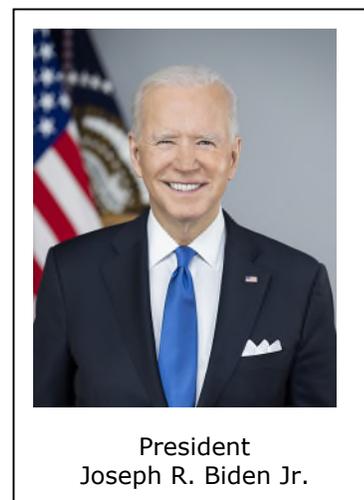


# One Hundred Seventeenth Congress

Jan. 3, 2021-Jan. 3, 2023

## Administration of Joseph R. Biden Jr.

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### Historical Background

After an election disputed by members of the Republican party with the highest vote count in US history and held in the midst of a global pandemic that had killed hundreds of thousands of Americans, former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. was inaugurated as the 46<sup>th</sup> President of the United States on January 20, 2021. The 45<sup>th</sup> President Donald J. Trump broke with longstanding tradition by refusing to formally concede the election to Biden in the weeks following the election, choosing instead to point to alleged instances of election fraud calling the legitimacy of the process into question. Despite this, multiple recounts in several states with close vote tallies confirmed Biden’s victory. As the formal process for certifying and affirming the election results in the Electoral College and the Congress continued, President Trump and some allies continued to question the accuracy of the count, pressing their case in media appearances and in conversations with various state election officials. Supporters of the president’s allegations of election fraud organized a rally to be held in Washington on January 6, 2021, the day the Congress was scheduled to certify the election results. The event culminated in a speech by President Trump, as the president drew his remarks to a close, thousands of his supporters began to approach the Capitol, where they were met by members of D.C.’s Metropolitan Police Department forming a protective ring around entrances to the building. As the crowd grew pressure on the police increased and protestors ultimately breached the line and forced their way into the Capitol. Capitol Police rushed members of Congress off the Senate and House floors before they could be overtaken by the crowd, many of whom roamed the building, taking photos and videos of themselves, which would later be used by authorities to prosecute individuals involved. After several tense hours, the crowd was

House	Senate
Majority Party: Democrat (219 seats)	Majority Party: Democrat (48 seats)
Minority Party: Republican (211 seats)	Minority Party: Republican (50 seats)
Other Parties: 5 vacant seats	Other Parties: Independent (2 seats)

disbursed and the Congress returned to their work, certifying the election results in the small hours of January 7. More than 130 police officers were injured during the assault, with one suffering a stroke leading to his death days later. One of the protestors who besieged the Capitol was fatally shot by a Capitol Police officer as she attempted to enter building.

In addition to winning the presidency, the Democratic party held their majority in the House of Representatives though they lost more than a dozen seats. At the same time, after an historic runoff election in Georgia that saw the first Black senator and first Jewish senator elected from the state, the Democratic party gained control of the Senate by holding 50 seats and the tie-breaking vote of the Vice President-elect Kamala Harris. In the wake of the January 6<sup>th</sup> attack on the U.S. Capitol, a select committee of U.S. representatives were appointed to investigate and hold hearings. The first series of hearings based on the select committee's investigations concluded on July 21, 2022.

On June 24, 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its opinion on *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, determining that the U.S. Constitution does not confer a right to an abortion, thereby overruling *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* and returning the regulation of abortion to the states. The overturning of *Roe* was in addition to other major supreme court decisions regarding the 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment, Miranda rights, school prayer, and the EPA. In addition to major supreme court decisions, congress passed major legislation, The long-term drought of the southwestern United States has led to historically low water levels and a longer and more severe wildfire season. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation declared a water shortage at Lake Mead for the first time in history in August 2021 and 2022 projections for Lake Powell forecast water levels too low to allow hydroelectric generation, and the first California wildfire of 2022 was as early as January. On August 7, the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, a revised iteration of the Build Back Better Act passed the Senate 51-50, with an estimated \$737 billion budget, \$369 billion of which will be invested in addressing the climate crisis over the next 10 years, the largest investment in climate change to date.

Since March 2022, the U.S. has seen record rates of inflation with the Consumer Price Index reaching as high as 9.1% in June, the highest since 1981. The US saw an initial economic rebound in 2020, largely due to fiscal and monetary stimulus in the initial months of the pandemic, which continued throughout 2020 and 2021, as COVID-19 vaccines and treatments eased the need for travel restrictions and stay-at-home orders. However, the supply disruptions, labor shortages, stimulus policy, and a general shift in consumer demand from services to goods have all led to high and rising inflation. Policymakers continue to grapple with how to address these issues without undermining economic recovery and as the challenges of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine continue to be in flux.



