term prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu faced several corruption investigations and a tough election challenge from a newly formed centrist coalition led by former Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) chief Benny Gantz. Though Netanyahu’s Likud party managed to secure a bare plurality in the polling, the prime minister’s inability to cobble together a governing coalition and moves to prevent Gantz from being given an opportunity to form a government triggered new elections scheduled for September 2019.

In India, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of prime minister Narendra Modi built on its majority in the Lok Sabha (lower house of parliament), despite failing to achieve the economic goals promised during the 2014 elections



President  
Donald J. Trump

House*	Senate
Majority Party: Democratic (233 seats)	Majority Party: Republican (53 seats)
Minority Party: Republican (197 seats)	Minority Party: Democratic (45 seats)
Other Parties: Libertarian (1 seat)	Other Parties: Independent (2 seats)
Speaker of the House: Nancy Pelosi	Majority Leader: Mitch McConnell

*\*Representative Justin Amash, elected as a Republican to represent Michigan’s 3<sup>rd</sup> district, left the Republican party in July 2019, becoming an independent, before joining the Libertarian party in April 2020.*

that brought him to power and accusations of stoking communal tensions for political gain.

And closer to home, the resignation of British prime minister Theresa May in May 2019 after failing for a third time to usher an agreement on the terms of Britain's exit from the European Union—a political phenomenon colloquially known as “Brexit”—led to the selection of the journalist and former London mayor Boris Johnson to succeed May as leader of the Conservative Party and, as such, the next prime minister.

Both in the U.S. and globally, politics and daily life took a drastic turn in March of 2020 when a novel coronavirus that causes a disease in humans called COVID-19 began to spread globally. By December of 2020 the virus had infected millions of people causing hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and nearly a half-million deaths in the United States alone.

The global COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences were the decisive issue in the 2020 federal elections. Measures taken to slow the spread of the virus wreaked havoc on the global economy, disrupting supply chains and shuttering many bricks and mortar businesses, thereby throwing a monkey wrench into the president's plan to highlight the strength of the economy in his appeals to voters. While many Americans, including most Democrats and many Republicans, supported decisive action to halt the spread of the disease, many more conservative voters viewed mask mandates and business closures as an infringement on civil liberties.

Former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. prevailed over a crowded field of candidates, including Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, who narrowly lost the 2016 Democratic nomination to former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, to become the Democratic nominee for president. Biden chose California Senator Kamala Harris as his running mate—the second woman to be nominated for vice president by a major party and the first Black and the first Asian American woman to be nominated. Campaign operations were hobbled by measures aimed at slowing the spread of the pandemic. This was another blow to President Trump, who relied on huge arena rallies to drum up support among his enthusiastic base. Biden, in contrast, ran a relatively below-the-radar campaign, delivering speeches and making appeals by video as much of the country was confined to their homes.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act, enacted March 27, 2020, included funds for states to increase mail-in voting, due to concerns over the spread of the virus at polling places. On October 2, just one month before election day, the President and First Lady tested positive for SARS CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, and the president was hospitalized for several days when his condition deteriorated. This again emphasized the centrality of the global pandemic to the election.

Over 158 million ballots were cast in the 2020 election, the most in U.S. history, and more than 100 million of these were submitted by mail. The election proved to be a decisive victory for the Democratic party, who won the Presidency, maintained their majority in the House of Representatives,



Senate Majority Leader  
Mitch McConnell



Nancy Pelosi  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives*

Speaker of the House  
Nancy Pelosi

though their margin shrunk from 37 to 8 seats, and winning control of the Senate after an historic run-off election in Georgia saw both Democratic candidates—Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock—overcome their Republican rivals, giving the party 50 seats in the chamber, which, with the tie-breaking vote of Vice President Kamala Harris, returned control to the Democrats. The president was not ready to concede defeat, however, and launched dozens of challenges to election results in states he lost, claiming widespread fraud due to the large number of mail-in ballots cast. On January 6, 2021, as the Congress was counting and certifying the electoral ballots cast on December 14, the president held a rally on the White House lawn, urging Congress to refuse to certify the election results. After the rally, many attendees marched to the U.S. Capitol, overwhelmed Capitol Police, and rushed the building, triggering an evacuation of the legislative chambers, where legislators and Vice President Mike Pence were overseeing the certification process. Five people died during the incident, including one Capitol Police officer.

