

# Ninety-Third Congress

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Jan. 3, 1973 - Dec. 20, 1974

## Second Administration of Richard M. Nixon/ Administration of Gerald R. Ford\*

\* Following the Watergate Scandal and facing impeachment in the House, President Nixon resigned on August 9, 1974. He was succeeded by his Vice President Gerald Ford.

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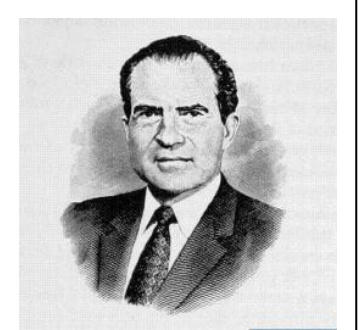
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### Historical Background

At the beginning of 1973, President Richard M. Nixon delivered a series of State of the Union messages that looked forward to modernizing the concepts and functions of Government since the United States had achieved a “peace with honor” deal that would enable it to withdraw from Vietnam. Although the war would continue despite the signing of the Paris Peace Accords, U.S. involvement in the war was continuing to wind down and Nixon chose to focus on domestic policy in his address. He affirmed the need to say “no” to excessive Federal spending and high taxes, while at the same time reaffirming his commitment to social compassion and national excellence. His objectives were to hold down taxes, control inflation, promote economic growth, increase productivity, encourage trade, keep farm income high, bolster small business and promote better labor-management relations.

In the area of natural resources, Nixon recommended programs to preserve and enhance the environment, advance science and technology, and assure the balanced use of irreplaceable resources. One of his major goals was to develop an insurance system to guarantee adequate financing of health care for every family. Nixon also proposed the creation of a Department of Community Development that would have consolidated into a single agency the various community development programs overseen by the Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, and Agriculture.



President Richard M.  
Nixon



President Gerald R. Ford

On March 28, 1973, Nixon submitted a plan to Congress to place primary responsibility for Federal drug law enforcement in a single new agency, the Drug Enforcement Administration, within the Department of Justice.

However, problems related to the break-in at Democratic National Committee headquarters located at the Watergate complex in Washington, D.C., on June 17, 1972 continued to haunt the Administration. On April 30 Nixon addressed the nation, professing his lack of involvement in and knowledge about the Watergate break-in and other illegal activities undertaken by his aides during the 1972 Presidential election campaign. In an unrelated incident, Vice President Spiro Agnew was forced to resign on October 10, 1973 in connection with a no-contest plea in a bribery and tax fraud investigation. Invoking the Twenty-Fifth amendment, Nixon nominated House Minority Leader Gerald Ford for the office of Vice President; Ford was confirmed by both the House and Senate and he took the oath of office on December 6, 1973.

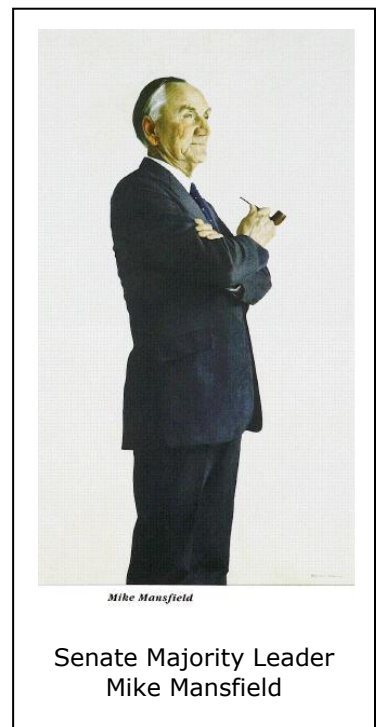
During 1973, Congress passed the Agricultural and Consumer Protection Act which overhauled the farm subsidy program, and the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973 which allowed the use of Federal highway funds for mass transit projects. The Trans-Alaska Pipeline Authorization Act and the Endangered Species Act were also signed into law. On January 2, 1974 the Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1973 was enacted, establishing an independent Federal agency to plan for the consolidation of seven bankrupt railroads, including the Penn Central.

In 1974, Nixon delivered a State of the Union address which, as he noted, was the first in history in which the top priority was energy. The energy crisis of 1973 had begun the previous fall when members of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries imposed an oil embargo on the U.S. in response to U.S. support for Israel during the Yom Kippur War. Nixon's address proposed diplomatic initiatives, as well as measures to require oil companies and other energy producers to provide the public with information on energy supply levels. The oil embargo continued until March 18, 1974, and on May 7, Congress passed the Federal Energy Administration Act of 1974 which reorganized and consolidated certain functions of the Federal Government into the new Federal Energy Administration to manage short-term fuel shortages.

