

Ninety-Second Congress

Jan. 21, 1971-Oct. 18, 1972

First Administration of Richard M. Nixon

Historical Background.....	1
War or Peace?	2
Economic Trends and Conditions.....	3
Constitutional Amendments.....	4
Major Treaties.....	4
Landmark U.S. Supreme Court Decisions.....	5
1971 Events.....	6
1972 Events.....	7
Major Acts.....	9



President Richard Milhous Nixon

Historical Background

The last two years of President Richard M. Nixon's first term in office were marked by innovation and change. On March 23, 1971, the Twenty-Sixth amendment to the Constitution, lowering the voting age to 18, was sent to the States, which ratified it within 100 days. At the request of the White House, Congress in August 1971 approved legislation authorizing a Federal loan guarantee of \$250 million in commercial bank loans for the financially troubled Lockheed Aircraft Corporation, the Nation's largest defense contractor.

During February 1972, Congress enacted the Federal Election Campaign Act, which placed a ceiling on the amount of money a candidate for President, Vice President, or Congress could spend for radio and television time and other forms of political advertising and required full disclosure of campaign contributions and expenditures. For the first time in history, Congress a month later sent a constitutional amendment guaranteeing equal rights for women to the States for ratification. However, on June 30, 1982 the proposed Amendment officially died three States short of the 38 needed for ratification.

During October, Congress voted to override Nixon's veto of the Federal Water Pollution Act Amendments of 1972, which has been called the most comprehensive and expensive environmental legislation in U.S. history. Four additional environmental measures were completed at the same time establishing a national program for the management, use, and protection of the America's coastal zones and estuaries, granted authority for the Federal Government to regulate the dumping of materials in the oceans and coastal

House	Senate
Majority Party: Democrat (256 seats)	Majority Party: Democrat (54 seats)
Minority Party: Republican (179 seats)	Minority Party: Republican (44 seats)
Other Parties: None	Other Parties: Conservative (1 seat), Independent (1 seat)
Speaker of the House: Carl B. Albert	Majority Leader: Mike Mansfield

waters, established the first comprehensive Federal regulatory program to control noise, and the first major change in pesticide regulation in 25 years.

By the time the 92nd Congress adjourned on October 18, the President had also been granted the authority to freeze wages, prices, and rents, to begin the implementation of general revenue-sharing with the States, to develop a new space-shuttle program, and to create a Consumer Product Safety Commission.

In addition, legislation was also enacted to further enhance the quality of life in rural America, reach a settlement of Alaska Native claims that had remained unresolved for more than 100 years, and provide for the election of nonvoting delegates to the House from Guam and the Virgin Islands

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?

Vietnam War

On February 8, 1971 South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu ordered South Vietnamese forces into Laos to disrupt supply lines coming down from North Vietnam. Despite U.S. air support, South Vietnamese casualties were heavy and by March 25 all but 500 South Vietnamese troops had been withdrawn. The U.S. Department of Defense reported that 608 U.S. helicopters had been damaged during the Laotian offensive and that 104 helicopters had been permanently lost. In April, a crowd estimated of up to 500,000 demonstrators rallied in Washington, D.C. to protest U.S. involvement in Vietnam. During this period, secret negotiations conducted by National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho, a member of North Vietnam's Politburo, had been underway in Paris since August 1969.

On June 13 *The New York Times* published the first in a series of articles revealing portions of a previously secret study commissioned by the Pentagon on U.S. involvement in Vietnam, and the secret peace negotiations. Subsequently, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and other newspapers published portions of the report, which became known as "the Pentagon Papers," and which fueled anti-war sentiment. On August 18, Australia and New Zealand announced a timetable for withdrawing their troops from Vietnam. In November, Nixon ordered 45,000 ground troops home from Vietnam in December and January and declared that the U.S. ground offensive had been concluded. At the end of December, U.S. Air Force and Navy planes staged heavy attacks on military installations in North Vietnam. In January, Nixon ordered further reductions in U.S. ground forces and revealed publicly that the U.S. had been engaged in secret peace talks.

During the spring of 1972, North Vietnamese undertook a major offensive and Nixon responded by ordering strikes by B-52 bombers in various areas



Mike Mansfield

Senate Majority Leader
Mike Mansfield



Speaker of the House
Carl B. Albert

of North Vietnam, including the capital Hanoi. In addition, South Vietnamese President Thieu declared martial law. On August 12, the last U.S. ground troops withdrew, leaving about 43,500 in administrative and supply jobs, several hundred advisers, and pilots and crews of helicopters and combat planes. On October 26, 1972, shortly before the U.S. Presidential election, Kissinger confirmed a Radio Hanoi broadcast announcing that a breakthrough in the peace negotiations had been reached on October 8.