Senate Majority Leader  
Charles E. Schumer

## COVID-19 Pandemic

Globally, the COVID-19 pandemic wreaked havoc on health care systems and economies. By June 2021, 175 million cases of the disease had been confirmed and 3.78 million people had lost their lives. The United States had the worst outbreak of the disease globally with 600,000 deaths and 33.4 million cases. The development and approval of multiple vaccines, including three spearheaded in the U.S., in late 2020 gave hope that the pandemic would subside and a return to normalcy was on the horizon.

But as many major Western nations made great strides in vaccinating their citizens during the first half of 2021, countries in the Global South were not expected to have significant access to the vaccine before 2022. The scarcity of SARS-CoV2 vaccines in lower and middle-income countries was exacerbated by the course of the pandemic in India, by far the largest producer of vaccines in the world. The government of prime minister Narendra Modi began 2021 in a mood of self-congratulation for avoiding a devastating outbreak while also providing vaccines around the world. A catastrophic second wave of the pandemic, driven in large part by the circulation of the Delta variant of the virus, led to a peak of 400,000 cases of the disease in a single day, contributing to the country's totals of over 30 million cases and nearly half a million deaths. In response to the unprecedented surge in cases, the government ordered a halt on all exports of SARS-CoV2 vaccines in order to see to the needs of vaccinating a population of 1.4 billion, dealing a huge blow to the campaign to make vaccines available worldwide.

As effective vaccines became increasingly available in the U.S. and other wealthy Western countries, hopes that the worst of the pandemic was past continued to grow. While the rate of vaccinations in the U.S. were strong through the spring of 2021, they began to decline precipitously in early summer, leading some states to offer incentives for adults who choose to be vaccinated. As the highly transmissible Delta variant reached U.S. shores during the summer, rates of infections and deaths again increased dramatically, hitting hardest in regions of the country with lower rates of vaccination. During the final weeks of summer, intensive care units in hospitals across the southern United States were again stretched to capacity and public optimism regarding the end of the pandemic and a return to a more conventional way of life was dealt a serious blow.

Brazil suffered the second-worst outbreak of the pandemic with 482,000 deaths. Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's approval ratings declined significantly, and the popular former president Luis Inácio Lula da Silva was released from prison and cleared of corruption charges, clearing the way for him to challenge Bolsonaro in the 2022 presidential elections.



Nancy Pelosi  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives*

Speaker of the House  
Nancy Pelosi

In Israel, the country's fourth election in just over two years ended with no clear majority. Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's Likud party won a plurality in the Knesset but was unable to form a governing coalition. The years-long stalemate was broken when an unprecedented coalition was formed between the religious nationalist Yamina party led by Naftali Bennett and the centrist Yesh Atid party led by Yair Lapid and which included the Islamist Ra'am party led by Mansour Abbas. The agreement was struck to remove Benjamin Netanyahu, who faces major corruption charges, and places Bennett as Prime Minister for two years, after which Lapid will step into the role.

## **War in Afghanistan**

The war and occupation of Afghanistan carried out by the United States and its allies in response to the September 11, 2001 terror attacks came to an end almost 20 years to the day after that inciting event. In anticipation the August 31 deadline for withdrawal of U.S. and other foreign forces stipulated by the 2020 agreement signed with the Trump administration, the Afghan Taliban began a campaign to wrest control of territories and provincial capitals from the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. As U.S. forces abandoned posts around the country ahead of the full withdrawal, the Taliban rushed into these newly vulnerable territories with dizzying speed, capturing 15 districts in May and a further 69 in June. The Taliban's campaign featured a mix of direct combat along with negotiated surrenders of several of the independent militias that the Afghan government relied on for security in many regions of the country. Afghan government forces outside the capital Kabul were severely underequipped and undersupplied, contributing to the perception that corruption at all levels of the government made its defense untenable. In August, as the U.S. withdrawal continued apace, the Taliban succeeded in capturing control of one provincial capital after another, in addition to securing control over the major international border crossings. The Taliban entered Kabul on August 15, prompting Afghan president Ashraf Ghani to flee to the United Arab Emirates, effectively surrendering control to the resurgent movement. As the U.S. and its coalition partners were scrambling to evacuate citizens and Afghan allies from the country via the Kabul airport, they found themselves in the awkward situation of collaborating with their former foes in order to provide the security necessary complete the withdrawal.