During this period, Nixon also sought from Congress a program to assure comprehensive health insurance protection to Americans unable to obtain or afford it, with improved protections against catastrophic illnesses. Legislation Nixon did achieve included the Fair Labor Standards Amendments of 1974, which provided for graduated increases in the minimum wage, and the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act which provided Congress with enhanced control over Federal spending.

However, the facts concerning Nixon's knowledge and involvement in the Watergate Affair continued to become public, and on July 27, 1974, the House Judiciary Committee approved its first article of impeachment charging Nixon with obstruction of justice. Six of the Committee's 17

House	Senate
Majority Party: Democrat (243 seats)	Majority Party: Democrat (56 seats)
Minority Party: Republican (192 seats)	Minority Party: Republican (42 seats)
Other Parties: None	Other Parties: Conservative (1 seat); Independent (1 seat)
Speaker of the House: Carl Albert	Majority Leader: Mike Mansfield



Republicans joined all 21 Democrats in voting for the article. On July 29, the Committee approved its second article charging Nixon with abuse of power, and on July 30, the third and final article, charging Nixon with contempt of Congress, was approved. On August 8, Nixon announced he was resigning the presidency effective at Noon on August 9, at which time Vice President Ford was sworn in as President. On September 8, Ford pardoned Nixon in an effort to end the nation's preoccupation with Watergate.

On August 12, Ford, addressed a joint session of Congress, expressed concerns about the economy, inflation, and Government spending, he also nominated New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller for the office of Vice President, and Rockefeller was sworn in on December 19, 1974.

Following Ford's assumption of the Presidency, Congress set up an independent Government corporation to provide legal services for the poor, approved a four-year extension of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, enacted the first major housing bill since 1968, completed work on a six-year \$11.9 billion program to aid mass transit systems, and passed a bill establishing Federal standards for private pensions.

With the concerns of the Watergate scandal still fresh in mind, Ford signed a campaign finance bill in mid-October, setting limits on political contributions and spending, and mandating the first use of public funds to finance Presidential election campaign costs. On November 21, Congress over-rode the President's veto of a major expansion of the Freedom of Information Act.

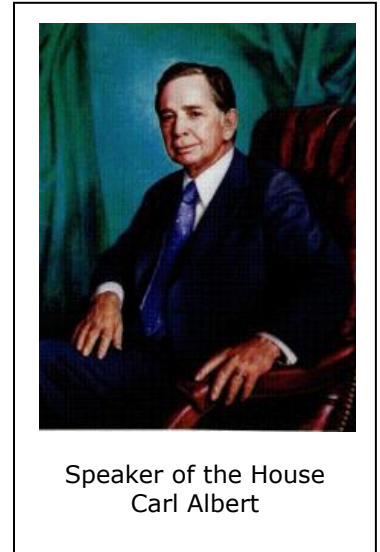
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## War or Peace?

### War in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia

Fighting in Vietnam continued throughout 1973-74, as U.S. involvement wound down and U.S. policymakers pursued a military exit strategy. On January 27, 1973, a four-power cease-fire agreement known as the Paris

Accords was signed. The Accords called for a complete cessation of hostilities and stated that the signatories entered into the agreement with a view to ending the war and restoring peace in Vietnam, but it was not a treaty or agreement of peace.

On March 12, a statement approving and supporting the Vietnam armistice agreement was signed by 12 nations. The U.S. agreed to respect the sovereignty of Laos and Cambodia and agreed to end all military activities in both countries. The U.S. public became more aware of U.S. military and paramilitary activities in Laos, but details about U.S. military assistance to Cambodia were not disclosed. During the spring of 1973, Cambodia became the major theater of war in South East Asia. Although the U.S. did not have ground troops in Cambodia, U.S. involvement in air operations and Cambodian political affairs was direct and intimate, as the U.S. sought to enable the government set up by Lon Nol, a Cambodian general who seized power in 1970, to withstand the military offensive of the Khmer Rouge Communists.

In July 1973 Congress approved legislation calling for a halt in the bombing of Cambodia by Aug. 15. In November, Congress overrode the President's veto of the War Powers Resolution, thereby setting a 60-day limit on the commitment of U.S. troops abroad without congressional consent.

Once U.S. troops were withdrawn from South Vietnam, the number of South Vietnamese troops killed continued to rise. In late summer of 1974 North Vietnam emphasized the need for revolutionary violence and declared that its major mission in 1975 would be the defeat of South Vietnam's pacification program. More North Vietnamese troops were deployed in South Vietnam than ever before. The U.S. continued to support South Vietnam through military and economic assistance programs.