Cold War and Arms Limitation

Nixon's historic trips to Beijing and Moscow in 1972 marked the first state visit by an American President to either the People's Republic of China (PRC) or the Soviet Union. His stay in mainland China ended more than two decades of official U.S. hostility towards the PRC. The ensuing talks concluded with both Nixon and Communist Party Chief Mao Zedong agreeing on the need for increased contacts between the two nations. Three months later, in Moscow, Nixon signed seven agreements with the Soviet Union, including two nuclear arms control accords.

On August 3, 1972, the Senate ratified the first of the two strategic arms limitation agreements, which had been reached with the Soviet Union the previous May. With this action the two super powers were each limited to two anti-ballistic missile sites. The second accord, approved by Congress on September 30, 1972, authorized the President to accept a five-year interim agreement on offensive nuclear weapons between the United States and the Soviet Union, after adopting several amendments to the resolution.

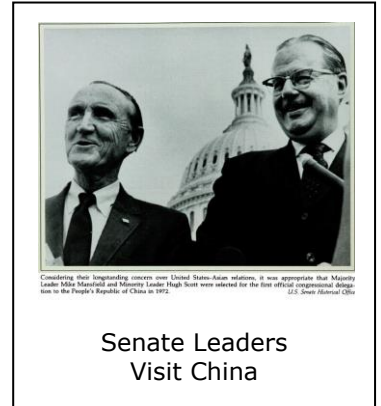
Source:

Committee on Foreign Relations. Senate. [Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam \(7th Revised Edition\)](#). GPO, Dec. 1, 1974. 93rd Congress, 2nd Session, 75-S382-4. ProQuest Congressional, CMP-1974-FOR-0025

Economic Trends and Conditions

During 1971, total employment, total output, output per person, real hourly earnings, and real income after tax per person reached new highs. Inflation had begun to subside. Nevertheless, in response to persistent high unemployment rates and the high level of the international balance of payments debt, on August 15, Nixon imposed a 90-day freeze on prices, wages, and rents; suspended a conversion of dollars into gold; and imposed a temporary surcharge on imports. Nixon also proposed a stimulative tax program, which was enacted in a different format than the President's original plan. During 1971, as in 1969 and 1970, there was a major shift in the allocation of total output from military to civilian uses.

By the end of 1972, the economy was in a cyclical upswing. During 1972, total real output in the economy rose by 6.5 percent, in contrast to an annual average growth of only slightly over 1 percent from 1960 through 1971. Unemployment was reduced somewhat, but by year's end there were still about 4.5 million unemployed; over 2 million working only part time; and



750,000 discouraged workers who had stopped looking for work. The manufacturing sector was operating at less than 80 percent of its capacity. By the end of 1972, rising consumer prices fueled concerns about inflation.

Sources:

Committee on Economic. Joint. [1973 Joint Economic Report](#). GPO, Mar. 26, 1973. 93rd Congress, 1st Session, H. Rpt. 93-90. ProQuest Congressional, 13022-4 H.rp.90

Nixon, Richard M. [Economic Report of the President](#). Committee on Economic. Joint, Jan. 27, 1972. 92nd Congress, 2nd Session, H. Doc. 92-228. ProQuest Congressional, 13008 H.doc.228

Constitutional Amendments

Twenty-Sixth Amendment. Lowered the voting age to 18 in all Federal, State, and local elections. Originally this right had been extended as part of the 1970 Voting Right Act Amendments, but portions of that statute were nullified when the Supreme Court ruled that Congress had the power to make the change only for Federal contests. Approved Mar. 23, 1971. Ratified by the requisite number of States June 30, 1971. ([85 Stat. 825](#))

Proposed Equal Rights Amendment. Would ensure, if ratified by the requisite number of States, that "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States on account of sex," and would give "Congress and the several States power within their respective jurisdictions, to enforce the article by appropriate legislation." Approved Mar. 23, 1972. ([86 Stat. 1523](#)). On Oct. 20, 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed a Joint Resolution (even though his approval was not required) granting States an additional 39 months to ratify the proposed Amendment. (92 Stat. 3799). However, on June 30, 1982 the proposed Amendment officially died three States short of the 38 needed 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

