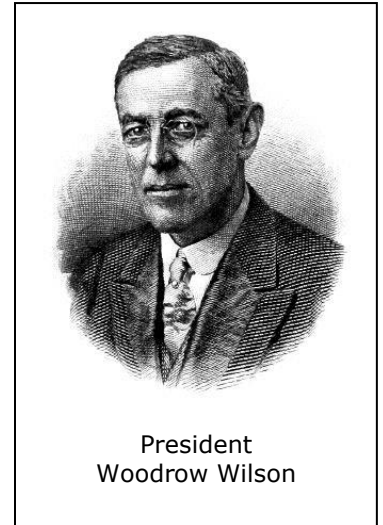


Sixty-Fifth Congress

March 4, 1917- March 4, 1919

Second Administration of Woodrow Wilson

Historical Background.....	1
War or Peace?	2
Economic Trends and Conditions.....	4
Constitutional Amendments.....	4
Landmark U.S. Supreme Court Decisions.....	5
1917 Events	5
1918 Events.....	6
Major Acts.....	8



Historical Background

Shortly after his re-election in November 1916, Woodrow Wilson made a final effort to win a negotiated peace between the Allied and Central Powers - each hitherto having been reluctant for the most part to pursue a settlement on any but favorable terms. On January 22, in a message to Congress, Wilson suggested that a League of Nations be organized to establish and maintain world peace; he bluntly told the embattled powers that only through "peace without victory" could permanent peace be realized. Germany's reaction enhanced the Prospect that the U.S would join the Allies in the war. After the sinking of the *Lusitania* in May 2015, Germany reversed its policy on submarine warfare, declaring that they would no longer target vessels flying the flags of neutral states, including the United States. However, it was thought that a victory for the Central Powers could be hastened by squeezing Britain that much more. So, in early 2018 Germany walked back their scrupulousness with respect to the ships of neutral nations, declaring that any U.S. flagged ship bound for Britain, be they merchant ships or passenger ships, would be subject to the German blockade. In February of that year, the German navy made good on their threat, sinking two U.S. ships. The resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare, coupled with the revelation of a secret cable sent by German foreign secretary Arthur Zimmerman to the government of Mexico proposing an alliance if Mexico were to declare war against the United States, effected a complete reversal of U.S. public sentiment, with Americans now supporting U.S. entry into the war on the side of the Allied Powers.

On March 21st, 1917, Wilson issued a call for a special session of Congress to convene April 2nd. A war resolution passed the Senate on April 4th, by a vote of 82 to 6, and the House on April 6th, 373 to 50. To prosecute the war, Congress during the ensuing thirteen months approved the Liberty Loan Act, to help finance American and Allied war needs, a Selective Service Act to

House	Senate
Majority Party: Republican (214 seats)	Majority Party: Democrat (54 seats)
Minority Party: Democrat (215 seats)	Minority Party: Republican (42 seats)
Other Parties: Progressive (3 seats), Socialist (1 seat), Prohibition (1 seat), Independent Republican (1 seat)	Other Parties: None
Speaker of the House: James Beauchamp Clark	Majority Leader: Thomas S. Martin

* 6 House seats were vacated during the course of the session

provide for the registration and classification of all men between 21 and 30, and the Lever Food and Food Control Act, providing the President with the power to make regulations and issue orders to stimulate and conserve the production and control the distribution of the foods and fuels necessary for the war effort. The President signed a declaration of a state of war with Austria-Hungary on December 11th, 1917.

Later that month the Congress approved the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which prohibited the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors. The amendment was sent to the states for ratification, reaching the requisite number and becoming the law of the land in January 1919.

In an address to the Congress delivered on January 8, 1918, President Wilson outlined a series of principles that should guide U.S. diplomats in negotiating the peace at the end of the war.