### **Yom Kippur War**

On October 6, 1973, on the holiday of Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, a coalition of nine Arab states, led by Egypt and Syria and supported by Cuba and the Soviet Union, launched a surprise attack against Israel, catching the lauded Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) off guard as Israelis everywhere observed the day of atonement. The goal of the invasion was the recovery of territories occupied by Israel since the disastrous Six-Day War of 1967—especially Egypt's Sinai Peninsula and Syria's Golan Heights. Though the Egyptian advance into the Sinai Peninsula was initially virtually unopposed, due to the religious holiday, within days, Israel was able to repel much of the Egyptian army's progress and launch attacks against the Syrian capital in Damascus.

Despite the initial success of the invasion, Israel was able to consolidate its position rapidly, forcing a UN-brokered cease fire on October 22, followed by a U.S. and Soviet-initiated end to the conflict on October 25. Though the United States did not formally take part in the conflict, beginning October 14<sup>th</sup> the U.S. began supplying Israeli forces with equipment and supplies. In response, the Arab members of OPEC declared an oil embargo against the

United States, resulting in the 1973 energy crisis and raising the profile of OPEC member states on the international stage.

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## **Economic Trends and Conditions**

At the beginning of 1973, the U.S. faced a number of external economic problems. The trade balance was in deficit by several billion dollars annually and the U.S. was spending more than \$3 billion abroad each year as the net external cost of military commitments, and capital export controls hampered the ability of Americans to lend or invest overseas. On February 12, the U.S. announced its intention to devalue the dollar by 10 percent, but foreign exchange markets remained turbulent and speculation against the dollar continued.

The unemployment rate dropped from 6 percent at the end of 1972 to 5 percent in early 1973. The real gross national product (GNP) rose 6.5 percent during 1972 and was expected to continue to grow during the first half of 1973. However, concerns persisted that continued inflation would frustrate continued healthy growth, and the boom in investment would build to an unsustainable pace and then fade abruptly.

At the end of 1973 unemployment was rising, inflation continued to rise, interest rates remained at very high levels, and the energy shortage was disrupting spending patterns. During early 1974 several economic indicators were present that offered evidence the U.S. economy had entered its sixth recession since the end of World War II: sharply rising unemployment, declining personal income, reduced auto sales, a lower level of housing starts, and falling industrial production.

In addition, during 1974 the real GNP declined by 5 percent, and the level of production in the fourth quarter of 1974 was lower than production in the fourth quarter of 1972. During the fourth quarter of 1973, the annual rate of real consumer spending declined 12 percent, and business fixed investment declined during the third and fourth quarters while business inventories began to backlog. By December, housing starts had declined by 900,000 units and auto sales during the fourth quarter of 1974 were recorded to be 2.3 million below the levels recorded during the same period of 1973.

Responding to the Nation's deteriorating economic situation, Congress enacted three bills aimed at bolstering the economy and sent them to the White House hours before it adjourned on December 20. Those measures were to establish an emergency public jobs program; extend unemployment compensation to nearly 12 million persons not otherwise eligible; and authorize an extra 13 weeks of unemployment compensation beyond that already provided for by law. On the last day of the session, the Trade Act of 1974 was approved after Congress and the Administration resolved a lengthy controversy over congressional insistence that trade benefits for the Soviet Union be conditioned upon more liberal Soviet emigration policies.

Following U.S. intervention in the Yom Kippur War, wherein the U.S. provided response for Israel, members of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries imposed an oil embargo on the U.S. causing severe gasoline shortages and leading to the 1973 Energy Crisis.

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## Landmark U.S. Supreme Court Decisions

*Roe v. Wade*, held that the right to privacy protects a woman's right to have an abortion up to the time the fetus is viable, 410 U.S. 113 (1973)

*Doe v. Bolton*, held that a State may not unduly burden a woman's right to have an abortion by imposing regulations that prohibit or substantially limit access to the means of effectuating the decision, 410 U.S. 179 (1973)

*Mahan v. Howell*, held that the reapportionment of electoral districts for Virginia's House of Delegates complied with the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, 410 U.S. 315 (1973)



*San Antonio School District v. Rodriguez*, held that a public education finance system that relied on property taxes from district to district, and was claimed to discriminate against those in underprivileged areas, was not in violation of the Equal Protection Clause, since there is no Constitutional right to education, and it did not discriminate wholly against all underprivileged persons, 411 U.S. 1 (1973)

*Frontiero v. Richardson*, held that benefits given by the United States military to the family of service members could not be given out differently because of sex, 411 U.S. 677 (1973)

*Miller v. California*, reiterated that obscenity is not protected by the First Amendment, 413 U.S. 15 (1973)

*Keyes v. School District*, modified and remanded the decision that a school guilty of segregation exposed a "prima facie case of unlawful segregative design" within the entire county school system, 413 U.S. 189 (1973)