Source:

Kronstadt, K. Alan. [India, Pakistan, and the Pulwama Crisis, CRS Insight](#) CRS. Feb. 26, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. IN11057. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2019-CRS-191728

Kronstadt, K. Alan. [India's Domestic Political Setting, CRS In Focus](#) CRS. May 24, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. IF10298. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2019-CRS-197312

Mix, Derek E. [New UK Leadership: Implications for Brexit, CRS Insight](#) CRS. July 31, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. IN11150. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2019-CRS-19942

Subcommittee on Commodity Exchanges, Energy, and Credit; Committee on Agriculture. House. [Brexit and Other International Developments Affecting U.S. Derivatives Markets](#) June 26, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, Committee on Agriculture Serial No. 116-14 (Y4.AG8/1:116-14). ProQuest Congressional, HRG-2019-HAG-199361

Zanotti, Jim. [Israel: April 2019 Elections and Probable Indictments Against Prime Minister Netanyahu, CRS Insight](#) CRS. Mar. 6, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. IN11068. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2019-CRS-191977

---

## War or Peace?

### Ending the War in Afghanistan

During the 2016 presidential election campaign, then-candidate Donald J. Trump decried the long-simmering foreign conflicts that embroiled the United States military in the years since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. As such, concluding the 17-year long U.S. military engagement in Afghanistan became an important foreign policy goal for his administration. To this end, the United States entered direct negotiations with Taliban representatives in Doha, Qatar in February 2019. The talks, led by former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Zalmay Khalilzad, were described as productive by all sides, though continuing Taliban-instigated violence throughout Afghanistan and the exclusion of the Afghan government from the talks risked derailing the process.

## **North Korea**

After several years of escalations and nuclear brinkmanship by the new young leader of the Democratic People's of Korea (DPRK or North Korea) Kim Jong-Un, a flurry of diplomacy between the North and the Republic of Korea (ROK or South Korea) in 2018 ushered in a new atmosphere of détente between the isolated Stalinist police state and the rest of the world. This thaw in relations culminated in the historic summit between North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un and U.S. president Donald John Trump in Singapore in August 2018. This first ever meeting between the leaders of the United States and the DPRK produced a joint statement that looked forward to peaceful, normalized relations between the two countries and outlined a vision of a denuclearized Korean peninsula and security guarantees for North Korea. Perhaps most importantly, the summit produced an atmosphere of optimism among the international community regarding an issue that outgoing President Barack H. Obama characterized to his successor as the greatest security threat facing the United States.

This optimism proved to be short-lived, as the leaders met for their second summit, scheduled for February 27-28, in Hanoi, Vietnam. The U.S. delegation abruptly announced the end of the negotiation on February 28, without a new agreement or joint statement of the progress of the talks. The Hanoi summit was preceded by preparatory discussions between Secretary of State Michael Pompeo and representatives of the DPRK government in Pyongyang, and with his counterparts in the South Korean government in Seoul, though as the summit proceeded in Hanoi, it quickly became apparent that the two negotiating sides had different ideas about what exactly would be up for discussion. In the immediate aftermath of the troubled summit, representatives from the Trump administration assigned blame for the dissolution of the talks to Chairman Kim's insistence upon the removal of all economic sanctions imposed on North Korea in response to its pursuit of nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) technology, though this account was disputed by the DPRK government.

Though the breakdown of talks during the February summit in Hanoi was a disappointment for those anticipating progress in one of the world's longest-running conflicts, a sense of cautious optimism regarding the future of the Korean peninsula returned during summer 2019. On June 12, President Trump announced to a gathering of reporters that he had received a personal message from DPRK leader Kim Jong-Un. The communiqué, described by the President as a "very warm, very nice" personal letter, was interpreted as a signal that negotiations between the long-time rivals could resume. Developments followed in rapid succession, with Blue House, the residence and executive office of South Korea's head-of-state, issuing a release on June 24 that President Trump would be paying a visit to Seoul on June 30, on the heels of the G20 summit held in Osaka, Japan. Responding to the announcement via the social media and microblogging service Twitter, President Trump announced, "If Chairman Kim of North Korea sees this, I would love to meet him at the Border/DMZ just to shake hands and say Hello." As the President prepared to accompany South Korean president

Moon Jae-in in a visit to the DMZ, the Korean president's office confirmed that they would indeed be meeting briefly with Kim Jong-Un at the border and, after shaking hands across the heavily militarized boundary, Chairman Kim invited President Trump to step across the line, marking the first visit of a sitting U.S. President to the DPRK. After the highly theatrical cross border greeting, President Trump held an hour-long private meeting at the DMZ accompanied by top advisor Ivanka Trump.

Though little in the way of measurable progress resulted from this ostensibly impromptu diplomatic set piece, it did signal the official resumption of negotiations between the U.S. and the DPRK over the myriad issues dividing the powers in matters relating to security in the Korean peninsula and its east Asian neighborhood. Even so, significant issues continued to hamper progress, including North Korea's insistence that the United States scale back or discontinue altogether the regular military exercises conducted with South Korea, which the North views as provocative and destabilizing. As the U.S. and South Korea gave no indications that any changes would be made to their scheduled joint exercises, North Korea began a series of tests of ballistic missiles in late-July 2019, even as the rivals continue preparations for the resumption of talks.

