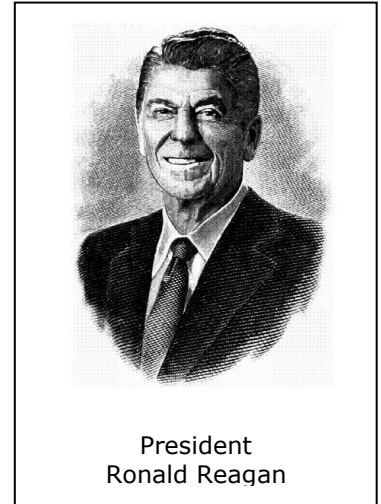


Ninety-Eighth Congress

January 3, 1983 – January 3, 1985

First Administration of Ronald Reagan

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Historical Background

The administration of President Ronald W. Reagan entered the 98th Congress with a broad and ambitious agenda. To start, he warned that Social Security needed reforming. To that end, Reagan signed the Social Security Amendments of 1983, based on compromises from a bipartisan Commission on Social Security. The President also advocated for a greater presence throughout the world and applied what would become known as the “Reagan Doctrine,” to combat the spread of communism. The President’s aggressive stance with respect to the Soviet Union necessarily led to sharp increases in defense spending. Regan also argued, however, that big government policies had contributed to the recession of which the country was slowly climbing out. In response, President Reagan decreased government services and cut income tax rates.

In 1984 Congress passed legislation that expanded the civil rights for certain historically disenfranchised populations, including the elderly and disabled, with the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act. Legislation was also enacted providing assistance to World War II and Vietnam veterans suffering from side effects as a result of exposure to toxic and radioactive substances during their years of service. Crime concerns were also addressed with the passage of the Comprehensive Crime Control Act, which created harsher penalties for violent crimes and drug trafficking under President Reagan’s war on drugs.

In November 1984 President Reagan faced reelection. He defeated his Democratic challenger, Walter Mondale, by carrying fifty-nine percent of the popular votes, along with forty-nine states in the Electoral College. Mondale was only able to carry forty percent of the popular vote and single state in the Electoral vote. President Reagan’s vote tally in the Electoral College was the largest margin of victory in any U.S. presidential election.

House	Senate
Majority Party: Democrat (270 seats)	Majority Party: Republican (55 seats)
Minority Party: Republican (165 seats)	Minority Party: Democrat (45 seats)
Other Parties: none	Other Parties: none
Speaker of the House: Thomas Phillip “Tip” O’Neill, Jr.	Majority Leader: Howard Baker

Sources:

Reagan, Ronald W. *State of the Union Message, Message from the President*. House, Jan. 25, 1983. 98th Congress, 1st Session, H. Doc. 98-1 (Y1.1/7:98-1) ProQuest Congressional, 13516 H.doc.1

Reagan, Ronald W. *State of the Union Message, Message from the President*. House, Jan. 25, 1984. 98th Congress, 2nd Session, H. Doc. 98-162 (Y1.1/7:98-162) ProQuest Congressional, 13570 H.doc.162

War or Peace?

Reagan Doctrine and the Cold War

Much of President Reagan's foreign policy during the 98th Congress reflected what came to be known as the "Reagan Doctrine." The doctrine set out to counter the influence of the Soviet Union and provided assistance, both covertly and overtly, to groups resisting the spread of communism. Beginning in 1981, the United States had been funneling aid to Nicaragua, where a loosely organized coalition of right-wing rebels known as the Contras were challenging the leftist Sandinista government that deposed long-time dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle in 1979. The campaign of support for the Contras was troubled almost from the start. The lack of any recognizable leadership hierarchy among the Contras meant that there was little accountability and stories of appalling human rights abuses were soon trickling out of the country. The first of several so-called Boland Amendments limiting or prohibiting federal aid to the Contras was enacted in 1982 and this would become the permanent policy of the United States with the passage of the third Boland Amendment in 1985.

In addition to financial and strategic support of anti-communist groups around the world, the U.S. led a full-scale invasion of the Caribbean Island nation of Grenada, called Operation Urgent Fury. President Reagan wanted to counter what was believed to be growing Soviet and communist-Cuban influence on the island nation after a coup d'état. On October 25, 1983, U.S. deployed 7,300 troops, assisted by the Caribbean Peace Force, against Grenadian and Cuban forces. The U.S. was able to gain control of the island, suffering 19 casualties, while the opposition suffered 65 casualties.