Major Treaties

U.S.-U.S.S.R. Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems Treaty. Limited the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to two anti-ballistic missile sites. Concluded May 26, 1972. Approved by the Senate Aug. 3, 1972. ([23 UST. 3435-3461](#))

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

Landmark U.S. Supreme Court Decisions

Wyman v. James, held that a visit by caseworkers necessary for one to obtain federal aid, does not constitute a search under the provisions of the Fourth Amendment, 400 U.S. 309 (1971)

Wisconsin v. Constantineau, held that a statute providing for the “posting” of “excessive” drinkers that prevents drinkers from taverns and similar places denies procedural due process by not requiring notice and opportunity to be heard, 400 U.S. 433 (1971)

Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education, affirmed that busing may be ordered to effect school district compliance with court-ordered desegregation, 402 U.S. 1 (1971)

Perez v. U.S., upheld the constitutionality of Consumer Credit Protection Act provisions controlling “loan sharking” activities that use extortionate means to collect and attempt to collect an extension of credit, 402 U.S. 46 (1971)

Cohen v. California, held that a California statute that prohibited the displaying of messages that “maliciously and willfully disturb the peace and quiet of any neighborhood or person” due to offensive conduct, was in violation of freedom of speech, 403 U.S. 15 (1971)

New York Times Co. v. U.S., held that the First Amendment protected the right of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* newspapers to publish the Department of Defense’s secret report—known as the Pentagon Papers—detailing the United States’ involvement in Vietnam, 403 U.S. 713 (1971)

Reed v. Reed, held that an Idaho statutory provision giving preference to males over females for appointment as administrator of a decedent’s estate violates the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment of the Constitution, 404 U.S. 71 (1971)

Dunn v. Blumstein, held that a Tennessee law that required a residence of one year in order to vote was unconstitutional, since it hampered the right to vote and the right to travel, 405 U.S. 330 (1972)

Wisconsin v. Yoder, held that a person’s right to free religion overshadowed the requirement of the state of Wisconsin that all parents send their children to attend school until the age of 16, 406 U.S. 205 (1972)

Apodaca v. Oregon, held that having a defendant convicted of a crime by less than a unanimous jury is not a violation of the Sixth and Fourteenth amendments, 406 U.S. 404 (1972)

Moose Lodge No. 107 v. Irvis, held that a club can refuse to serve someone because of their race, in that it was a private entity and was not subject to the Equal Protection Clause, 407 U.S. 163 (1972)

U.S. vs. U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, held that government officials, in this case Central Intelligence Agency officials, must

obtain a warrant before using wiretapping or other types of electronic surveillance, 407 U.S. 297 (1972)

Laird v. Tatum, held that the "surveillance of lawful civilian political activity" by Army Intelligence, which respondents claim was in violation of citizens' First Amendment rights, was not justiciable, 408 U.S. 1 (1972)

Furman v. Georgia, held that the imposition and carrying out of the death penalty, without a basis for consistency, was cruel and unusual punishment, 408 U.S. 238 (1972)

Gravel v. U.S., held that the privileges and immunities of the Speech and Debate Clause of the Constitution extend to congressional aides, but only in situations where the aides are involved in activities related to the legislative process, 408 U.S. 606 (1972)

Branzburg v. Hayes, held that the requirement of disclosing confidential information and sources by reporters to grand juries does not violate the First Amendment, 408 U.S. 665 (1972)

O'Brien v. Brown, upheld the decision of the lower courts when California and Illinois delegates brought suits against their unseating to the Democratic National Convention, and granted relief to the delegates from California and denied it to the delegates from Illinois, 409 U.S. 1 (1972)

Source:

Costello. George A. and Johnny H. Killian. [Constitution of the United States of America. Analysis and Interpretation](#). CRS, Library of Congress, Jan. 1, 1996. 103rd Congress, 1st Session, S. Doc. 103-6 (Y1.1/3:103-6). ProQuest Congressional, 14152 S.doc.6