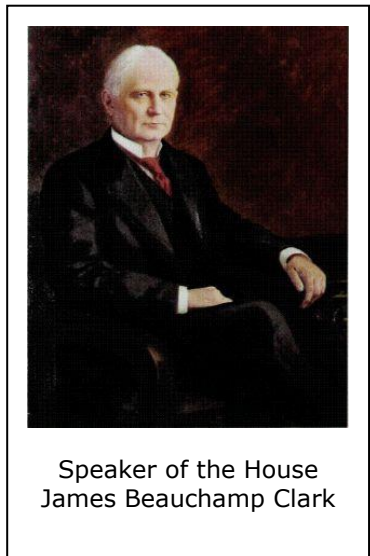
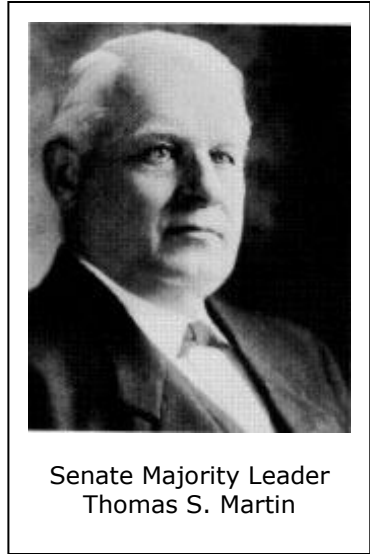
Other important acts included the War Revenue Act, which made the income tax the chief source of revenue during the war, the Railroad Control Act, placing the Nations' railroads under Government control, the War Finance Corporation, to finance war industries, the Webb-Poserene Export Trade Act, authorizing exporters to organize associations for export trade, and the Overman Act, authorizing the President to coordinate or consolidate executive bureaus, agencies and offices.

Legislation aimed at treasonable and disloyal activities was incorporated into the Espionage Act of June 1917 and was subsequently supplemented with three other measures: the Trading with the Enemy Act of October 1917, which prohibited commerce with enemy nations, the Sabotage Act of April 1918, which provided for the punishment of persons guilty of disrupting activities related to national defense, and the Sedition Act of May 1918, which provided severe penalties for persons found guilty of making or conveying false statements interfering with the prosecution of the war.

In addition, Congress in March 1918, enacted the Daylight Standard Time Act, established a Federal responsibility for the protection of international migratory bird resources, and sent the Eighteenth Amendment, prohibiting the manufacture, sale, or transportation of liquor, to the States for ratification.

Source:

Dell, Christopher and Stephen W. Stathis. [Major Acts of Congress and Treaties Approved by the Senate, 1789-1980](#). Government Division (CRS), Sept. 1, 1982. 97th Congress, 2nd Session, 82-156 GOV. ProQuest Congressional, CRS-1982-GOV-0005



War or Peace?

World War I

Early in the 65th Congress, the United States declared war on Germany on April 6th, 1917, breaking their neutral stance that they had maintained since the outbreak of hostilities. To support manpower, the Selective Service Act was passed in May 1917, which allowed for the forced military service of physically fit men between the ages of 21-30 on the basis of numbers chosen by lot. The first draft lottery was held on June 5th, 1917. Subsequently, lotteries were sometimes met with protests and even encountered several violent uprisings from citizens opposed to the idea of conscription. The United States issued another formal declaration of war against the German ally, Austria-Hungary, later in the year. In his 1917 State of the Union address, President Wilson stated that Germany had “established a power over other lands and people than their own – over the great Empire of Austria-Hungary, over hitherto free Balkan states, over Turkey, and within Asia, – which must be relinquished.”

In December 1917, under authority granted by the Federal Control Act (Transportation), President Wilson ordered the nationalization of the whole of the U.S. railroad system under the auspices of the United States Railroad Administration. The President justified the move because of the need to expand the railroad network to meet the demands for delivering war materiel. The railroads would remain nationalized until Congress enacted the Esch-Cummins Act in 1920, authorizing the return of the railroads to the private sector.

On the home front, Congress wanted full public support for the war. To maintain morale and high spirits for American participation they enacted a series of legislation that attempted to downplay certain forms of dissent or objection. The Espionage Act, approved June 15th, 1917, created massive fines and harsh sentences for anyone found guilty of treason or disloyal activities against the government. The passage of the Sabotage Act allowed the government to punish individuals or groups deemed to be disrupting or dismantling efforts in the interest of national defense. The Sedition Act, approved May 16th, 1918, furthered the Sabotage Act and instituted large fines and heavy sentences for anyone willfully uttering, printing, writing, or publishing any disloyal, profane, scurrilous or abusive language about our form of Government, the Constitution, and the armed forces of the United States. Towards the end of the second term of the 65th Congress, President Wilson exclaimed war effort successes by highlighting that 1,950,513 troops had been sent to Europe to fight.