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## **War or Peace?**

### **War in Afghanistan**

The Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the United States and Taliban was signed in Doha, Qatar on February 29, 2020. The agreement called for the full withdrawal of U.S. and NATO forces from Afghanistan and an end to sanctions against the Taliban by the end of August 2021. At the insistence of the Taliban, the agreement was negotiated and signed without the participation of the government of Afghanistan. Even so, the accord stipulated a framework for negotiations between the two sides in hopes of assuring the inclusivity of any future Afghan government. As it happened, though the government and the Taliban held some negotiations over prisoner exchanges, complications raised by the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with intransigence on both sides stymied hopes for any substantive political negotiations.

On April 14, 2021, President Biden announced the full withdrawal of the U.S. troops from Afghanistan by September 11, 2021. This would mark the end of the longest war in U.S. history. As withdrawal begins, Afghan military units in rural areas surrender to Taliban forces. Coinciding with the withdrawal of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, the Taliban began an offensive campaign in May to wrest territorial control from the Afghan government. On August 6, less than a month before the August 31 deadline for withdrawal, the Taliban began a rapid takeover of provincial capitals that culminated with the taking of the national capital, Kabul, on August 15. Speaking to critics of the U.S. withdrawal, President Biden said he “stood squarely behind” his decision to continue the troop withdrawal negotiated by the Trump administration. The U.S. continued to evacuate Americans and their Afghan allies, including thousands who worked with U.S. forces during the decades-long conflict, until August 31 when the last U.S. soldier left Afghanistan.

Since U.S. withdrawal, the country has faced a humanitarian and economic crisis as the Taliban, now ruling the country, are subject to U.S. sanctions

which prevent them from accessing the Afghan central bank's reserves and the country has lost foreign aid and suffered major currency devaluation. The U.N. World Food Program warned that at least 55% of Afghanistan's population will face crisis levels of food insecurity by March 2022. According to this estimate, millions of children would suffer from malnutrition and over 9 million Afghans would be displaced. On January 11, 2022, the U.S. pledged an additional \$308 million to Afghan humanitarian relief following the U.N.'s emergency plea for Afghanistan. President Joe Biden signed an executive order on February 11, 2022 releasing \$3.5 billion of the \$7 billion of U.S.-controlled Afghan reserves to potentially spend on aid programs while continuing to block Taliban access to the funds.

### **Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**

On May 6, Israeli Settlers and Palestinians clash in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah. Israeli police seize the al-Aqsa Mosque on May 7. On May 10, the Palestinian militia Hamas gave Israel an ultimatum to withdraw from the Mosque by 6 PM. When Israeli police forces did not comply, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad fired rockets into Israel and Israel began a campaign of retaliation. On May 19, President Biden urged Israeli Prime Minister in a phone call to deescalate and negotiate a ceasefire immediately. A ceasefire was agreed to on May 20 and put into action on May 21. 256 Palestinians, including 66 children, and 13 people in Israel, including two children, were killed. Thousands of Palestinians and 200 Israelis were injured, and the UN estimated 461 housing and commercial units were destroyed by airstrikes.

In March 2022, there was increased violence which led to the deaths of 19 Israelis or visitors to Israel and 40 Palestinians. In May 2022, Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was killed while reporting on a gunfight between Israeli security forces and Palestinians in Jenin. Global outrage ensued as evidence suggested that she was killed by the Israeli security forces. The U.S. called on Israel to investigate the killing. The Palestinian Authority accused Israel of targeting Abu Akleh, but Israel denies this.

Israel's parliament elections were held on November 1, 2022. It appears that Likud party leader Benjamin Netanyahu will again become Israel's prime minister. This most recent election was the fifth held in Israel since a formal process was implemented in December 2018 to address allegations of corruption. Two of the previous four elections did not result in the formation of a government, and the other two resulted in short-lived coalition governments. Concerns over the rise of the ultra-nationalist Religious Zionism faction as a likely Netanyahu coalition partner has triggered debate about the implications for Israel's democracy, its ability to manage relations and tensions with Palestine and other Arab nations, as well as relations with the United States and other countries.

### **Russian Invasion of Ukraine**

In October 2021, reports of Russian military movements on the Ukrainian border raised alarm among defense analysts and Ukrainian, US, and EU leaders that Russia was preparing to invade Ukraine. Such an invasion would come nearly eight years after Russia invaded and annexed Ukraine's Crimea region and occupied the Donbas region. In March and April of 2021, similar Russian troop buildups took place, but the October movements coincided with more aggressive rhetoric by Russian leaders and was followed-up by a cyberattack and attempted sabotage attributed to Russia. Subsequent bilateral negotiations between Russia and the US, Russia and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and Russia and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe have been unsuccessful. Russia demanded "security guarantees" including military drawdown of NATO forces from Eastern Europe.