1971 Events

- **Jan. 2:** [The Federal ban on cigarette advertising over radio and television becomes effective](#)
- **Feb. 5:** [Apollo 14 is launched taking three astronauts to the moon \(it is the third lunar landing\)](#)
- **Mar. 1:** [A bomb detonates in the Senate Wing of the Capitol](#)
- **Mar.26:** Bangladesh declares its independence from Pakistan, beginning the Bangladesh Liberation War
- **Apr. 19:** [The Salyut 1 space station is placed into orbit by USSR](#)
- **May 30:** [Mariner 9 is launched on a mission to Mars where it will go into orbit and return 6,786 pictures](#)
- **June 13:** [Excerpts of "Pentagon Papers" leaked to the New York Times begin to appear in print](#)
- **July 26:** [Apollo 15 is launched taking three astronauts to the moon, two of whom will explore the surface on a roving vehicle \(it is the fourth lunar landing\)](#)
- **Aug. 15:** [President Nixon appears on television to announces the imposition of economic measures intended to strengthen the economy and combat inflation](#)

- **Sept. 11:** Former Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev dies
- **Nov. 2-Nov. 8:** [Native Americans participating in the Trail of Broken Treaties demonstration occupy the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C.](#)
- **Dec. 3-17:** [India fights and defeats Pakistan in support of the creation of a new state, Bangladesh, to replace what was formerly East Pakistan](#)

1972 Events

- **Feb: 21-28:** [President Nixon visits the People's Republic China, becoming the first U.S. President to visit mainland China while in office](#)
- **May 15:** [Alabama Governor George C. Wallace, who was a candidate for President, is shot while campaigning in Laurel, Md. Wallace survives, but is paralyzed from the waist down](#)
- **Apr. 16:** *Space Race* – [Apollo 16 is launched taking three astronauts to the moon, two of whom will explore the surface on a roving vehicle \(it is the fifth lunar landing\)](#)
- **May 24:** U.S. President Richard M. Nixon approves a five-year cooperative program between NASA and the Soviet space program that would culminate in the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project, a joint U.S. Apollo and Soviet Soyuz mission in 1975
- **May 26:** The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I) conclude when U.S. President Richard M. Nixon and Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev sign the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty
- **June 17:** *Watergate Scandal* - [The Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate Hotel in Washington, D.C. is broken into by operatives who are linked to the White House](#)
- **Aug. 12:** *Vietnam War* - [The last U.S. ground troops are withdrawn from Vietnam](#)
- **Sept. 5:** [Palestinian terrorists break into the Olympics in Munich, Germany, resulting in the deaths of 11 Israelis athletes, a German police officer and five terrorists](#)
- **Oct. 8:** *Vietnam War* - Major breakthrough in peace negotiations held in Paris by the United States and North Vietnam (not made public until Oct. 26)
- **Nov 7:** President Nixon wins reelection defeating the Democratic candidate, Senator George McGovern
- **Dec. 7:** [Apollo 17 is launched taking three astronauts to the moon, two of whom will explore the surface on a roving vehicle \(it is the sixth lunar landing\)](#)
- **Dec. 18:** *Vietnam War* - U.S. President Richard M. Nixon announces the beginning of a massive bombing campaign in North Vietnam

Source:

Committee on Commerce. Senate. [Public Health Cigarette Amendments of 1971](#). GPO, Feb. 1, 3, 10, 1972. 92nd Congress, 2nd Session, 73-S261-4 (Y4.C73/2:92-82). ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1972-COM-0020

Committee on Economic. Joint. [President's New Economic Program, Part 1](#). GPO, Aug. 19-20, 23, 1971. 92nd Congress, 1st Session, 71-J841-15 (Y4.Ec7:P92/pt.1). ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1971-ECJ-0021

Committee on Foreign Relations. Senate. [Recognition of Bangladesh](#). Mar. 15, 1972. 92nd Congress, 2nd Session, 72-S383-9. ProQuest Congressional, 12971-1 S.rp.694

Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities, Select. Senate. [Presidential Campaign Activities of 1972, S. Res. 60. Watergate and Related Activities Phase I: Watergate Investigation. Book 1](#). GPO, May 17-18, 22-24, 1973. 93rd Congress, 1st Session, 73-S961-1 (Y4.P92/4:P92/phase1/bk.1). ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1973-PCA-0010

Committee on Science and Astronautics. House. [1972 NASA Authorization, Part 1. GPO, Mar. 2-4, 9-11, 16, 1971](#). 92nd Congress, 1st Session, 71-H701-2 (Y4.Sci2:92-1/2/pt.1). ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1971-SAH-0009

Committee on Science and Astronautics. House. [Apollo 15 Mission Report](#). GPO, Sept. 9, 1971. 92nd Congress, 1st Session, 71-H701-14 (Y4.Sci2:92-1/9). ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1971-SAH-0005