*Sloan v. Lemon*, struck down a Pennsylvania state law which provided partial reimbursement to parents for the cost of private schools, including parochial schools. Applying the test devised by the ruling in *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, the court held that the statute violated the First Amendment's establishment clause, 413 U.S. 825 (1973)

*U.S. v. Robinson*, held that in the case of a lawful custodial arrest a full search of the person is not only an exception to the warrant requirement of the Fourth Amendment, but is also a reasonable search under that Amendment, 414 U.S. 218 (1973)

*United States v. Calandra*, held that a grand jury has the right in its investigatory capacity to use the product of a past unlawful search and seizure, 414 U.S. 338 (1974)

*Communist Party of Indiana v. Whitcomb*, held that it was improper for the State of Indiana to deny a political party a place on the national ballot for the 1972 general elections because it failed to file an affidavit stating that it did not advocate the overthrow of local, State or national government by force or violence, 414 U.S. 441 (1974)

*Lau v. Nichols*, held that local and State educational agencies are required to provide services that meet the special needs of English language learners, 414 U.S. 563 (1974)

*Smith v. Goguen*, set aside the conviction of a defendant under a Massachusetts flag-misuse statute for sewing and wearing a small cloth version of the U.S. flag on the seam of his pants, 415 U.S. 566 (1974)

*DeFunis v. Odegaard*, held that the case, involving the admission of a student into law school, was moot and therefore could not go forward, 416 U.S. 312 (1974)

*Jenkins v. Georgia*, held that the film “Carnal Knowledge” was not obscene, 418 U.S. 153 (1974)

*Miami Herald Publishing Co. v. Tornillo*, invalidated a Florida law that required newspapers to provide space to individuals so they can reply to attacks made against them in the publication, 418 U.S. 241 (1974)

*Lehman v. City of Shaker Heights*, upheld the right of a city to prohibit political advertising on city transit system vehicles, even though it accepted commercial and public service advertisements, 418 U.S. 298 (1974)

*Spence v. Washington*, held that the taping of a peace symbol to a flag was expressive conduct protected by the First Amendment, 418 U.S. 405 (1974)

*U.S. v. Nixon*, held that the President cannot use executive privilege as an excuse to withhold evidence that is demonstrably relevant in a criminal trial, 418 U.S. 683 (1974)

*Milliken v. Bradley*, overturned a lower court order mandating consolidation of Detroit urban and suburban school districts, which would require the inter-district busing of pupils, 418 U.S. 717 (1974)

*Schick v. Reed*, held that the President’s power to pardon flows from the Constitution alone and cannot be modified, abridged, or diminished by the Congress, 419 U.S. 256 (1974)

Source:

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

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## 1973 Events

- **Jan. 27:** *Vietnam War* - Paris Peace Accords signed by representatives of the U.S., North Vietnam, South Vietnam, and the South Vietnam revolutionary movement
- **Feb. 27:** [The American Indian Movement occupies the town of Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota; the occupation lasted 71 days](#)
- **Apr. 1:** [As agreed to by the Paris Peace Accords, North Vietnam returns U.S. prisoners of war it acknowledges to be holding](#)
- **Apr. 30:** *Watergate Scandal* - [President Nixon announces that top White House aides involved in the Watergate Affair have resigned](#)
- **May 14:** [Skylab, the first U.S. space station, is launched aboard a two-stage Saturn rocket](#)
- **May 17:** *Watergate Scandal* - [Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities begins hearings on the Watergate Affair](#)



- **July 1:** [The Executive Order establishing the Drug Enforcement Administration becomes effective](#)
- **July 16:** *Watergate Scandal* - [Former White House aide Alexander Butterfield, testifying at a Senate hearing, discloses the existence of a White House taping system](#)
- **Oct 6:** *Yom Kippur War* - [The Yom Kippur War, also known as the October War, begins when Syria and Egypt attack Israel](#)
- **Oct. 10:** [Vice President Spiro Agnew, under investigation for tax fraud and bribery, resigns and pleads no contest to criminal charges of tax evasion](#)
- **Oct 16:** *1973 Energy Crisis* - [The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries \(OPEC\) sharply increases the price of crude oil](#)
- **Oct. 17:** *1973 Energy Crisis* - [The Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries imposes a total embargo on the U.S. and the Netherlands for their support of Israel](#)
- **Oct. 20:** *Watergate Scandal* - [President Nixon orders Attorney General Elliott Richardson to fire Watergate Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox. Richardson refuses to fire Cox and resigns](#)
- **Nov 1:** *Watergate Scandal* - [Acting Attorney General Robert Bork appoints Leon Jaworski as the new Watergate Special Prosecutor](#)
- **Nov. 26:** *Watergate Scandal* - [A tape recording of a June 20, 1972 meeting by President Nixon and aide H.R. Haldeman is found to have a gap of more than 18 minutes; the gap is believed to focus on Watergate](#)
- **Dec. 6:** [House Minority Leader Gerald Ford is confirmed and sworn in as the new Vice President](#)