On February 24, 2022, Russia began an invasion of Ukraine after recognizing two separatist groups, the "Donetsk People's Republic" and "Luhansk People's Republic", in the East of Ukraine on the Russian border 3 days earlier. Russian President Vladimir Putin calls the invasion a "Special Military Operation" with the goal of the overthrow of the Volodymyr Zelenskyy government. The initial Russian assault made quick gains but eventually slowed as it encountered a resilient and adaptive Ukrainian military. Forced to withdraw from its advance on the Ukrainian capital Kyiv, Russian forces refocused on eastern regions. As the conflict has continued, Russia has increasingly been accused of targeting civilians and committing war crimes.

International entities responded swiftly to the Russian invasion. NATO immediately condemned the invasion, and U.S., EU, and various other nations imposed financial and trade sanctions and other restrictive measures, intended to hinder Russia's ability to continue to finance the offensive. As the conflict continues, the economic impact and effectiveness of sanctions will be major policy considerations, as well as future Russia-NATO relations and the role of NATO in supporting Ukraine. Congress has increased the President's authority to grant U.S. arms and equipment to the Ukrainian government from up to \$100 million to up to \$11 billion plus an additional \$1 billion in special authority. It also passed the Ukraine Democracy Defense Lend-Lease Act of 2022 to streamline the lending of U.S. military equipment to Ukraine. As of June 1, 2022, since the beginning of the renewed Russian invasion, President Biden has committed over \$4.6 billion of assistance including advanced weaponry to Ukraine including High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS), thousands of Stinger and Javelin anti-aircraft systems, over a hundred armed drones, 20 Mi-17 helicopters, and hundreds of other defense articles.

On November 15, 2022, two missiles struck a village in Poland five miles from the Ukrainian border killing two people. Questions of the missiles intentions and origins arose but NATO and Polish leaders determined the incident was most likely an accident and that the missiles likely came from Ukrainian forces defending themselves from Russian attacks. On November

15, 2022, President Biden submitted to Congress a fourth request for almost \$38 billion in Ukraine related funds.

### **Ethiopia: Tigray Civil Strife and Humanitarian Crisis**

In November 2020, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed began a military campaign in the northern Tigray region after Tigrayan forces attacked a military base. This followed tensions between the Tigrayan regional government and Ethiopian federal government and undermining one another's legitimacy. In May 2021, the federal government declared the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front, the leaders of the insurgency, a terrorist group. The conflict escalated into a warlike state and other regional conflicts were drawn into the fighting, including neighboring Eritrea, Sudan, and the Ethiopian region of Oromia. The conflict created a humanitarian crisis in Tigray where a de facto embargo imposed by the federal government prevented food aid from entering the region despite 5.2 million people in need of it and hundreds of thousands at risk of starvation. In September and November 2021, respectively, the U.S. levied sanctions on the Ethiopian government as well as the Eritrean government over their intervention on the side of the Ethiopian government.

On November 2, 2022, the Ethiopian government and the Tigray held peace talks in Pretoria, South Africa and have agreed to a cessation of hostilities ending the two-year conflict. Further talks were held in Nairobi, Kenya on November 12th to discuss the implementation of the agreement. Following these talks, the movement of aid into Mekelle and other towns in Tigray began.

### **Protests in Iran**

On September 16th, 2022, a 22-year-old Iranian woman named Mahsa Amini died after being arrested by Iran's Morality Police. She was accused of violating Iran's mandatory hijab laws. Her treatment in police custody and subsequent death sparked outrage and protests throughout the country. The Iranian government responded to the protests by shutting down internet access and deploying security forces which has resulted in the deaths of dozens of protesters. The U.S. government has imposed sanctions on the Iranian government over the handling of the protests. On September 22, 2022, the U.S. Department of the Treasury issued sanctions due to Iran's Morality Police. The Morality Police is designated pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13553, which imposes sanctions with respect to serious human rights abuses by the government of Iran. On September 23, the U.S. Department of the Treasury issued Iran General License D-2, designed to expand the range of internet services available to Iranians after the governments shut down of internet access.

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## Economic Trends and Conditions

The expansion of access to the COVID-19 vaccine, the \$1.9 trillion stimulus package known as the American Rescue Plan and the \$900 billion package in December provided a significant boost to the economy. GDP increased by 6.4% in the first quarter, the second-largest single quarter growth since 2003. Employment in 2021 improved from 2020, however, with employment on the rise the nation is still suffering from a major labor shortage and many businesses reported having trouble hiring. The somewhat permanent shift to working remotely for some sectors of the work force caused many to reconsider pre-pandemic working conditions and others to rethink career options, potentially changing how we live and work. The housing market saw a major boom as many saw the pandemic as the cause to want to buy homes, as demand for homes increased so did properties listing prices, a trend that has continued throughout the entire year. The housing market has been pushed by low-interest rates and low inventory making it a seller's market, however as home prices soar across the country many worry about a looming housing crisis.