The United States also continued to grow its military assistance to the Afghan mujahideen fighting the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan under Operation Cyclone. As the campaign continued and support grew towards the Afghans, Operation Cyclone added important Congressional advocates and funding for the program expanded accordingly.

Lebanese Civil War

Despite relative successes under the Reagan Doctrine, the U.S. experienced a major setback and resistance from their presence in the Middle Eastern country of Lebanon. The United States was in Lebanon as part of the Multinational Force which had been deployed to provide security and



Senate Majority Leader
Howard H. Baker



Speaker of the House
Thomas Phillip "Tip"
O'Neill, Jr.

stability in order to restore Lebanese sovereignty subsequent to the negotiation of a cease fire between the government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1982. However, on April 18, 1983, a suicide bomber detonated a car bomb outside the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, killing 63. Then, on October 23, 1983, two truck bombs exploded outside of the Marine Corps barracks in Beirut, killing 241 American service members and 58 French paratroopers. The terrorist group "Islamic Jihad" claimed responsibility for both bombings, though a later court finding would ascribe culpability for the embassy bombing to the Lebanese Shia militia Hezbollah. Islamic Jihad had threatened attacks against more U.S. personnel if they did not leave and with Congressional support for U.S. participation in Lebanon falling, U.S. forces left Lebanon in February 1984. After the troop withdrawal, the U.S. navy fired shells at Druze and Syrian opposition forces.

Sources:

Committee on Armed Services, House. [*Full Committee Hearing on the Lessons Learned As a Result of the U.S. Military Operations in Grenada*](#). GPO, Jan. 24, 1984. 98th Congress, 2nd Session, Committee on Armed Services Serial No. 98-43. ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1984-ASH-0030

Select Committee on Intelligence, House. [*U.S. Intelligence Performance and the Sept. 20, 1984, Beirut Bombing*](#). GPO, Oct. 3, 1984. 98th Congress, 2nd Session, 84-H432-1. ProQuest Congressional, CMP-1984-ISH-0001

Shapiro, Sherry B. [*Reagan Doctrine: Selected References, 1979-1988*](#). Library Services Division (CRS), Apr. 1, 1988. 100th Congress, 2nd Session. ProQuest Congressional, CRS-1988-LSV-0085

Economic Trends and Conditions

President Reagan stated in his 1984 State of the Union, "We might well begin with common sense in Federal budgeting: Government spending no more than Government takes in." He stressed the vital need to reduce federal deficits, which could be done by "limiting the size and scope of the federal government." Despite a cutback in overall federal spending, President Reagan defended his defense spending policies, saying that national defense was solely the responsibility of the Federal government. He said his efforts allowed for more efficient use of federal money related to defense spending compared with previous administrations. President Reagan also stressed the need for low income taxes and budgetary reforms by proposing a constitutional amendment allowing the use of a line-item veto on appropriations bills, which he believed would "combat wasteful and extravagant spending."

In year previous to the 98th congress, the U.S. had experienced a crippling recession and was following a careful economic recovery path. In congressional testimony, Treasury Secretary Don Regan stated that unemployment levels drastically dropped from 10.7% in December 1982 to 8.2% by January 1984 and that 4 million more Americans were employed compared to 1982. He noted drastic interest rates spikes in the previous years, peaking at 21.5%, had since steadied at 11%, for the Prime Rate in

1984. Furthermore, he cited a rise in the Gross National Product of 6.1%, which was the second largest jump when compared to the previous twenty years. Secretary Regan stated that lowering income taxes was a way to help the economic recovery, supporting administration efforts such as lowering the top income tax bracket rate to 50%, reduction of capital gains rates, and the restructuring of tax depreciations to encourage capital spending.

Sources:

Joint Economic Committee. [1984 Economic Report of the President, Part 1](#). GPO, Jan. 26, 31, Feb. 2, 7, 9-10, 1984. 98th Congress, 2nd Session, S. Hrg. 98-873, pt. 1. ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1984-ECJ-0011

Reagan, Ronald W. [State of the Union Message, Message from the President](#). House, Jan. 25, 1984. 98th Congress, 2nd Session, H. Doc. 98-162. ProQuest Congressional, 13570 H.doc.162

Landmark U.S. Supreme Court Decisions

Missouri v. Hunter, held that a felon who committed first degree robbery with a deadly weapon was subject to sentencing and conviction for both the robbery and armed criminal action under a Missouri law, and this did not constitute Double Jeopardy, [459 U.S. 359](#) (1983)