## 1974 Events

- **Jan. 2:** [The U.S. imposes a national 55 mile-per-hour speed limit](#)
- **Jan. 6:** *1973 Energy Crisis* - [In response to the 1973 energy crisis, daylight saving time commences nearly four months early in the United States.](#)
- **Jan. 7:** *1973 Energy Crisis* - The Netherlands imposes gasoline rationing
- **Jan. 25:** Dr. Christian Barnard preforms the first transplant of a human heart without removing the old heart
- **Feb. 4:** *1973 Energy Crisis* - The Netherlands ends gasoline rationing
- **Feb. 4:** [Patricia Hearst, the daughter of publisher Randolph Hearst, is kidnapped by the urban guerrilla group the Symbionese Liberation Army](#)
- **Feb. 4:** The Provisional Irish Republican Army detonates a bomb on a bus in West Yorkshire, England, that is carrying British Army soldiers and some of their family members
- **Feb. 5:** [John Murtha becomes the first U.S veteran of the Vietnam War to be elected to the U.S. Congress](#)

- **Feb. 11:** [Henry Kissinger unveils the Nixon Administration's seven-point plan—“Project Independence”—designed to make the U.S. energy independent](#)
- **Feb. 11:** [Libya nationalizes three U.S. oil companies that had not agreed to 51 percent nationalization](#)
- **Feb. 12:** *1973 Energy Crisis* - The heads of state of Algeria, Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia discuss oil strategy in view of the progress in Arab-Israeli disengagement
- **Feb. 24:** [Pakistan officially recognizes Bangladesh](#)
- **Mar. 1:** *Watergate Scandal* - [the Watergate grand jury indicts seven presidential aides](#)
- **Mar. 2:** *Watergate Scandal* - the Watergate grand jury concludes President Nixon is involved in the Watergate cover-up
- **Mar. 9:** The last Japanese soldier who has remained fighting World War II as a guerrilla operating in Philippines surrenders 29 years after the war ended
- **Mar. 18:** *1973 Energy Crisis* - [Most of the Arab petroleum producing nations engaged in an oil embargo against U.S. end that embargo](#)
- **Apr. 20:** The war in Northern Ireland between republican and loyalist paramilitary groups and British security forces, claims its 1,000 victim
- **May 14:** [The urban guerrilla group the Symbionese Liberation Army is destroyed in a shoot-out, killing six](#)
- **May 31:** *Yom Kippur War* - Israel and Syria sign an agreement concerning the Golan Heights
- **June 17:** The Provisional Irish Republican Army detonates a bomb in the Houses of Parliament in London, injuring 11 people and causing extensive damage
- **June 23:** The first extraterrestrial message is sent from Earth into space
- **July 17:** Musician and song writer John Lennon is ordered to leave the U.S. within 60 days
- **July 24:** *Watergate Scandal* - the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously rules President Nixon must turn over the Watergate tapes
- **July 27:** *Watergate Scandal* - [the House Judiciary Committee votes 27-11 to recommend the articles of impeachment on President Nixon be adopted](#)
- **Aug. 8:** *Watergate Scandal* - [President Nixon announces he will resign the office of President effective at Noon Aug. 9](#)
- **Aug. 9:** [Vice President Gerald Ford is sworn in as President](#)
- **Aug. 20:** [President Ford nominates Nelson Rockefeller to be Vice President](#)
- **Sept. 8:** [Ford issues Proclamation 4311, pardoning Nixon for any crimes he might have committed against the United States while President](#)
- **Sept. 13:** OPEC instructs its Secretary General to "carry out a study of supply and demand in relation to possible production controls"
- **Sept. 16:** [President Ford announces a conditional amnesty for U.S. Vietnam War deserters](#)

- **Sept. 16:** [U.S. Army General Alexander Haig becomes NATO supreme commander in Europe](#)
- **Sept. 25:** [Scientists first report that Freon gases from aerosol sprays are destroying the ozone layer](#)
- **Oct. 9:** A race riot occurs in Boston due to court ordered "busing" of public school students
- **Nov. 22:** The United Nations General Assembly recognizes Palestine's right to sovereignty
- **Nov. 24:** President Ford and Soviet Communist Party General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev sign the second Strategic Arms Limitations Treaty between the U.S. and U.S.S.R.
- **Nov. 25:** The Irish Republican Army is outlawed in Britain following the deaths of 21 people
- **Dec. 19:** [Nelson A Rockefeller is sworn-in as the 41st Vice President](#)