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic hit the economy in many ways in 2021. Surges of new variants of COVID-19 and unwillingness of some members of the population to become vaccinated caused concern for the promise of a speedy and promising economic recovery. The pandemic exposed the inordinate disparities among the labor force between genders, races, ethnicities, social classes, and education or skill levels with more becoming poorer. Average hourly earnings increased in the beginning of the year as lower-wage workers lost their jobs at a higher rate than higher-wage workers at the onset of the pandemic, thereby increasing the average wage. Wages began to normalize somewhat in the spring. The labor shortage was one of the contributing factors to a massive delay and disruption on the supply chain, as there were not enough warehouse workers to make goods and not enough truck drivers to move goods throughout the country. The disruptions to the supply chain, which caused bottlenecks around the world, resulted in a shortage of goods and increased prices on many goods. As the world tried to mitigate the risks of COVID-19 and deal with the effects of the pandemic many industries reduced the production of goods and services and tried to account for a surge in demand for items with a shortage of supply. In the fall of 2021, many ports were extremely backed up and experts warned the disruptions to the supply chain may go into 2022. With the impact of global supply chain disruptions, labor shortages, and COVID-19 variants, many countries including the U.S. began to move rely on developing domestic production possibly creating less flow of global trade in the years to come. Supply Chain issues increased further when Russia invaded Ukraine in February of 2022, the ongoing conflict created disruptions

The summer of 2022 was marked largely by fear of a recession and inflation as the costs of basic goods and energy increased dramatically. The price of gas reached record highs as oil prices soared. As pre-pandemic level travel returned the demand for gas increased while supply chains already impacted by the pandemic were further weakened by war in Europe which left much of the globe without its largest supplier of crude. Russia's invasion of Ukraine caused significant disruption and altered the global oil trade, as EU leaders agreed in May to ban the majority of Russian petroleum products and crude oil imports. Governments worked to ease the strain of costs, in the US President Biden announced the release of 180 million barrels of oil from the national petroleum stockpile in April.

Prices increased not only on oil but largely across the board, since March the annual change in the consumer price index has been above 8%, sending costs of manufactured goods, housing and food rising significantly. After reporting negative growth in the first quarter the US government has been attempting to control the impact. In an attempt to combat and reduce inflation the Federal Reserve raised the federal funds rate several times.

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Prices increased not only on oil but largely across the board, in March 2022 the annual change in the consumer price index went above 8%, sending costs of manufactured goods, housing and food rising significantly. After reporting negative growth in the first quarter the US government has been attempting to control the impact. To combat and reduce inflation the Federal Reserve raised the federal funds rate several times. Similarly, in an effort to attempt to lessen inflation, Congress passed PL117-169, the Inflation Reduction Act, on August 16, 2022 which lowered energy costs, health care insurance, prescription drug prices, and small business taxes and reformed corporate taxes. However, uncertainty remained about the future of the economy and led to layoffs in the technology industry in fall of 2022, a sector which had flourished during the pandemic.

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## Major Treaties

**Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.** President Biden recommitted the United States to the executive agreement which the administration of President Donald Trump had abandoned. The agreement aims to limit global temperature rise due to climate change to 1.5°C by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Each party nation must develop a plan and regularly report on its contribution to addressing global warming.

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## Landmark U.S. Supreme Court Decisions

*Jones v. Mississippi*, held that the Eighth Amendment does not require sentencers to make a separate factual finding of inability to reform before sentencing for life without parole, [593 US \(2021\)](#)

*Territory of Guam v. United States*, held that Guam could pursue a lawsuit with the U.S. government under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 over environmental liabilities of a toxic and hazardous 1940s U.S. Navy dumping site in Guam, [593 US \(2021\)](#)

*Cedar Point Nursery v. Hassid*, concluded that permitting union representatives to meet with farmworkers at their worksites violated the employers' private property rights, [594 US \(2021\)](#)

*Brnovich v. Democratic National Committee*, concluded that Arizona was lawful in restricting voting in the wrong electoral district as well as banning voters from having someone drop off their ballots for them, [594 US \(2021\)](#)

*Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, held that the right to an abortion was not constitutionally protected in a direct overturn of the finding *Roe v. Wade* (1973). Chief Justice John Roberts joined the majority in overturning the Mississippi law at issue, which banned abortion 15 weeks after conception, but disagreed with the five justices who abrogated *Roe's* finding. The majority opinion was leaked to the press in a rare breach of the Court's confidentiality. [597 US \(2022\)](#)

*New York State Rifle & Pistol Assoc. v. Bruen*, held that the Second Amendment protects U.S. citizens right to carry a handgun outside of the home. The Court's opinion struck down a New York law requiring special justification to carry a handgun outside the home and threatens similar laws in Massachusetts, California, Maryland, New Jersey, and Hawaii.