Minneapolis Star & Tribune Co. v. Minnesota Commissioner of Revenue, held that a Minnesota tax scheme that singled out certain publications was in violation of the freedom of press, [460 U.S. 575](#) (1983)

Bob Jones University v. U.S., held that a religious university that was engaged in discriminatory acts concerning enrollment and the prohibition of interracial romantic relationships would lose its tax-exemption status, justifying that "not all burdens on religion are unconstitutional" under the Free Exercise Clause, [461 U.S. 574](#) (1983)

Oregon v. Bradshaw, concluded that once a suspect invokes his rights under *Miranda v. Arizona*, the police may not initiate questioning until the suspect has an attorney present or voluntarily approaches the police with further questions beyond a "necessary inquiry arising out of the incidents of the custodial relationship," [462 U.S. 1039](#) (1983)

City of Akron v. Akron Center for Reproductive Health, concluded that several provisions of an Ohio abortion law to be unconstitutional, including requirements for abortions to be performed only in hospitals, a 24-hour waiting period, age limits for woman, doctors informing patients of fetal development, the supposed health risks of abortion, and the availability of adoption and childbirth resources, [462 U.S. 416](#) (1983)

Planned Parenthood Assn. v. Ashcroft, held that not all abortions after 12 weeks of conception are required to be performed in a hospital in the state of Missouri, [462 U.S. 476](#) (1983)

Simopoulos v. Virginia, held that a Virginia law requiring all second trimester abortions to be performed at a hospital or a licensed outpatient facility was constitutional, [462 U.S. 506](#) (1983)

INS v. Chadha, held that the provision of the Immigration and Nationality Act that authorized a one-House veto in Congress for deportation votes was unconstitutional in that it violated the separation of powers standard, [462 U.S. 919](#) (1983)

Container Corporation of America v. Franchise Tax Board, held that California's application of the unitary business principle to appellant and its foreign subsidiaries was proper, California's use of the three-factor formula to apportion the income of the unitary business consisting of appellant and its foreign subsidiaries was fair, and that California had no obligation under the Foreign Commerce Clause to employ the "arm's-length" analysis used by the Federal Government and most foreign nations in evaluating the tax consequences of intercorporate relationships, [463 US 159](#) (1983)

Solem v. Helm, held that in a case where a criminal was convicted of multiple minor offenses over the course of twenty years, all of which were not crimes against people, the issuance of a life sentence without parole was considered cruel and unusual punishment and deemed unconstitutional, [463 U.S. 277](#) (1983)

Jones v. United States, concluded that verdicts of not guilty by reason of insanity are sufficiently probative of mental illness and dangerousness to justify commitment of the acquittee for the purposes of treatment and the protection of society. Such verdicts establish that defendants committed an act constituting a criminal offense, and that he committed the act because of mental illness. Indefinite commitment of an insanity acquittee, based on proof of insanity by only a preponderance of the evidence, comports with due process, [463 U.S. 354](#) (1983)

Mueller v. Allen, held that a Minnesota law that allowed for state tax deductions for the purchases of materials for children's elementary and secondary school education was not in violation of the Establishment Clause, [463 U.S. 388](#) (1983)

Bolger v. Youngs Drug Products Corp., held that the prohibition of the mailing of unsolicited advertisements for contraceptives is unconstitutional as applied to appellee's commercial mailings, [463 US 60](#) (1983)

Marsh v. Chambers, upheld the Nebraska chaplaincy practice, where a state chaplain offered prayers at legislative sessions and was paid from public funding, asserting that it had been customary since the First Congress, [463 U.S. 783](#) (1983)

Sony Corp. of America v. Universal City Studios, Inc., concluded that manufacturers of home video recording machines could not be liable for contributory copyright infringement for the potential uses by its purchasers, because the devices were sold for legitimate purposes and had substantial non-infringing uses. Personal use of the machines to record broadcast television programs for later viewing constituted fair use. Reversed by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, [464 U.S. 417](#) (1984)

Lynch v. Donnelly, held that a holiday display that depicted a nativity scene was not in violation of the Establishment Clause, [465 U.S. 668](#) (1984)

Keeton v. Hustler, held that a libel suit, in which the plaintiff sued in New Hampshire due to statute of limitations reasons, had sufficient grounds even though most of the circulation of the libel damages were incurred elsewhere, [465 U.S. 770](#) (1984)