Sources:

Dell, Christopher and Stephen W. Stathis. [*Major Acts of Congress and Treaties Approved by the Senate, 1789-1980*](#), Government Division (CRS), Sept. 1, 1982. 97th Congress, 2nd Session, 82-156 GOV. ProQuest Congressional, CRS-1982-GOV-0005

Wilson, Woodrow. [*Address of the President of the United States Delivered at a Joint Session of the Two Houses of Congress*](#), Dec. 2, 1918. 65th Congress, 3rd Session, H.doc.1668 (Pr28.1:918). ProQuest Congressional, 7582 H.doc.1668

Wilson, Woodrow. [*Address of the President of the United States Delivered at a Joint Session of the Two Houses of Congress*](#), Dec. 4, 1917. 65th Congress, 2nd Session, H.doc.468 (Pr28.1:917). ProQuest Congressional, 7443 H.doc.468

Economic Trends and Conditions

Congress enacted several key pieces of legislation that gave sweeping economic control to the President to lend financial support to the war effort. The Liberty Loan Act authorized a bond issue of \$5 billion at 3.5 percent, \$2 billion earmarked for the war, and \$3 billion for loans to Allies. The War Revenue Act increased corporate and personal income taxes and established excise, excess-profits, and luxury taxes. The War Finance Corporation Act created the War Finance Corporation with capital stock of \$500 million and power to issue \$3 billion in bonds to lend to banks to cover loans made in assisting war industries, and to persons and corporations engaged in business necessary to the prosecution of the war.

In his December 1918 report to Congress, Treasury Secretary Williams Gibbs McAdoo highlighted the successes of Liberty Bond sales, noting the first two rounds raised \$5.8 billion combined, the third round raised \$4.2 billion, with the fourth seeing almost \$7 billion. McAdoo also totaled \$800 million in war saving certificates. He covered total war costs for the 1918 fiscal year, which came in at \$13,222,749,734.14. The total amount of revenue raised by the Federal government was \$3.7 billion, almost \$3 billion more than the previous year, and the most that had ever been collected at this point in American history. With the official end of hostilities with Germany happening in November 1918, McAdoo recommended Congress lower taxes by saying, "We must left the burdens of taxation from the people to the greatest extent possible during the period of readjustment."

Sources:

Dell, Christopher and Stephen W. Stathis. [*Major Acts of Congress and Treaties Approved by the Senate, 1789-1980*](#), Government Division (CRS), Sept. 1, 1982. 97th Congress, 2nd Session, 82-156 GOV. ProQuest Congressional, CRS-1982-GOV-0005

Department of Treasury. [*Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on the State of the Finances for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1918*](#), Dec. 2, 1918. 65th Congress, 3rd Session, H.doc.1451. ProQuest Congressional, 7471 H.doc.1451

Constitutional Amendments

Eighteenth Amendment. Prohibited the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquor within or into the United States. Approved Dec. 19, 1917. Ratified by the requisite number of States Jan. 16, 1919. (40 Stat. 1050)

Source:

Dell, Christopher and Stephen W. Stathis. [*Major Acts of Congress and Treaties Approved by the Senate, 1789-1980*](#), Government Division (CRS), Sept. 1, 1982. 97th Congress, 2nd Session, 82-156 GOV. ProQuest Congressional, CRS-1982-GOV-0005

Landmark U.S. Supreme Court Decisions

Caminetti v. United States, concluded that The Mann Act applied not only to purposes of prostitution but also to other noncommercial consensual sexual liaisons and that consensual extramarital sex fell within the genre of “immoral practice,” 242 U.S. 470 (1917)

Adams v. Tanner, concluded that a Washington State law that banned private employment agencies was considered unconstitutional because a ban would breach the principle of due process of law in the deprivation of liberty and property, 244 U.S. 590 (1917)

Buchanan v. Warley, concluded that a Louisville, Kentucky city ordinance prohibiting the sale of real property to African Americans, violated the Fourteenth Amendment, which protected freedom of contract, reversing the ruling of the Kentucky Court of Appeals, 245 U.S. 60 (1917)

Arver v. United States, concluded that a Louisville, Kentucky city ordinance prohibiting the sale of real property to African Americans, violated the Fourteenth Amendment, which protected freedom of contract, reversing the ruling of the Kentucky Court of Appeals, 245 U.S. 60 (1917)

Hammer v. Dagenhart, concluded that Congress did not have the power to ban from the channels of interstate commerce goods made with child labor, since Congress' power was to prescribe the rule by which commerce was to be carried on and not to prohibit it, except with regard to those things the character of which-diseased cattle, lottery tickets-was inherently evil, 247 U.S. 251 (1918)