### **Withdrawal from Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty**

On August 2, 2019, the United States announced the formal dissolution of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty), which had been a cornerstone of global disarmament efforts in the waning years of the Cold War. Negotiated by then-President Ronald Reagan and Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev, the treaty was signed December 8, 1987 and ratified the following June. The INF treaty grew out of concerns raised among U.S. policymakers and their NATO counterparts by the deployment of Soviet SS-20 intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBM), which were perceived as a potentially existential threat due to their small size, ease of transportation and concealment, and the missiles' inclusion of a multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle (MIRV) capabilities, allowing each SS-20 to be armed with three 150-kiloton nuclear warheads.

Though the treaty had served as a key cornerstone of global denuclearization efforts in the post-Cold War-era, complaints of Russian violations of the treaty persisted for years and President Donald Trump cited this when announcing his intention to withdraw the U.S. from the treaty on October 20, 2018. Of possibly greater significance for the U.S. defense posture is the fact that the People's Republic of China (PRC) had never become a signatory to the treaty.

### **A Reckoning in Kashmir**

On February 14, 2019 a suicide car bomber targeted Indian security forces in the Pulwama district of Indian administered Kashmir. The incident occurred just inside the Indian side of the Line of Control (LoC) that has divided the disputed territory since the newly-independent states of India and Pakistan

first went to war over the disposition of Kashmir in 1947. The attack, which claimed the lives of 40 Indian security personnel, was immediately claimed by Jaish-e-Mohammad, a militant organization operating in both Indian and Pakistani-controlled Kashmir with historical ties to the Pakistani security establishment.

The government of prime minister Narendra Modi had been preparing for national elections scheduled to be carried out during April and May 2019. Modi had secured a victory for his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the 2014 elections by emphasizing the party's commitment to driving economic growth and providing higher-paying jobs. The prime minister faced criticism when, in January 2019, it was revealed that the government refused to release results from a government-administered economic report that showed that unemployment increased during the five years the BJP was in power. After the Pulwama attack, however, the national conversation abruptly pivoted, allowing the government to stick to a script they were more comfortable with: presenting Narendra Modi as a fearless champion of India's majority Hindus in the face of existential threats posed by its neighbor Pakistan and the Islamist militants allegedly employed by the Pakistani security services to conduct their foreign policy.

Amidst the televised saber rattling and a brief aerial engagement over Pakistani airspace leading to the downing of an Indian jet and the capture of its pilot by Pakistani security forces, voters in India rallied around the government of prime minister Narendra Modi, delivering an historic second consecutive majority victory for the ascendant BJP. Meanwhile, in Washington DC, President Donald Trump welcomed the recently elected Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan for an official visit to the White House in late-July 2019. During an unscripted conversation with reporters, the President quipped that the Indian prime minister had invited him to serve as a mediator in the long-running dispute between the two nuclear-armed South Asian neighbors over the territory of Kashmir.

The Indian government issued an immediate correction to the President's suggestion, insisting that the final status of Kashmir can only be negotiated by India and Pakistan. Two weeks later, on August 5, 2019, Indian Home Minister Amit Shah introduced a bill into the two houses of India's parliament, that reorganized the State of Jammu and Kashmir—until then the only Indian state with a Muslim-majority population—into two separate Union Territories, Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh, and ending the special autonomy enjoyed by the State under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. Among other provisions, Article 370 allowed the government of Jammu and Kashmir to restrict property ownership in the state to residents, thereby preventing an influx of largely Hindu migrants to the state and preserving its unique demographics.

The move to reorganize the State of Jammu and Kashmir was accompanied by a massive influx of security forces to the region, the evacuation of all non-residents from the territory (largely tourists from other parts of India), the severance of all communications, including internet, and cellular and land-line telephones, and a ban on foreign journalists entering the territory. In Pakistan, the move was interpreted as a ploy to unilaterally change the

status quo in the contested region in contravention of UN resolutions stipulating the terms under which the final status of Kashmir can be negotiated. Though the Pakistani government was quick to protest the move as antidemocratic and contrary to the wishes of the Kashmiri people and to submit the matter to the United Nations for adjudication, a persistent economic crisis there left them with few opportunities for a more strident response. Moreover, while many in the international community expressed concern for the rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, the view that the matter was essentially an internal Indian matter predominated, leaving Pakistan feeling as though they'd been cut out of the process.