Calder v. Jones, held that a libel suite, in which the plaintiff sued in California due to her residency, had sufficient grounds even though the publication was national, and the defendants were based in Florida, [465 U.S. 783](#) (1984)

Immigration and Naturalization Service v. Delgado, concluded that unless circumstances of an encounter between law enforcement and citizens are so intimidating as to demonstrate that a reasonable person would have believed he was not free to leave if he had not responded, one cannot say that the encounter qualifies as detention under the Fourth Amendment, [466 U.S. 210](#) (1984)

Stickland v. Washington, held that in order to determine that a person's Sixth Amendment right to counsel was violated, counsel's defense must be deemed unreasonably lacking and prejudicial, [466 U.S. 668](#) (1984)

Los Angeles City Council v. Taxpayers for Vincent, held that a ban on the posting of political signs on public property was constitutional, explaining that freedom of speech was not being suppressed due to the fact that other forms of communication were still available to disseminate information on political candidates, [466 U.S. 789](#) (1984)

Nix v. Williams, held that in a particular case where information gathered from a guilty party was obtained prior to him being read his Miranda rights was admissible. The guilty party gave up the location of his victim's body, but the discovery of the body was eminent, even without the given information, [467 U.S. 431](#) (1984)

New York v. Quarles, held that in a case where information surrounding the location of an assailant's gun was obtained prior to him being read his Miranda rights was admissible. The issue of public safety was determined to be immediately pressing, and therefore the officer's actions were constitutional, [467 U.S. 649](#) (1984)

Hishon v. King & Spalding, held that discrimination in the workplace, in this case, the denial of partnership in a law firm, on the basis of sex was in violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, [467 U.S. 69](#) (1984)

Regan v. Wald, held that the prohibition of travel to Cuba under Treasury Department Regulation 201(b) was constitutional under the statutory basis of the Trading With the Enemy Act when travel is banned due to national emergency, [468 U.S. 222](#) (1984)

Berkemer v. McCarty, held that Miranda warnings must be given to those who perpetrate misdemeanor offenses in order for their testimony to be admissible, [468 U.S. 420](#) (1984)

Hudson v. Palmer, held that the Fourth Amendment prohibition against unreasonable searches and seizures does not apply to those in prison, [468 U.S. 517](#) (1984)

Block v. Rutherford, held that prohibiting inmates from having contact visits with their families, as well as the prohibition of being present when their cells were searched, were reasonable policies and allowable, [468 U.S. 576](#) (1984)

Roberts v. United States Jaycees, upheld Minnesota's antidiscrimination law prohibiting a private organization from excluding a person from membership based on sex, because the state had a compelling interest in prohibiting discrimination which outweighed the First Amendment right of freedom of association, [468 U.S. 609](#) (1984)

Segura v. United States, held that evidence obtained prior to the physical possession of a search warrant was admissible, in that for this case, there was an independent source for the evidence and disconnected from the initial entry, [468 U.S. 796](#) (1984)

United States v. Leon, held that evidence obtained on the basis of an incorrectly issued search warrant was admissible, [468 U.S. 897](#) (1984)

Massachusetts v. Sheppard, held that evidence obtained when the officers mistakenly thought they had a valid warrant was admissible, [468 U.S. 981](#) (1984)

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

1983 Events

- **Jan. 3:** The volcano Kilauea begins a slow eruption on the Big Island, Hawaii
- **Feb. 28:** The final episode of M*A*S*H is broadcast and breaks records as the most watched episode ever
- **Mar. 23:** [President Reagan proposes the Strategic Defense Initiative, also known as the "Star Wars," initiative, a plan that would introduce technology to intercept missiles from space](#)
- **Apr. 18:** [The U.S. Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon is bombed, killing 63 people](#)
- **May 17:** [Israel, U.S., and Lebanon sign an agreement for Israel to withdraw from Lebanese lands](#)
- **May 20:** [Two separate research groups independently reported that a novel retrovirus may be the cause of AIDS](#)
- **June 18:** [Astronaut Sally Ride becomes the first American woman in space aboard the Space Shuttle Challenger](#)