Committee on Science and Astronautics. House. [Apollo 16 Mission Report](#). GPO, May 16, 1972. 92nd Congress, 2nd Session, 72-H701-10 (Y4.Sci2:92-2/18). ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1972-SAH-0003

Nixon, Richard Milhous. [Remarks announcing withdrawal of additional U.S. troops from Vietnam](#). Public Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1983, Jan. 13, 1972. ProQuest Congressional, 1972-21-3

Sheldon, Charles S. [Soviet Space Programs, 1971-75 Overview \[...\] Vol. I](#). Science Policy Research Division (CRS), Aug. 30, 1976. 94th Congress, 2nd Session, 76-S122-5 (Y4.Ae8:So8/971-75/v.1). ProQuest Congressional, CRS-1976-SPR-0031

Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, Committee on Foreign Affairs. House. [New China Policy: Its Impact on the U.S. and Asia](#). GPO, May 2-4, 16-17, 1972. 92nd Congress, 2nd Session, 72-H381-64 (Y4.F76/1:C44/12). ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1972-FOA-0040

Subcommittee on Foreign Operations and Government Information, Committee on Government Operations. House. [U.S. Government Information Policies and Practices: The Pentagon Papers Part 1](#). GPO, June 23-25, 1971. 92nd Congress, 1st Session, 71-H401-33 (Y4.G74/7:ln3/12/pt.1). ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1971-OPH-0053

Subcommittee on Indian Affairs, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. House. [Seizure of Bureau of Indian Affairs Headquarters](#). GPO, Dec. 4-5, 1972. 92nd Congress, 2nd Session, 73-H441-10 (Y4.In8/14:92-54). ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1972-IIA-0015

Subcommittee on Manned Space Flight, Committee on Science and Astronautics. House. [1974 NASA Authorization, Part 2](#). GPO, Feb. 27 - Mar. 1, 6-8, 13-15, 23, 1973. 93rd Congress, 1st Session, 73-H701-4 (Y4.Sci2:93-1/1/pt.2). ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1973-SAH-0023

Subcommittee on NASA Oversight, Committee on Science and Astronautics. House. [Review of Recent Launch Failures](#). GPO, June 15-17, 1971. 92nd Congress, 1st Session, 71-H701-10 (Y4.Sci2:92-1/5). ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1971-SAH-0002

["The Tragedy at Munich--Senate Resolution 358, Expressing the Sense of the Senate on the Tragic Killings of Israeli Olympic Team Members of the 20th Olympiad at Munich."](#) Congressional Record, 92nd Congress, 2nd Session (Sept. 6, 1972) Vol. 118, pp. 29439-29445. ProQuest Congressional, CR-1972-0906

U.S. Senate. 92nd Congress. "[Public Law 92-299. Joint Resolution Deploring the attempted assassination of Governor George C. Wallace of Alabama.](#)" (May 18, 1972). ProQuest Congressional

Major Acts

Emergency Loan Guarantee Act. Authorized a Federal guarantee of up to \$250 million in bank loans for the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation. Approved Aug. 9, 1971. ([85 Stat. 178; PL92-70](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Settled the claim of Alaska's Native Indians, Aleut, and Eskimo population to the aboriginal lands on which they had lived for generations. Provided that the Natives would receive title to a total of 40 million acres and were to share in a payment of \$462.5 million and \$500 million in mineral rights derived from specified Alaskan lands. Approved Dec. 18, 1971. ([85 Stat. 688; PL92-203](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

Economic Stabilization Act Amendments of 1971. Extended the President's authority to control wages, salaries, prices, and rents through Apr. 30, 1973, and broadened the President's stabilization powers to include control of interest rates, finance charges, corporate dividends, and similar transfers. Established an emergency court of appeals composed of three or more Federal judges to be designated by the Chief Justice, with exclusive jurisdiction over appeals from the district courts and challenges on constitutional questions. Approved Dec. 22, 1971. ([85 Stat. 743; PL92-210](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

National Cancer Act of 1971. Enlarged the authorities of the National Cancer Institute and the National Institutes of Health to aid in the battle against cancer. Approved Dec. 23, 1971. ([85 Stat. 778; PL92-218](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971. Placed a ceiling on the amount of money candidates for President, Vice President, the House, or the Senate can spend for radio and television time, and other forms of political advertising, and required full disclosure of campaign contributions and expenditures. Restricted candidates to a maximum of 10 cents per eligible voter, or \$50,000 whichever was greater, for all forms of media advertising. Approved Feb. 7, 1972. ([86 Stat. 3; PL92-225](#)) ([Regulatory History](#)) Certain provisions of this Act were subsequently held unconstitutional in *Buckley v. Valeo*, 424 U.S. 1 (1976).