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Committee on Aeronautical and Space Sciences. Senate. [Skylab](#). GPO, May 23, 1973. 93<sup>rd</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 73-S121-5 (Y4.Ae8:Sk9). ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1973-ASP-0008

Committee on Commerce. Senate. [Daylight Saving Time](#). GPO, Nov. 9, 12, 1973. 93<sup>rd</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, Committee on Commerce Serial No. 93-49 (Y4.C73/2:93-49). ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1973-COM-0013

Committee on Foreign Affairs. House. [Impact of the October Middle East War](#). GPO, Oct. 3, 23-24, Nov. 29, 1973. 93<sup>rd</sup> Session, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 74-H381-6 (Y4.F76/1:M58/6). ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1973-FOA-0029

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Committee on the Judiciary. Senate. [Revolutionary Activities Within the U.S.: The American Indian Movement](#). GPO, Apr. 6, 1976. 94<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 76-S521-70 (Y4.J89/2:R32/2). ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1976-SJS-0046

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## Major Acts

**Second Supplemental Appropriation Act, 1973.** In part banned the use of any previously appropriated funds from being used to support United States combat activities in, or over, Cambodia and Laos after Aug. 15, 1973. Approved July 1, 1973. ([87 Stat. 99; PL93-50](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973.** Sought to establish a new program designed to help resolve food shortages in other parts of the world and to produce high market prices for farm commodities. Increased the price supports for milk and ordered the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a comprehensive study of dairy imports and present his findings by Jan. 1, 1975. Set a subsidy ceiling on payments to \$20,000 a year for each farmer. Extended the Food for Peace and food stamp programs as well as the cotton, wheat and feed grain programs. Authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into long-term land use contracts with farmers and land owners to deal with conservation and pollution problems. Also authorized a forestry incentive program under which farmers and landowners would be encouraged to increase timber production and protect privately held forest lands. Approved Aug. 10, 1973. ([87 Stat. 221; PL93-86](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Federal-Aid Highway and Safety Act of 1973.** Permitted, for the first time, the use of highway funds for mass transit projects. Allocated \$18.35 billion for the Interstate Highway System for Federal fiscal years 1974 through 1979. Extended the time of completion of the interstate system for one year, until June 30, 1979. Approved Aug. 13, 1973. ([87 Stat. 250; PL93-87](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Rehabilitation Act of 1973.** Extends and revises authorization of grants for vocational rehabilitation, focusing efforts on services to those with disabilities. Extends civil rights to individuals with disabilities. Approved Sept. 26, 1973. ([87 Stat. 355; PL93-112](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973.** Emphasized the importance of volunteerism in the United States and authorized funding and regulations for the Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) program. Approved Oct. 1, 1973. ([87 Stat. 394; PL93-113](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Amtrak Improvement Act of 1973.** Allowed Amtrak trains to take precedence over freight trains in the use of national tracks and

infrastructure. Reorganized the Amtrak Board of Directors. Approved Nov. 3, 1973. ([87 Stat. 548; PL93-146](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**War Powers Resolution.** Limited the President's powers to commit United States forces abroad without congressional approval. Defined the legal rights of Congress and the President in such matters, urging the President "in every possible instance" to consult with Congress before committing U.S. forces to hostilities or situations where hostilities might be imminent, and to consult with Congress regularly after such a commitment. Required the termination of a troop commitment within 60 days, unless Congress declared war, specifically authorized continuation of the commitment, or was physically unable to convene as a result of an armed attack upon the United States. The 60-day period could be extended for up to an additional 30 days if the President determined, and certified to Congress, that continued use of U.S. forces was an unavoidable military necessity in order to ensure both the safety of those forces and a prompt disengagement. Approved Nov. 7, 1973. ([87 Stat. 555; PL93-148](#))