### **Conflict with Iran**

Furthering existing tensions in the region, the conflict between Iran and the U.S hit new heights beginning in May of 2019. The relationship between the two nations broke down further as Iran and Iran-linked forces responded to increased pressure from the U.S. by attacking and seizing commercial US ships. On December 27, 2019, a U.S. contractor was killed and 4 U.S. servicemen and 2 Iraqi servicemembers were injured in a rocket attack on a base in northern Iraq. The U.S. responded on Dec. 29 by launching airstrikes on three facilities in Iraq and two in Syria used by Kata'ib Hezbollah (KH)--an armed Iraqi group backed by Iran. Two days later, on Dec. 31, supporters of KH and other Iranian-backed militias forcible entered the U.S. embassy in Baghdad and set nearby buildings on fire.

In retaliation for the attack on the embassy on January 2, 2020, the U.S. Department of Defense announced that the U.S. military had killed Qasem Soleimani, a Commander Major General with the Islamic Revolutionary Guards-Qods Force, a U.S. designated foreign terrorist organization, in a drone strike. Iran's most prominent leaders, Supreme Leader Khamene'i and President Hassan Rouhani, pledged to get revenge for the killing and instated a three-day period of public mourning across Iran. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of January Iran ended its commitment to a nuclear deal it had agreed upon in 2015 and the Iraqi parliament passed a joint resolution to no longer allow foreign troops in its territories. On January 8, six days after the death was announced, Iran launched more than a dozen ballistic missiles into Iraq at two military bases where U.S. forces were located. The attack did not cause any casualties, although U.S. troop injuries were later reported.

In response to the heightened tensions the U.S. deployed 4,000 troops and many speculated that Iran and the U.S. were on the verge of entering onto an open conflict. The weeks of active conflict came to an end without a war as many feared possible, although the relationship between the two countries remains tense.

Sources:

Committee on Financial Services. House. [\*May 15, 2019 "Assessing the Use of Sanctions in Addressing National Security and Foreign Policy Challenges"\*](#), GPO, May 10, 2019, 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, ProQuest Congressional, CMP-2019-HFS-196725



Committee on Foreign Affairs. House. [On the Eve of the Summit: Options for U.S. Diplomacy on North Korea](#) GPO. Feb. 26, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. Committee on Foreign Affairs Serial No. 116-6 (Y4.F76/1:116-6) ProQuest Congressional. HRG-2019-FOA-195676

Kronstadt, K. Alan. [India, Pakistan, and the Pulwama Crisis, CRS Insight](#) CRS. Feb. 26, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. IN11057. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2019-CRS-191728

Kronstadt, K. Alan. [India's Domestic Political Setting, CRS In Focus](#) CRS. May 24, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. IF10298. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2019-CRS-197312

Kronstadt, K. Alan. [Pakistan-U.S. Relations, CRS In Focus](#) CRS. July 15, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. IF11270. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2019-CRS-198847

Manyin, Mark E., Emma Chanlett-Avery, and Mary Beth D. Nikitin. [North Korea: What 18 Months of Diplomacy Has and Has Not Achieved, CRS Insight](#) CRS. Aug. 5, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. IN11153. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2019-CRS-199594

Thomas, Clayton. [Afghanistan: Background and U.S. Policy In Brief](#) CRS. Aug. 1, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. R45122. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2019-CRS-199493

Thomas, Clayton. [Momentum Toward Peace Talks in Afghanistan?, CRS Insight](#) CRS. Oct. 16, 2018. 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session. IN10935. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2018-CRS-186218

Trump, Donald J. [Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Global Deployment of United States Combat-Equipped Armed Forces](#) Unnumbered Executive Orders, Directives, and Proclamations. June 11, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. ProQuest Congressional, 2019-53-046

Woolf, Amy F. [Russian Compliance with the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces \(INF\) Treaty: Background and Issues for Congress](#) CRS. Aug. 2, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. R43832. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2019-CRS-199552

Woolf, Amy F. [U.S. Withdrawal from the INF Treaty: What's Next?, CRS In Focus](#) CRS. Aug. 2, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. IF11051. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2019-CRS-199548

---

## Economic Trends and Conditions

### Trade War with China

The confrontation between the world's preeminent economic superpowers, the United States and the People's Republic of China (PRC), that was one of the major economic policies pursued during President Trump's first two years in office heated up during the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress. At the end of 2018, the President announced that he would delay a planned tariff increase from 10-25% on \$200 billion in Chinese goods, in an apparent attempt at warming relations ahead of planned trade negotiations. But with both sides digging in for a long fight, little traction was made toward a solution to the dispute and on May 9, 2019, the government officially announced a tariff increase to 25% on \$200 billion in Chinese goods, citing China's failure to honor previous agreements.