Source:

Costello. George A. and Johnny H. Killian. [Constitution of the United States of America. Analysis and Interpretation](#). Senate, Jan. 1, 1996. 103rd Congress, 1st Session, S. Doc. 103-6. ProQuest Congressional, 14152 S.doc.6

1917 Events

- **Jan. 28:** [The U.S. ends its search for Pancho Villa](#)
- **Feb. 24:** [American ambassador to the United Kingdom, Walter Hines Page, is alerted of the Zimmerman Telegram, a note from Germany to Mexico that promised Mexico the American southwest back if they declared war on the U.S.](#)
- **Mar. 4:** [Jeannette Rankin of Montana becomes the first woman member of the U.S. House of Representatives](#)
- **Apr. 6:** *World War I* - [The U.S. declares war on Germany](#)
- **May 18:** *World War I* - [Congress passed the Selective Service Act, which gives the President the power of conscription](#)
- **June 5:** *World War I* - [The first draft is held in the U.S. to send men to fight in World War I](#)
- **July 1:** [A race riot erupts after a labor dispute leaves 250 in East St. Louis, IL](#)

- **Aug. 1:** [Houston riot](#)
- **Aug. 2-3:** *World War I* - [Several hundred farmers start an uprising against the draft, called the Green Corn Rebellion, in Oklahoma](#)
- **Sept. 14:** The Provisional Government declares Russia a republic
- **Oct. 23-26:** *World War I* - [A Brazilian ship is sunk by a German U-Boat, which leads to Brazil's declaration of war against the Central Powers \(Germany, Bulgaria, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire\)](#)
- **Nov. 24:** In Milwaukee, WI, nine members of the Milwaukee Police Department are killed in a bomb explosion. Though suspicion immediately fell on a group of anarchists operating in the U.S. during this period, the perpetrators were never identified
- **Dec. 26:** *World War I* - [President Woodrow Wilson federalizes most of the U.S. railroads, under authority granted by the Federal Control Act \(Transportation\), to help move troops and war materials in a more efficient manner](#)

1918 Events

- **Jan. 8:** *World War I* - [President Woodrow Wilson delivers his famous Fourteen Points speech](#)
- **Feb. 5:** *World War I* - [The SS *Tuscania* is sunk by a German U-Boat off the coast of Ireland killing 210 aboard, and is the first ship to be sunk that carried both British and American troops](#)
- **Mar. 19:** [Congress establishes time zones and approves daylight saving time](#)
- **Apr. 21:** *World War I* - Germany's Manfred von Richthofen, known as the "Red Baron," and World War I's most successful fighter pilot, is killed in combat
- **May 15:** The U.S. Post Office established an airmail route between New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC, and is the third regular airmail to be used
- **June 12:** [Grand Duke Michael of Russia is killed, becoming the first member of the Romanov family to murdered by Bolsheviks](#)
- **July 9:** Two trains collide, "known as the Great Train Wreck of 1918," killing 101 in Nashville, TN
- **Aug. 30:** Twenty-thousand police officers strike in London, England, calling for higher pay and union recognition
- **Sept. 11:** The Boston Red Sox defeated the Chicago Cubs in the World Series
- **Sept. 26:** *World War I* - [Meuse-Argonne Offensive. One of the largest operations in World War I with over one million American Expeditionary Forces involved. Over 26,000 American soldiers were killed during the offensive](#)
- **Nov. 1:** *World War I* - [Germany signs an armistice with the Allied Powers, thus officially ending hostilities from World War I](#)
- **Dec. 4:** [President Woodrow Wilson becomes the first U.S. president to travel overseas while still in office, heading to the Paris Peace Conference by ship](#)

Sources:

Committee of the Whole House. House; Committee on Foreign Affairs. House. [War with the Imperial German Government](#). Apr. 4, 1917. 65th Congress, 1st Session, H.rp.1. ProQuest Congressional, 7252 H.rp.1

Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, House. [Daylight saving](#). Feb. 9, 1918. 65th Congress, 2nd Session, H.rp.293. ProQuest Congressional, 7307 H.rp.293

Committee on Interstate Commerce. Senate. [Government Control and Operation of Railroads. Parts 1 to 7. Inclusive](#). GPO, Dec. 29, 31, 1917; Jan. 2, 7-11, 14-19, 21-26, 1918. 65th Congress, 2nd Session, S117-0 (Y4.In8/3:R13/22). ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1917-ICS-0012