**Trans-Alaska Pipeline Authorization Act.** Directed the Secretary of the Interior to immediately authorize the construction of the 789-mile pipeline connecting the North Shore of Alaska with the port of Valdez. Provided that all actions necessary for completion of the pipeline be taken without further delay under the National Environmental Act of 1969. Restricted judicial review of the Act to its constitutionality, to actions under the Act which violated constitutional rights, and actions which went beyond the authority granted by this Act. Directed the President to ensure equitable allocation of Alaskan North Slope crude oil among all regions of the United States. Approved Nov. 16, 1973. ([87 Stat. 576; PL93-153](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973.** Provided opportunities for extensive training and employment for jobs in the public service. Approved Dec. 28, 1973. ([87 Stat. 839; PL93-203](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Endangered Species Act of 1973.** Extended Federal authority to species "threatened" with extinction as well as those in immediate danger of becoming extinct. Made it a Federal offense to take (hunt, trap, capture, etc.), buy sell, or transport them in interstate commerce; and import or export endangered or threatened species or products made from them. Established fines of \$10,000 for violation of the act committed knowingly by commercial operators; \$5,000 for violations of regulations; and \$1,000 for violations committed unknowingly. Provided for the conservation of threatened and endangered species of fish, wildlife and plants by Federal action and by encouraging the establishment of State programs. Approved Dec. 28, 1973. ([87 Stat. 884; PL93-205](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Health Maintenance Organization Act of 1973.** Provided grants and other incentives and assistance in order to establish more Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs). Required certain employers to provide federally approved HMO choices for health insurance coverage. Approved Dec. 29, 1973. ([87 Stat. 914; PL93-222](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))



**Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1973.** Established the United States Railway Association, an independent Federal agency, to plan the consolidation of seven bankrupt railroad lines in the Northeast and Midwest into one giant corporation. The rail lines to be consolidated include: the Ann Arbor; Boston & Maine; Central of New Jersey; Erie Lackawanna; Lehigh Valley; Penn Central; and Reading Railroads. Authorized the Association to issued federally guaranteed loans up to \$1.5 billion to help the new corporation take over the choice routes operated by the bankrupt companies; repair track; and run the system. Also authorized \$43.5 million to design the new system; \$85 million to keep the existing railroad companies running while the plan was being developed; \$250 million to pay the benefits of those who lost their jobs under the reorganization; and \$180 million for operating subsidies. Approved Jan. 2, 1974. ([87 Stat. 985; PL93-236](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Fair Labor Standard Amendments of 1974.** Increased the hourly minimum for most non-farm workers to \$2.00 as of May 1, 1974, to \$2.10 on Jan. 1, 1975, and to \$2.30 on Jan. 1, 1976. Minimum rates for farm workers were similarly raised from \$1.30 to \$2.30 an hour in five stages over a longer period of time. Extended coverage under the Fair Labor Standards Act to approximately 7 million additional employees. Approved Apr. 8, 1974. ([88 Stat. 55; PL93-259](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Federal Energy Administration Act of 1974.** Reorganized and consolidated certain functions of the Federal Government in the new Federal Energy Administration to manage short-term fuel shortages. Appropriated \$75 million for Federal fiscal year 1974 and \$200 million for Federal fiscal years 1975 and 1976. Provided that the Act would expire June 30, 1976. Approved May 7, 1974. ([88 Stat. 96; PL93-275](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Disaster Relief Act of 1974.** Established procedures for presidential disaster declarations in order to authorize federal aid throughout the United States when emergency assistance was required. Approved May 22, 1974. ([87 Stat. 143; PL93-288](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974.** Established House and Senate Budget Committees to study the President's budget and recommend changes in fiscal policy and spending priorities. Created a Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to assist the Budget Committees in studying budget information. Defined procedures that established more congressional control over the impoundment of funds by the executive branch. Approved July 12, 1974. ([88 Stat. 297; PL93-344](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Legal Services Corporation Act of 1974.** Transferred the legal services program from the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) to an independent Legal Services Corporation to provide legal assistance to the poor in non-criminal proceedings. Set up an 11-member board of directors for the corporation, appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate; at least six were to be lawyers and no more than six were to be members of the same party. Exempted employees of the corporation from laws and