*West Virginia v. Environmental Protection Agency*, held that the EPA and Federal Government in general does not have the authority to limit carbon emissions from already existing power plants. The ruling follows a trend in the Court limiting the power of the executive branch, arguing Congress must direct the agencies. [597 US \(2022\)](#)

*Carson v. Makin*, held that the state of Maine, and by extension any state, cannot bar public education grants from religious schools. The law in question was a tuition assistance program and Chief Justice Roberts, writing for the Court, argued it imposed a "stricter separation of church and state" than is constitutionally mandated. [596 US \(2022\)](#)

*Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, held that public school employees praying at a school event are not violating the establishment clause of the First Amendment and that their prayers are constitutionally protected exercises of the rights to freedom of religion and free speech. The case at issue found that a school improperly fired a football coach for leading prayers after games with players. [597 US \(2022\)](#)

*Oklahoma v. Castro-Huerta*, held that a state's law enforcement agencies have the right to prosecute non-indigenous people for crimes against indigenous people committed within tribal territory. The Court supported the actions of Oklahoma officials and limited the scope of *McGirt v. Oklahoma* (2020) which previously established around 40% of Oklahoma under tribal sovereignty. [597 US \(2022\)](#)

## 2021 Events

- **Jan. 5:** Runoff elections for Georgia's two US Senate seats were held. Democrats Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff (whose election victory was confirmed on January 6) win defeat their Republican opponents, handing control of the Senate to the Democratic Party, thanks to the tie-breaking vote of Vice President-elect Kamala Harris.
- **Jan. 6:** [President Donald Trump holds a rally in Washington DC as the Congress convened to certify the results of the 2020 election, alleging irregularities and urging members of Congress and Vice President Mike Pence to halt the certification. After the president's speech, thousands of his supporters march to the Capitol, rush security barriers and storm the building. 5 people died during the unrest.](#)
- **Jan. 11:** [The House of Representatives formally levies one article of impeachment against President Donald Trump for "incitement of insurrection."](#)

- **Jan. 13:** [President Donald Trump becomes the first President to be impeached by the House of Representatives twice.](#)
- **Jan. 19:** [The Trump Administration declares an ongoing genocide by the Chinese government against Uyghur Muslims and other minorities.](#)
- **Jan. 20:** [Joe Biden and Kamala Harris are inaugurated as the 46<sup>th</sup> President and 49<sup>th</sup> Vice President of the United States, respectively. Biden recommits the US to the Paris Climate Agreement, halts funding to the border wall on the US-Mexico border, and lifts the travel ban on Muslim-majority countries.](#)
- **Jan. 21:** [President Biden signs an executive order implementing the Defense Production Act to accelerate COVID-19 vaccine distribution.](#)
- **Jan. 25:** [The House of Representatives triggers the impeachment trial against former President Donald Trump on a charge of incitement of insurrection](#)
- **Feb. 1:** [The Tatmadaw, the military of Myanmar, overthrows the democratically elected government of State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint.](#)
- **Feb. 10:** President Biden sanctions the leaders of the Tatmadaw.
- **Feb. 11:** President Biden announces that there will be vaccines available for 300 million Americans by the end of July.
- **Feb. 13:** [The Senate acquits former President Donald Trump of incitement of insurrection in a 57-43 vote.](#)
- **Apr. 6:** President Biden announces that all adults will be eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine by April 19<sup>th</sup>.
- **Apr. 20:** Derek Chauvin, the officer who killed George Floyd sparking anti-racism demonstrations globally in 2020, is convicted on all charges, including second-degree murder, related to Floyd's death.
- **May 4:** President Biden aims for 70% of American adults to be vaccinated by July 4<sup>th</sup>.
- **May 13:** [Colonial Pipeline, one of the largest pipelines in the U.S. serving much of the eastern states, is targeted by a ransomware cyberattack, shutting down their operations and leading to short-term gas shortages.](#)
- **June 3:** President Biden bans investment in 59 Chinese companies, including Huawei.
- **June 11:** President Biden and leaders of the G-7 endorse a global minimum corporate tax rate of 15%.
- **July 7:** [Haiti's President Jovenel Moise is assassinated.](#)
- **July 23:** Postponed 2020 Summer Olympics begin in Tokyo, Japan.
- **July 29:** President Biden refuses to extend the federal eviction moratorium citing lack of authority and calling on Congress to act. It expires on July 31.
- **Aug. 3:** The Center for Disease Control and Prevention issues a temporary eviction moratorium extension with some limitations