- **July 24:** [The start of the Sri Lankan Black July riots, an anti-Tamil movement, that kills between 400-3,000 people on the island nation, and considered the start of the Sri Lankan Civil War](#)
- **Aug. 30:** [Astronaut Guion Bluford becomes the first African-American in space aboard the Space Shuttle Challenger](#)
- **Sept. 6:** [The Soviet Union admits its role in shooting down Korean Air Lines Flight 007, stating the flight entered Soviet airspace, killing all 269 aboard, including U.S. Congressman Larry McDonald](#)
- **Sept. 26:** Nuclear war is averted when Soviet officer Stanislav Petrov correctly identifies a warning of attack by U.S. missiles as a false alarm
- **Oct. 19:** [Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop is assassinated along with 40 others during a military coup](#)
- **Oct. 23:** [Marine Corps Barracks in Beirut, Lebanon bombed by terrorist group Islamic Jihad, killing 241 Marine Corps servicemen, 58 French paratroopers, and 6 Lebanese](#)
- **Oct. 25:** The United States invades Grenada to quell unrest in that country after a coup d'état installed a military government
- **Nov. 2:** [Martin Luther King, Jr. Day becomes as a federal holiday](#)
- **Dec. 4:** [U.S. Naval Aviators Lt. Mark Lange and Lt. Bobby Goodman are shot down over Lebanon and captured by Syrians, with Lt. Lange dying of his injuries and Lt. Goodman being released 30-days later after an intervention by Jesse Jackson](#)

1984 Events

- **1984:** Crack cocaine, a cheap, smokable form of the drug, is introduced in Los Angeles, California and will soon spread across the nation in what became known as the crack epidemic
- **Jan. 10:** [The U.S. and Vatican restore full diplomatic relations](#)
- **Feb. 26:** [U.S. Marine Corps pull out of Beirut, Lebanon](#)
- **Mar. 16:** [Terrorist group Islamic Jihad kidnaps CIA Beirut station chief William Francis Buckley, who dies while being held hostage](#)
- **Apr. 23:** [Researchers officially announce the discovery of the AIDS virus](#)
- **May 8:** [The Soviet Union announces it will boycott the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles](#)
- **May 31:** Six inmates escape from the death row facility in Mecklenburg Correctional Facility, Virginia, with all eventually being captured and put to death in following years
- **June 8:** [An F5 tornado touches down near Barneveld, Wisconsin, killing 9 and injuring 200 people, with \\$25 million in damages](#)
- **July 25:** Russian Cosmonaut Svetlana Savitskaya becomes the first woman to perform a space walk
- **Aug. 4:** Russian submarine K-278 Komsomlets reaches a record depth of 1,020 meters
- **Sept. 20:** [Lebanese Shi'i militia Hezbollah detonates a car-bomb at the U.S. Embassy annex in Beirut, Lebanon killing 24 people](#)

- **Sept. 26:** [The United Kingdom and the People's Republic of China sign the initial agreement to return Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty in 1997](#)
- **Oct. 31:** Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi is assassinated by her two Sikh bodyguards, sparking anti-Sikh protests, that leave between 10,000-20,000 Sikhs dead around the capital of Delhi and surrounding areas with Hindu populations
- **Nov. 6:** [President Reagan defeats Democratic candidate Walter Mondale, carrying fifty-nine percent of the popular vote, the highest since President Nixon's 1972 victory](#)
- **Dec. 3:** [The Union Carbide factory in Bhopal, India has a methyl isocyanate leak that initially kills 8,000 and injures half a million people in what is considered the worst industrial accident in history](#)

Sources:

["Agreement of the Future of Hong Kong."](#) Congressional Record, 98th Congress, 2nd Session (Sept. 28, 1984) Vol. 130, pp. 27754-27755. ProQuest Congressional, CR-1984-0928

Coleman, Kevin J. [1984 Presidential Election: The Platforms Presented by the Democratic Party \(Mondale/Ferraro\) and the Republican Party \(Reagan/Bush\) with Cross Referenced Index.](#) Government Division (CRS), Oct. 23, 1984. 98th Congress, 2nd Session. ProQuest Congressional, CRS-1984-GOV-0049

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Committee on Armed Services. Senate. [Situation in Lebanon.](#) GPO, Oct. 25, 31, 1983. 98th Congress, 1st Session, S. Hrg. 98-612. ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1983-SAS-0011

Committee on Energy and Commerce. House. [Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome \(AIDS\).](#) GPO, Sept. 17, 1984. 98th Congress, 2nd Session. Committee on Energy and Commerce Serial No. 98-185. ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1984-HEC-0068