As the trade war was becoming increasingly intractable, the Trump administration stepped up its high-stakes effort to prevent China from emerging as the dominant player in the highly-anticipated global shift to 5G



wireless networks. At issue here was the Chinese mobile technology powerhouse Huawei, which the Trump administration characterized as a national security threat, due to the possibility that its technology could be used for the purposes of espionage by the Chinese government, thereby sowing suspicion with foreign governments who might otherwise use technology built by Huawei for constructing their mobile communications infrastructure.

The ongoing dispute took yet another twist in August 2019, when the central bank of China allowed the Chinese currency (renminbi) to shed up to 2% of its value compared to the U.S. dollar. The PRC has frequently been accused of currency manipulation by U.S. policymakers and the Treasury Department responded to China's move by officially declaring China to be a Currency Manipulator. And, in a further sign that the disputants were preparing for a long fight, on August 9, 2019, China announced an increase in the pace of its divestment of its holdings of over \$1 trillion in U.S. Treasury bonds.

### **Economic Downturn and COVID-19**

Beginning in March of 2020 lockdown orders were issued throughout much of the country and travel restrictions were issued in response to the emerging COVID-19 pandemic. By March 13, 2020 President Trump declared the coronavirus pandemic as a national emergency. The following lockdown of businesses combined with a fear of the repercussions and duration of the pandemic led to a massive economic downturn. On June 8, 2020 it was announced by the National Bureau of Economic Research that the U.S. as a result of these measures and the continued downturn had entered into a recession in March of 2020.

As a result of businesses going into lockdown and stay at home orders issued there was a rapid decline in gross domestic product and employment. Many workers were laid off or furloughed, by April of 2020 unemployment had hit 14.7%. As the pandemic progressed and businesses adapted many jobs were regained and the rate of unemployment by October of 2020 was down to 6.9%. However, many job losses once considered temporary became permanent which has led to concerns among many that this high rate of unemployment could remain for years after the initial shock of the pandemic.

The pandemic's global spread wreaked havoc on supply and demand of goods and services, as production was halted in many sectors and demand for many services dried up following social distancing orders. Consumer spending nosedived as individuals lost incomes and stopped going into stores or restaurants to prevent the spread of the virus.

To address the growing needs of businesses and individuals during this time Congress passed four relief package laws. The Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2020 (PL116-123), The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (PL116-127), the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act (PL116-136) and the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancements Act (PL116-

139). These infusions of capital into both individual households and businesses buoyed the markets to a certain extent and slowed the economic decline, stimulus checks made up more than 12% of total personal income in April of 2020.

The domestic and international ramifications of the pandemic are thought to be wide ranging and possibly long lasting.

Sources:

Akhtar, Shayerah Ilias, and Ian F. Fergusson. [U.S. Trade Policy: Background and Current Issues, CRS In Focus](#) CRS. July 22, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. IF10156. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2019-CRS-199104

Brown, Phillip, and Michael Ratner. [Low Oil Prices and U.S. Oil Producers: Policy Considerations, CRS Insight](#) CRS. Apr. 01, 2020. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session. IN11246. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2020-CRS-205023

Committee on Small Business. House. [Full Committee Hearing: "Long-Lasting Solutions for a Small Business Recovery"](#), GPO, July 15, 2020, 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, ProQuest Congressional, CMP-2020-SBU-208486

Committee on Small Business. House. [ZTE: A Threat to America's Small Businesses](#) GPO. Feb. 26, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. Committee on Small Business Serial No. 115-082 (Y4.SM1:115-082) ProQuest Congressional. HRG-2019-SBU-195628

Falk, Gene. [COVID-19 Pandemic's Impact on Household Employment and Income, CRS Insight](#) CRS. July 22, 2020. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session. IN11457. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2020-CRS-208724

Freeman, Wilson C. [Huawei v. United States: The Bill of Attainder Clause and Huawei's Lawsuit Against the United States, CRS Legal Sidebar](#) CRS. Mar. 14, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. LSB10274. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2019-CRS-192239

Ratner, Michael and Heather L. Greenley. [Crude Oil Futures Prices Turn Negative, CRS Insight](#) CRS. Apr. 22, 2020. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session. IN11354. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2020-CRS-205540

Schwarzenberg, Andres B. [U.S.-China Trade and Economic Relations: Overview, CRS In Focus](#) CRS. Aug. 7, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. IF11284. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2019-CRS-199653

Weinstock, Lida R. [COVID-19: Measuring Unemployment, CRS Insight](#) CRS. July 13, 2020. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session. IN11456. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2020-CRS-208462