- **Aug. 26:** The Supreme Court of the United States strikes down the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s temporary eviction moratorium.
- **Aug. 26:** At Afghanistan’s Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, a suicide bombing kills around 200 Afghans and 13 U.S. service members.
- **Aug. 30:** [The evacuation of civilians from the U.S., Afghanistan and other foreign nations ends as U.S. military officially leaves Afghanistan.](#)
- **Sept. 1:** The Supreme Court refused to provide injunctive relief blocking a Texas law effectively banning abortions after six weeks of pregnancy and empowering private citizens to enforce the provision via lawsuit, preparing the ground for a possible overruling of Roe v. Wade (1973) in a case this fall.
- **Sept. 8:** Robert E. Lee monument removed in Richmond, Virginia.
- **Sept. 16:** SpaceX, founded by Elon Musk, completes first all-civilian spaceflight beating out competitors Richard Branson’s Virgin Galactic and Jeff Bezos’ Blue Origin.
- **Sept. 30:** President Biden signs a government funding stopgap bill to avert federal government shutdown.
- **Nov. 1:** President Biden joins leaders of almost 200 foreign nations for the COP26 summit on climate change and vows US leadership on the global challenge.
- **Nov. 15:** President Biden signs \$1 Trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act into law with bipartisan support.
- **Nov. 18:** President Biden resumes tradition of summit of US, Canada, and Mexico which his predecessor, President Donald Trump, had not continued.
- **Nov. 24:** Three white men were convicted of the murder of Ahmaud Arbery, a 25-year-old Black man, and were later sentenced to life in prison.
- **Nov. 24:** A new variant of COVID-19, omicron, is first detected in South Africa.
- **Nov. 26:** In response to the discovery of the Omicron variant of the COVID-19 virus in South Africa, President Biden enacts travel restrictions on the country and seven other African nations.
- **Dec. 6:** The US announces it will diplomatically boycott the Winter Olympics in China over apparent human rights abuses by the Chinese government against the Uighur ethnic minority.
- **Dec. 9-10:** President Biden hosts the virtual “Summit for Democracy” with 110 other participants.

## 2022 Events

- **Jan. 14:** The Supreme Court of the United States blocked President Biden order mandating COVID vaccines or testing regimes at large corporations.
- **Feb. 21:** Russian President Vladimir Putin declares that the Luhansk and the Donetsk regions as independent of Ukraine
- **Feb. 24:** [Russia launches a full scale invasion of Ukraine with air and missile strikes on Ukrainian soil](#)
- **Apr. 7:** : Ketanji Brown Jackson becomes the first Black woman confirmed as a Supreme Court Justice in a 53-47 vote
- **May 2:** A Supreme Court draft decision by Justice Samuel Alito overturning Roe v. Wade is leaked, prompting protests across the country.
- **May 4:** The U.S. death toll reaches 1 million since the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- **May 24:** A mass shooting occurs at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, where 19 students and 2 teachers are killed, and 17 others are wounded, becoming the third deadliest school shooting in the United States.
- **June 24:** [The Supreme Court rules in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization that the Constitution of the United States does not confer a right to abortion, overruling both Roe v. Wade and Planned Parenthood v. Casey and giving the power to regulate abortion back to individual states.](#)
- **June 25:** A month after the Robb Elementary school shooting in Texas, President Biden signs into law the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, the first major federal gun reform legislation to be passed since 1994.
- **July 1:** United States inflation reaches 9.1%, the highest since 1981.
- **July 8:** [Former Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe is assassinated while delivering a campaign speech in Nara, Japan.](#)
- **July 12:** The first full-color images and spectroscopic data from the James Webb Telescope, the largest optical telescope in space, is released.
- **July 23:** [Monkeypox is declared a public health emergency of international concern by the World Health Organization, nearly 2 months after the first confirmed case is found in the U.S.](#)
- **July 31:** Ayman al-Zawahiri, leader of al-Qaeda following the death of Osama bin Laden, is killed in a U.S. drone strike in Afghanistan
- **August 2:** China conducts its largest ever live-fire exercise near Taiwan in response to visit by Nancy Pelosi, the highest-ranking U.S. official to visit Taiwan in 25 years.
- **August 8:** [The FBI carries out a search of Mar-a-Lago, where current President Donald Trump resides, seizing boxes of classified documents](#)