Committee on Military Affairs, Senate. [Uniforms and equipment lost on board steamship Tuscania](#). Mar. 8, 1918. 65th Congress, 2nd Session, S.rp.305. ProQuest Congressional, 7304 S.rp.305

Committee on the Judiciary, House. [Amnesty for Political Prisoners](#). GPO, Mar. 16, 1922. 67th Congress, 2nd Session, H322-12. ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1922-HJH-0012

Committee to Investigate the Race Riots in East St. Louis, 1917, Select. House. [East St. Louis Riot Investigation](#). Oct. 18, 1917. 65th Congress, 1st Session, 65 HS-T.1. ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1917-ESL-0026

[Final report of Gen. John J. Pershing Commander-in-Chief American Expeditionary Forces](#). American Expeditionary Forces, Department of War, House, Sept. 1, 1919. 66th Congress, 2nd Session, H.doc.626. ProQuest Congressional, 7692 H.doc.626

["General Deficiency Appropriation Bill."](#) Congressional Record, 64th Congress, 2nd Session (Mar. 2, 1917) Vol. 54, pp. 4827-4829. ProQuest Congressional, CR-1917-0302

[Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States 1918 Russia \(in three volumes\) Volume I](#). Department of State, House, Dec. 2, 1918. 65th Congress, 3rd Session, H.doc.1868. ProQuest Congressional, 7470-2 H.doc.1868

[Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States. 1917](#). Supplement 1. The World War. Department of State, House, Jan. 1, 1931. 70th Congress, 2nd Session, H.doc.618 (S1.1:917/supp.1). ProQuest Congressional, 9037-1 H.doc.618

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Salazar Torreón, Barbara. [U.S. World War I \(1917-1918\) Centennial. CRS Insight, Mar. 13, 2017](#). 115th Congress, 1st Session, IN10668. ProQuest Congressional, CRS-2017-KSG-0023

[Selective service regulations, prescribed by the President \[...\]](#). Provost Marshal General's Bureau, Department of War, GPO. Jan. 1, 1917. Provost Marshal General's Office Form No. 999. ProQuest Congressional, W37.6-27.1

U.S. House, 115th Congress. ["115 H.R. 382 Introduced in the House: 100 Years of Women in Congress Act."](#) (Jan. 9, 2017). ProQuest Congressional

Wilson, Emmett. [Note of the German Secretary of Foreign Affairs. Message from the President of the United States, transmitting \[...\] a report \[...\] concerning the note published in the press \[...\] by the German Secretary for Foreign Affairs to the German Minister to Mexico](#). S.doc.728, Mar. 1, 1917, 64th Congress, 2nd Session. ProQuest Congressional, 7126 S.doc.728

Wilson, Woodrow. [Address of President Wilson to the Congress of the United States](#). Committee on Foreign Affairs, House, Jan. 8, 1918. 65th Congress, 2nd Session, H.doc.765. ProQuest Congressional, 7443 H.doc.765

Wilson, Woodrow. [Address of the President of the United States to the joint session of Congress Monday, November 11, 1918 in the House of Representatives](#). Committee on Foreign Affairs,

House, Nov. 18, 1918. 65th Congress, 2nd Session, H.doc.1339. ProQuest Congressional, 7444 H.doc.1339

Wilson, Woodrow. [Military personnel actions. \(Official Bulletin\)](#). Official Bulletin, 1917-1918, Committee on Public Committee on Public Information, Unnumbered Executive Orders, Directives, and Proclamations. Aug. 31, 1918. ProQuest Congressional, 1918-25-404

Wilson, Woodrow. [Putting into effect the selective draft provision of the War Army Act of May 18, 1917, designating June 5th, 1917, as Registration Day](#). Numbered Presidential Proclamations, May 18, 1917. Presidential Proclamation No. 1370. ProQuest Congressional, 1917-PR-1370

Major Acts

Declaration of a State of War with Germany. Proclaimed that a state of war existed with Germany. Approved Apr. 6, 1917. ([40 Stat. 1, Chap. 1; PR65-1](#))

Liberty Loan Act. Authorized a bond issue of \$5 billion at 3.5 percent, \$2 billion earmarked for costs of the war, and \$3 billion for loans to Allies. Approved Apr. 24, 1917. ([40 Stat. 35, Chap. 4; PL65-3](#))