---

## Landmark U.S. Supreme Court Decisions

*Bostock v Clayton County*, holding that title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects employees against discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation, 590 U.S. \_\_\_ (2020)

---

## 2019 Events

- **Jan. 1:** Qatar announces its withdrawal from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in the midst of the Persian

Gulf sultanate's dispute with neighboring Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates

- **Jan. 3:** China's Chang'e 4 probe becomes the first human-made object to land on the far side of the moon
- **Jan. 10:** Venezuela enters a constitutional crisis as the opposition-controlled National Assembly declares the government of president Nicolás Maduro illegal and appoints Juan Guaidó president
- **Jan. 28:** The U.S. Justice Department sues Chinese tech giant Huawei, accusing them of multiple counts of fraud
- **Feb. 1:** U.S. President Donald Trump confirms that the United States would be leaving the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty of 1987
- **Feb. 14:** A suicide bomb attack on a military convoy in Pulwama in Indian-administered Kashmir kills 40 Indian security personnel
- **Feb. 27-28:** U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un meet for their second summit in Hanoi, Vietnam. The summit ends abruptly with no new agreements
- **Mar. 10:** Ethiopian Airlines flight 302, a Boeing 737 Max 8 flight from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to Nairobi, Kenya, crashes shortly after takeoff, killing all 157 aboard and triggering a crisis for Boeing over the safety of its flagship product
- **Mar. 15:** 51 people are killed in Christchurch, New Zealand when Brenton Harrison Tarrant opens fire at two mosques in a coordinated terrorist attack
- **Apr. 15:** A fire breaks out in Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris during Holy Week observations
- **Apr. 21:** A coordinated series of terrorist bombings targeting Christian churches in Sri Lanka result in the deaths of over 250
- **May 24:** British prime minister Theresa May announces her resignation after failing for a third time to usher an agreement on Britain's exit from the European Union through parliament
- **June 9:** Over one million residents of Hong Kong turn out for protests of a proposed law that would allow Hong Kong residents to be extradited to mainland China. It is the largest protest in the semi-autonomous territory since China took possession in 1997
- **June 30:** Donald Trump becomes the first sitting U.S. president to enter the territory of North Korea during a meeting with Kim Jong-Un at the demilitarized zone
- **July 24:** Boris Johnson becomes prime minister of the United Kingdom
- **Aug. 3:** 22 people are killed in a mass shooting at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas
- **Aug. 5:** India ends the special status enjoyed by the state of Jammu and Kashmir under article 370 of the constitution, dividing the state into two Union Territories
- **Sept. 25** – The House of Representatives unanimously declassifies an August 12 whistleblower complaint accusing US President Donald Trump of pressuring Ukrainian officials to interfere in the 2020 election. A transcript of a call between Trump and Ukrainian

President Volodymyr Zelensky was released in which Trump pressures Zelensky to work with Rudy Giuliani and US Attorney General William Barr to investigate 2020 presidential candidate Joe Biden and his son Hunter for corruption.

- **Sept. 30** – White House officials reported that US President Donald Trump requested Australian prime minister Scott Morrison's collaboration with the US Justice Department's inquiry intended to undermine Robert Mueller's investigation into the Trump administration.
- **Oct. 3** – On national television, US President Donald Trump calls on China and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to "investigate the Bidens".
- **Oct. 6** – A second whistleblower submits new information corroborating the details of the phone call between US President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.
- **Oct. 7** – US President Donald Trump orders withdrawal of US troops from northeastern Syria
- **Oct. 27** – US President Donald Trump verifies that ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi killed himself during a fight with US forces via detonation of an explosive vest.
- **Dec. 18** – US President Donald Trump is impeached by the US House of Representatives on counts of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress.
- **Dec. 31** – Iraqi protestors attack US embassy in Iraq after US air strikes targeted the Iran-backed militia group Kataib Hezbollah in Iraq two days prior.

## 2020 Events

- **Jan. 2** – Iran's top security and intelligence commander, Major General Qasem Soleimani, is killed in a U.S. airstrike ordered by President Donald Trump.
- **Jan. 7** – Iran launches ballistic missiles in a limited strike against U.S. forces in Iraq.
- **Jan. 8** – President Donald Trump warns Iran of retaliation for further strikes but notes "Iran appears to be standing down."
- **Jan. 16** – President Donald Trump's impeachment trial in the Senate begins.
- **Jan. 16** – the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) is ratified by the Senate.
- **Jan. 29** – President Donald Trump signs the USMCA
- **Jan. 31** – President Donald Trump, via executive order, adds six additional countries to his travel ban from several countries, including some with majority Muslim populations – Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nigeria, Sudan, and Tanzania.
- **Feb. 2** – The Trump administration restricts air travel to and from China in response to the threat of COVID-19.
- **Feb. 5** – President Donald Trump is acquitted by the Senate on charges of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress.