- **August 29:** Jackson Mississippi declares a state of Emergency after the water treatment plant stops the treatment of drinking water indefinitely, leaving many without access to safe drinking water.
- **September 1:** President Biden gives a televised primetime speech at Independence Hall in Philadelphia warning Americans about the state and future of American democracy.
- **September 6:** Boris Johnson steps down as Prime Minister, and the Queen appoints new Prime Minister, Liz Truss.
- **September 8:** Queen Elizabeth dies at age of 96.
- **September 28:** Hurricane Ian makes landfall in Florida, it becomes the deadliest hurricane to hit the United States since Katrina in 2005
- **September 29:** The Department of Education partially reverses its decision on student loan forgiveness, to disqualify those with private loans or Perkins loans.
- **October 20:** Liz Truss resigns as Prime Minister, triggering an election in the conservative party for her successor.
- **October 22:** A federal judge issues a stay to provide a temporary block to president Bidens student loan forgiveness plan.
- **October 25:** Rishi Sunak becomes the 57<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister of the UK and the first to be sworn in by King Charles.
- **October 27:** Elon Musk purchases social media site, Twitter, for \$44 billion.
- **October 28:** Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi's home is broken into and her husband attacked with a hammer, in what appears to be an attack meant for the Speaker.
- **November 15:** Donald Trump announces he will be running for President in the 2024 election
- **December 13:** President Biden signs into law the Respect for Marriage Act, granting federal protection for same-sex and interracial marriage

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## Major Acts

**American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.** As part of government funding bill, funded \$1,400 stimulus payments to every individual, extended increased unemployment benefits at \$300 per week, increased food stamp benefits, and expanded child tax credit, earned income tax credit and other tax credits. Approved Mar. 11, 2021. ([135 Stat. 4, PL117-2](#))

**COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act.** Required expedited review and reporting of hate crimes at the federal and local level due to the rise of hate crimes specifically against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders during the COVID-19 pandemic. Approved May 20, 2021 ([135 Stat. 265, PL117-13](#))

**Juneteenth National Independence Day Act.** Established a federal holiday on June 19. On June 19, 1865 enslaved peoples were emancipated by U.S. federal troops in Galveston, Texas nearly two and half years after the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation. Approved June 17, 2021. ([135 Stat. 287, PL117-17](#))

**Investment Infrastructure and Jobs Act.** Authorized and extended funding on road, highway, bridge, harbor, airport and rail programs to rebuild U.S. transportation infrastructure and respond to the impact of climate change. Also authorized funding for greater access to clean drinking water, better electric grid capabilities, and access to high-speed internet. ([135 Stat. 429, PL117-58](#))

**Prohibition of Importation of Goods Made by Forced Labor in China Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.** Imposed sanctions against imported goods made by forced labor in Xinjiang, China in response to human rights violations in the region. ([135 Stat. 1525, PL117-78](#))

**Emmett Till Antilynching Act.** Amended the US code to define lynching as any conspired crime resulting in death or injury and made lynching a federal hate crime. ([136 Stat. 1125, PL117-107](#))

**Bipartisan Safer Communities Act.** Improved community and school-based mental health services provided to children, youth, and families. Enhanced federal firearm laws by expanding criminal and mental health background checks for those purchasing a firearm under the age of 21, restricting gun sales to individuals convicted of domestic violence for at least five years, and making it a crime to purchase guns on behalf of someone who is prohibited from purchasing a firearm. ([136 Stat. 1313, PL117-159](#))

**CHIPS Act of 2022; Research and Development, Competition, and Innovation Act; Supreme Court Security Funding Act of 2022.** Centered production of semiconductors domestically with the hope of driving U.S. competitiveness globally and to lessen reliance on international supply chains. Invests in STEM innovation through various federally funded government and academic research and development initiatives. ([136 Stat. 1366, PL117-167](#))

**Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.** In an effort to curb inflation provided incentives for clean energy use, reduced prescription drug prices and health care costs, imposed a minimum of 15 percent tax on large corporations, and did not raise taxes for families making less \$400,000. ([136 Stat. 1818, PL117-169](#))

**Respect for Marriage Act.** provided statutory authority for same-sex and interracial marriages, replaced provisions that define, for purposes of federal law, *marriage* as between a man and a woman and *spouse* as a person of the opposite sex with provisions that recognize any marriage between two individuals that is valid under state law ([136 Stat. 2305, PL117-228](#))

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