Executive orders affecting Federal agencies, but stipulated those employees be considered Federal employees for pension and other benefits. Approved July 25, 1974. ([88 Stat. 378; PL93-355](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Education Amendments of 1974.** Provided a four-year \$25.2 billion extension of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Revised the way in which compensatory education aid for disadvantaged students was distributed. Made new Federal commitments in two areas, bilingual education programs and Federal aid programs for education of the handicapped—where the courts had ruled that public schools must provide more adequate education. Consolidated seven categorical grant programs into two broader programs, giving the States somewhat more discretion than they had had over how the money was spent. Approved Aug. 21, 1974. ([88 Stat. 484; PL93-380](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.** Created a new rental assistance program for low- and moderate-income families. Consolidated 10 urban development programs into a single block grant program that offered local governments \$8.6 billion over three years for community development activities. Also required communities to "give maximum feasible priority" to spending at least 80 percent of their grant funds on programs directly benefiting low- and moderate-income families or helping deteriorating areas and generally limiting spending for public services to 20 percent of the total grant. Approved Aug. 22, 1974. ([88 Stat. 633; PL93-383](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974.** Established minimum Federal standards for private pensions. This Act—the first regulatory effort in this area—aimed to safeguard the pension rights of at least 23 million workers covered by the private pension systems. While the new law did not require firms to provide pension funds for their employees, those that did had to adhere to Federal rules. Also established the rules which had to be followed by pension fund trustees. A major innovation was a provision that enabled an individual not covered by a pension plan to create his or her own retirement account that could qualify for special tax treatment. Approved Sept. 2, 1974. ([88 Stat. 829; PL93-406](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Energy Reorganization Act of 1974.** Created a new Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) to direct Federal research into the better use of existing fuels and the development of new sources of energy. ERDA took over most of the functions of the old Atomic Energy Commission, which was abolished by the act, plus programs from the Interior Department, the National Science Foundation, and the Environmental Protection Agency. Approved Oct. 11, 1974. ([88 Stat. 1233; PL93-438](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Federal Election Campaign Act Amendments of 1974.** Established spending limits for candidates involved in primary and general elections for the Presidency, Senate, and House. Introduced public financing in Presidential primary campaigns by establishing Federal matching grants for individual contributions of \$250 or less, and public funding for Presidential

nominating conventions. Supplemented provisions of the public funding of Presidential general elections including in the Revenue Act of 1971. (85 Stat. 562-574) Set contribution limits for individuals as well for political committees, and national and State party organizations. Stipulated specific disclosure and reporting requirements, and established the Federal Election Commission to administer and enforce the campaign finance laws. Approved Oct. 15, 1974. ([88 Stat. 1263; PL93-443](#)) ([Regulatory History](#)) Note that certain provisions of this Act were subsequently held unconstitutional in *Buckley v. Valeo*, 424 U.S. 1 (1976)

**Freedom of Information Act Amendments.** Allowed Federal judges for the first time to review decisions by the Government to classify certain materials and order payment of attorneys' fees and court costs for plaintiffs who won suits seeking information under the act. Set deadlines for agencies to respond to a request for information under the law and required that they publish a uniform set of fees for providing documents. Required agencies to publish their indexes of final opinions on settlements of internal cases, policy statements, and administrative staff manuals, or if they were not published, to furnish them upon request to any person for cost of duplication. Approved Nov. 21, 1974. ([88 Stat. 1561; PL93-502](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**National Mass Transportation Assistance Act of 1974.** Authorized \$11.9 billion over six years to help the Nation's financially troubled urban mass transit systems meet increasing operating and capital expenses, including \$7.8 billion for capital grants and \$4 billion that could be used either for operating or capital needs. Approved Nov. 26, 1974. ([88 Stat. 1565; PL93-503](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Act of 1974.** Provided assistance to Vietnam veterans returning from war and prohibited discrimination in employment for veteran with disabilities. Approved Dec. 3, 1974. ([88 Stat. 1578; PL93-508](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Safe Drinking Water Act.** Established rules and regulations for the protection of drinking water supplies from pollution. Created water quality minimum standards for states to ensure the health and safety of the public. Approved Dec. 16, 1974. ([88 Stat. 1660; PL93-523](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Emergency Jobs and Unemployment Assistance Act of 1974.** Established an emergency program of public service jobs in State and local governments and provided unemployment insurance coverage to nearly 12 million persons not otherwise eligible. Approved Dec. 31, 1974. ([88 Stat. 1845; PL93-567](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 1974.** Authorized an extra 13 weeks of unemployment compensation for workers who had exhausted their regular and extended unemployment benefits. Stated that the maximum duration of jobless benefits would depend upon the economic conditions in individual States, and only those States with insured unemployment rates of at least 6 percent would be eligible for the full 65

weeks of benefits. Approved Dec. 31, 1974. ([88 Stat. 1869; PL93-572](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Privacy Act of 1974.** Established a code of fair information practices that determine the appropriate use and dissemination of information on individuals, recorded and maintained by Federal departments and agencies. Approved Dec. 31, 1974. ([88 Stat. 1896; PL93-579](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Federal Rules of Evidence Act.** Established rules for proceedings in courts throughout the United States in order to ensure fairness and promote evidentiary support in the pursuit of truth and justice. Approved Jan. 2, 1975. ([88 Stat. 1926; PL93-595](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

**Trade Act of 1974.** Provided the President with broad authority to enter into trade agreements with other countries for the purpose of harmonizing, reducing or eliminating tariff and nontariff trade barriers. Established a congressional approval procedure, requiring action by both Houses for all nontariff barrier trade agreements. Approved Jan. 3, 1975. ([88 Stat. 1978; PL93-618](#)) ([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. 97<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 82-156 GOV. ProQuest Congressional, CRS-1982-GOV-0005

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