Selective Service Act. Required the registration and classification for military service of all men between the ages of 21 and 30 (subsequently broadened by the Manpower Act of August 31, 1918, to include all men between the ages of 18 and 45) and provided for the selection for military service of physically fit registrants on the basis of numbers chosen by lot. Approved May 18, 1917. ([40 Stat. 76; PL65-12](#))

Declaration of a State of War with Austria-Hungary. Proclaimed that a state of war existed with Austria-Hungary. Approved Dec. 11, 1917. ([40 Stat. 429, Chap. 1; PL65-17](#))

Espionage Act. Established severe penalties, fines up to \$10,000 and 20-years' imprisonment, for anyone found guilty of treasonable and disloyal activities against the interests of the Government. The Act empowered the Postmaster General to exclude from the mails all newspapers, periodicals, and other material alleged to be treasonable or seditious. Approved June 15, 1917. ([40 Stat. 217; PL65-24](#))

Lever Food and Fuel Control Act. Granted to the President the authority to fix prices and to place controls on output and consumption. Forbade the importation and manufacture of distilled spirits for the duration of the war. Approved Aug. 10, 1917. ([40 Stat. 276; PL65-41](#))

War Revenue Act of 1918. Increased corporate and personal income taxes and established excise, excess-profits, and luxury taxes. Approved Oct. 3, 1917. ([40 Stat. 300, Chap. 63; PL65-50](#))

Trading with the Enemy Act. Prohibited commercial intercourse with enemy nations or their associates. Authorized the President to place an embargo on imports, to establish censorship of any material passing between the U.S. and any foreign nation, and established a custodian of alien

property. Also established a War Trade Board with the power to license imports and exports in order to facilitate American trade and hamper that of the enemy. Approved Oct. 6, 1917. ([40 Stat. 411; PL65-91](#))

Daylight Standard Time Act. Established the standard time of the United States by dividing the continental United States into four-time zones. Also provided that clocks would be advanced one hour from the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in October in order to conserve electric energy. Approved Mar. 19, 1918. ([40 Stat. 450, Chap. 24; PL65-106](#))

Federal Control Act (Transportation System). Placed the management of all railroads under the Government, with a Director General and regional directors. Approved March 21, 1918. ([40 Stat. 451, Chap. 25; PL65-107](#))

War Finance Corporation Act. Created a War Finance Corporation with capital stock of \$500,000,000 and power to issue \$3,000,000,000 in bonds to lend to banks to cover loans made in assisting war industries, and to persons and corporations engaged in business necessary to the prosecution of the war. Approved Apr. 5, 1918. ([40 Stat. 506; PL65-121](#))

Webb-Pomerene Export Trade Act. Provided that exporters might organize associations for export trade without becoming liable for violation of the antitrust laws. Approved April 10, 1918. ([40 Stat. 516, Chap. 50; PL65-126](#))

Sabotage Act. Provided for the punishment of persons guilty of disrupting or attempting to disrupt any activity related to national defense. Approved Apr. 20, 1918. ([40 Stat. 533; PL65-135](#))

Sedition Act. Established severe penalties for making or conveying false statements interfering with the prosecution of the war; for willfully uttering, printing, writing, or publishing any disloyal, profane, scurrilous or abusive language about our form of Government, the Constitution, and the armed forces of the United States; and for advocating, teaching, defending or suggesting such action. Approved May 16, 1918. ([40 Stat. 553; PL65-150](#))

Overman Act. Empowered the President to coordinate and consolidate executive bureaus, agencies, and offices; and to create new agencies, alter existing ones, and transfer their power for the duration of the war. Approved May 20, 1918. ([40 Stat. 556; PL65-152](#))

Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. Implemented the 1916 Convention between the United States and Great Britain (for Canada) for the Protection of Migratory Birds and established responsibility for protection of the international migratory bird resources. Approved July 3, 1918. ([40 Stat. 755, Chap. 128; PL65-186](#))

Grand Canyon National Park Act. Established the Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona under the terms of the National Park Service Organic Act. Approved Feb. 26, 1919. ([40 Stat. 1175, Chap. 44; PL65-277](#))

Source:

Dell, Christopher and Stephen W. Stathis. [*Major Acts of Congress and Treaties Approved by the Senate, 1789-1980*](#), Government Division (CRS), Sept. 1, 1982. 97th Congress, 2nd Session, 82-156 GOV. ProQuest Congressional, CRS-1982-GOV-0005

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