- **Feb. 13** – President Donald Trump publicly admits that he sent Rudy Giuliani to Ukraine to seek information on Joe and Hunter Biden, despite past denials.
- **March 6** – President Donald Trump signs the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act
- **March 11** – total COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. are 31, confirmed cases exceed 1000. The WHO officially designates the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic.
- **March 13** – President Donald Trump declares a national emergency to address COVID-19.
- **March 16** – The Dow Jones Industrial Average suffers its largest point loss ever at 12.9%
- **March 18** – President Donald Trump signs the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Trump and Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau close the border.
- **March 25** – total COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. are 826.
- **March 27** – President Donald Trump signs the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) into law.
- **April 8** – total COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. exceed 12,900. There have been more than 397,000 cases globally.
- **April 15** – total COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. reach 25,922. There have been more than 606,800 cases globally. President Donald Trump announces the U.S. is ending its financial support for the World Health Organization, the president complained of the WHO's perceived leniency towards China.
- **April 22** - total COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. reach 42,200. There have been more than 830,000 cases globally
- **April 24** – President Donald Trump signs the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act
- **April 29** - total COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. reach 53,034. There have been more than one million cases globally.
- **May 25** – George Floyd, a 46-year-old African American man, was killed when Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin knelt on his neck for nearly eight minutes while three officers watched and prevented bystanders from interfering. The incident was caught on video and it sparked protests around the world.
- **May 27** - total COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. reach 98,937. There have been more than 1.6 million cases.
- **June 1** – President Donald Trump's administration orders riot police and military police to use tear gas and stun grenades to disperse peaceful protesters in Lafayette Square so that Trump can walk to St. John's Church, which is situated at the square, for a photo op.
- **June 3** – total COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. exceed 100,000.
- **July 1** – the USMCA officially begins; total COVID-19 deaths in the US reach 127,461. There have been more than 2.7 million cases globally.
- **July 21** – President Donald Trump declares intent to send federal law enforcement officers to Democratic Party-administered cities to subdue continuing protests against racism and police brutality.

- **July 28** – President Donald Trump suggests the election should be delayed, suggesting without evidence that mail-in voting is susceptible to voter fraud.
- **July 29** - total COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. reach 150,100. There have been more than 4.3 million cases globally.
- **July 30** – Reports indicate that in 2020 quarter two, U.S. GDP declined 9.5% - the largest decline in 70 years.
- **Aug. 13** – the United Arab Emirates and Israel agree to normalize relations after negotiations orchestrated by the United States, the first Abraham Accord.
- **Sept. 11** – Bahrain and Israel agree to normalize relations after negotiations orchestrated by the United States, the second Abraham Accord.
- **Sept. 18** – Supreme Court Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg succumbs to pancreatic cancer at the age of 87.
- **Sept. 22** - total COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. reach 200,000. There have been more than 6.9 million cases globally.
- **Sept. 26** – President Donald Trump nominates Amy Coney Barrett to fill the Supreme Court Associate Justice seat left vacant due to Ruth Bader Ginsburg's death.
- **Oct. 2** – President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump test positive for coronavirus and Trump enters Walter Reed National Military Medical Center for treatment. The Trump campaign manager, RNC chairwoman, and Utah Senator Mike Lee also test positive.
- **Oct. 5** – White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany and two of her deputies test positive for coronavirus
- **Oct. 6** – Senior adviser to President Donald Trump Stephen Miller tests positive for coronavirus
- **Oct. 23** – Sudan and Israel agree to normalize relations after negotiations orchestrated by the United States
- **Oct. 26** – Amy Coney Barret is confirmed as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court in a party line vote, 52-48. It is the fastest confirmation of a Supreme Court Justice in US history.
- **Nov. 3** – the U.S. presidential and congressional elections are held. No winner is declared by the media on election night as vote counting faces delays due to COVID-19 safety measures including increased absentee voting by mail.
- **Nov. 4** –President Donald Trump declares victory at 2 AM despite votes continuing to be counted and no electoral vote majority present.
- **Nov. 5** – At a press conference, President Donald Trump states “If you count the legal votes I easily win. If you count the illegal votes, they can try to steal the election from us.” Votes continue to be counted.
- **Nov. 7** – Nevada and Pennsylvania are called by the Associated Press indicating that Joe Biden has won a majority of electoral votes, an interim count of 290, making him the president-elect.