Nonvoting Delegates in the House of Representatives for Guam and the Virgin Islands. Provided for the election of nonvoting delegates to the House of Representatives from Guam and the Virgin Islands. Approved Apr. 10, 1972. ([86 Stat. 118; PL92-271](#))

National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act, 1973. Appropriated a Federal fiscal year 1973 budget of \$3.4 billion for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Included within this

authorization was \$227.9 million for the space shuttle program. Approved May 19, 1972. ([86 Stat. 157; PL92-304](#))

Education Amendments of 1972. Extended grant authorizations for several programs for higher education and student assistance. It also established land-grant colleges in the Virgin Islands and Guam, the Bureau of Occupational, Career, and Adult Education, the Bureau of Indian Education, and the U.S. Foreign Services Scholarship Program. Lastly, it authorized emergency assistance aid for the desegregation and integration of schools. Approved June 23, 1972. ([85 Stat. 235; PL92-318](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

Rural Development Act of 1972. Provided for the expansion of various existing programs and authorized numerous new programs designed to improve job opportunities, increase incomes, and generally enhance the quality of life in rural America. Approved Aug. 30, 1972. ([86 Stat. 657; PL92-419](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

U.S.-U.S.S.R. Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty. Approved and authorized Presidential acceptance of a five-year interim agreement on offensive nuclear weapons between the United States and the Soviet Union; after several amendments, the resolution was adopted. Approved Sept. 30, 1972. ([86 Stat. 746; PL92-448](#))

Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972. Initiated a major change in the basic Federal approach to water pollution by adding strict limits on what could be discharged into waterways, as well as setting standards for water quality. Set a national goal of eliminating all pollutant discharges into U.S. waters by 1985 and an interim goal of making the waters safe for fish, shellfish, wildlife and people by July 1, 1983. Provided funds for comprehensive programs for water pollution control, interstate cooperation and uniform laws, grants for research and development and pollution control programs, and area-wide treatment management. Approved Oct. 18, 1972. ([86 Stat. 816; PL92-500](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

State and Local Fiscal Assistance Act of 1972 (Federal Revenue Sharing Act). Established a five-year program of general revenue sharing to distribute \$30.2 billion in unrestricted funds to States and localities over a period of five years. Created a State and Local Government Fiscal Assistance Trust Fund wherein the annual appropriations for Federal-State revenue sharing would remain available without fiscal limitations. Approved Oct. 20, 1972. ([86 Stat. 919; PL92-512](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

Federal Environmental Pesticide Control Act of 1972. Broadened the Government's authority to control the vast array of pesticides and other pest killers, and required that all pesticides be registered with the Environmental Protection Agency, which would be responsible for controlling the manufacture, distribution, and use of pesticides. Approved Oct. 21, 1972. ([86 Stat. 973; PL92-516](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972. Banned the unregulated dumping of waste materials into the oceans and coastal waters

to protect human health and welfare, the marine environment, and the economic potential of ocean resources. Also banned the transportation out to sea or dumping under any circumstances of radiological, chemical or biological warfare agents, or high-level radioactive water. Approved Oct. 23, 1972. ([86 Stat. 1052; PL92-532](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

Consumer Product Safety Act. Created an independent Consumer Product Safety Commission authorized to set standards for a wide variety of consumer products, and to ban those products that presented an unreasonable risk of injury. Approved Oct. 27, 1972. ([80 Stat. 1207; PL92-573](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

Noise Control Act of 1972. Gave the Federal Government the authority to set standards limiting certain commercial sources of noise, such as construction and transportation equipment, motors, engines, and electrical or electronic devices. Directed the Environmental Protection Agency to propose noise standards for aircraft, but left final authority to review and reject standards which it found unsafe or impractical with the Federal Aviation Administration. Approved Oct. 27, 1972. ([86 Stat. 1234; PL92-574](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972. Established a national program for the management and protection of U.S. coastal waters and adjacent shorelines. Authorized Federal grants to the States to help them develop coastal management programs under Federal guidelines. Directed the Secretary of Commerce to consult and cooperate with other Federal agencies in carrying out the responsibilities directed by the Act. Approved Oct. 27, 1972. ([86 Stat. 1280; PL92-583](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

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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