- **Nov. 10** – Secretary of State Mike Pompeo does not acknowledge Joe Biden’s victory saying “there will be a smooth transition to a second Trump administration.”
- **Nov. 19** – After a Georgia recount that awarded the state’s electoral votes to Joe Biden, putting the count at 306-232, all states have been called.
- **Nov. 23** – the General Services Administration is authorized to begin the presidential transition, it marks the first official acknowledgment by the Trump administration of Joe Biden’s victory.
- **Dec. 9** – The Texas Attorney General asks the Supreme Court to stop electoral votes from Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Georgia from being cast for Joe Biden.
- **Dec. 10** – Morocco and Israel agree to normalize relations after negotiations orchestrated by the United States. As part of the agreement, the U.S. recognizes Morocco’s claim over Western Sahara.
- **Dec. 11** – President Donald Trump sidesteps a government shutdown by signing a one-week stop-gap bill.
- **Dec. 14** – The 538 electors meet to cast their votes. They cast them as expected without faithless electors – 306 for Joe Biden and 232 for President Donald Trump
- **Dec. 22** – President Donald Trump issues 20 pardons including to four Blackwater guards convicted of 17 murders in 2007, 2 Border Patrol agents also convicted of murder, and politicians convicted on corruption charges.
- **Dec. 23** – President Trump vetoes the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 and signs the Fallen Journalists Memorial Act into law.
- **Dec. 27** – President Trump signs the \$900 billion COVID-19 stimulus package included in the 2021 Appropriations Act into law.

Sources:

Committee on Foreign Affairs. House. [On the Eve of the Summit: Options for U.S. Diplomacy on North Korea](#) GPO. Feb. 26, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. Committee on Foreign Affairs Serial No. 116-6 (Y4.F76/1:116-6) ProQuest Congressional. HRG-2019-FOA-195676

Freeman, Wilson C. [Huawei v. United States: The Bill of Attainder Clause and Huawei’s Lawsuit Against the United States](#). [CRS Legal Sidebar](#) CRS. Mar. 14, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. LSB10274. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2019-CRS-192239

Kronstadt, K. Alan. [India, Pakistan, and the Pulwama Crisis](#). [CRS Insight](#) CRS. Feb. 26, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. IN11057. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2019-CRS-191728

Kronstadt, K. Alan. [India’s Domestic Political Setting](#). [CRS In Focus](#) CRS. May 24, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. IF10298. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2019-CRS-197312

Kronstadt, K. Alan. [Pakistan-U.S. Relations](#). [CRS In Focus](#) CRS. July 15, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. IF11270. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2019-CRS-198847



Woolf, Amy F. [Russian Compliance with the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces \(INF\) Treaty: Background and Issues for Congress](#) CRS. Aug. 2, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. R43832. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2019-CRS-199552

Woolf, Amy F. [U.S. Withdrawal from the INF Treaty: What's Next?. CRS In Focus](#) CRS. Aug. 2, 2019. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. IF11051. ProQuest Congressional. CRS-2019-CRS-199548

---

## Major Acts

**John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act.** This omnibus public lands management law includes over 150 provisions setting forth various projects, studies, and other programs for the management and conservation of public lands. Specific provisions of the law include setting aside over one million acres of public lands in Utah for various for wilderness or recreation area protection, reauthorizing the Neotropical Migratory Bird Act, including appropriations through 2022, creating the Cerro del Yuta and Rio San Antonio Wilderness Areas in New Mexico, and creating new National Heritage Areas in Washington, West Virginia, and Maryland. Approved Mar. 12, 2019 ([133 Stat. 580, PL116-9](#))

**Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Humanitarian Assistance and Security at the Southern Border Act, 2019.** Authorizes emergency supplemental FY2019 appropriations for law enforcement, security and humanitarian operations at the U.S.-Mexico border, including \$1.2 billion for operations of U.S. Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and nearly \$3 billion for Refugee and Entrant Assistance. Approved July 1, 2019 ([133 Stat. 1018, PL116-26](#))

**Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act.** The largest economic stimulus package in United States history authorizes \$2 trillion dollars in stimulus spending, including direct cash payments to all Americans, additional federal unemployment benefits, and loans, tax credits and tax relief for businesses. Approved Mar. 27, 2020 ([134 Stat. 281, PL116-136](#))

**The Great American Outdoors Act.** Establishes a National Park and Public Lands Legacy Restoration Fund to spend up to \$9 billion on maintenance for wildlife refuges, national parks, forests and other federal lands. Also guarantees \$900 million per from oil and gas drilling royalties per year in funding to the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Considered the largest piece of land conservation legislation in a generation. Approved August 4, 2020 ([134 Stat. 682, PL116-152](#))

---

Copyright©2021, ProQuest LLC. All rights reserved.