Committee on Foreign Affairs. House. [Strategic Defense and Anti-Satellite Weapons.](#) GPO, Apr. 25, 1984, 98th Congress, 2nd Session, Committee on Foreign Affairs (Y4.F76/2:S.hrg.98-750). ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1984-FOR-0004

Committee on Foreign Affairs. House. [Crisis in Lebanon: U.S. Policy and Alternative Legislative Proposals.](#) GPO, Feb. 2, 1984. 98th Congress, 2nd Session. ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1984-FOA-0011

Committee on Foreign Affairs. House. [Implications of the Industrial Disaster in Bhopal, India.](#) GPO, Dec. 12, 1984. 98th Congress, 2nd Session. ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1984-FOA-0064

Committee on Foreign Relations. Senate. [Nomination of William A. Wilson.](#) GPO, Feb. 2, 1984. 98th Congress, 2nd Session, S. Hrg. 98-586. ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1984-FOR-0016

Committee on Foreign Relations. Senate. [Situation in Grenada.](#) GPO, Oct. 27, 1983. 98th Congress, 1st Session, S. Hrg. 98-491. ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1983-FOR-0032

Committee on Science and Technology. House. [Flight of STS-7 with Astronauts Capt. Robert L. Crippen, Capt. Frederick H. Hauck, Col. John M. Fabian, Dr. Sally K. Ride, and Dr. Norman E. Thagard.](#) GPO, July 19, 1983. 98th Congress, 1st Session, Committee on Science and Technology Serial No. 13.(Y4.Sci2:98/13) ProQuest Congressional, HRG-198-TEC-0011

Committee on Science and Technology. House. [Aircraft Navigation Technology and Errors](#). GPO, Sept. 19, 1983. 98th Congress, 1st Session, Committee on Science and Technology Serial No. 33. ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1983-TEC-0061

Committee on Science and Technology. House. [Flight of STS-8 with Astronauts Capt. Richard H. Truly, Comdr. Daniel C. Brandenstein, Lt. Comdr. Dale A. Gardner, Lt. Col. Guion S. Bluford, Jr., and William Edgar Thornton, M.D.](#) GPO, Sept. 27, 1983. 98th Congress, 1st Session, Committee on Science and Technology Serial No. 39. ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1983-TEC-0031

Johnson, Judith A. [AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome](#). Science Policy Research Division (CRS), Dec. 2, 1983. 98th Congress, 1st Session, IB83162. ProQuest Congressional, CRS-1983-SPR-0033

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["Public Law 98-144."](#) (97 Stat. 917; Nov. 2, 1983). ProQuest Congressional

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Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations, Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, Committee on Foreign Affairs. House. [Human Rights Implications of the Sinhalese-Tamil Conflict in Sri Lanka](#). GPO, Apr. 2, 1984. 98th Congress, 2nd Session, Committee on Foreign Affairs (Y4.F76/1:H88/32). ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1984-FOA-0041

Subcommittee on International Operations, Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, Committee on Foreign Affairs. House. [U.S. Embassy Bombing in Beirut](#). GPO, June 28, 1983. 98th Congress, 1st Session, Committee on Foreign Affairs (Y4.F76/1:Un35/59). ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1983-FOA-0016

["Terrorism—A Continuing Threat."](#) Congressional Record, 98th Congress, 2nd Session (Mar. 27, 1984) Vol. 130, pp. 6781-6782. ProQuest Congressional, CR-1984-0327

["Why Should Not the Federal Government Help a Disaster Stricken Community?"](#) Congressional Record, 98th Congress, 2nd Session (June 11, 1984) Vol. 130, pp. 15605-15606. ProQuest Congressional, CR-1984-0611

Major Acts

Social Security Amendments of 1983. Made comprehensive changes to the Social Security coverage, finance structure. The law mandated Social Security to include all employees of tax-exempt to nonprofit organizations; increased benefits for disabled widows and widowers who become eligible for benefits before age 60; eliminated any remaining gender-based distinctions; increased tax rates on self-employment income equal to the combined employer-employee rates and provided credits against tax liability offset part of the increase; and raised unreduced retirement benefits in two stages to 67 by the year 2027, among others. Approved Apr.20, 1983. ([97 Stat. 65: PL98-21](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Recognized Martin Luther King, Jr. Day as federal holiday to be observed on the third Monday in January. Approved Nov. 2, 1983. ([97 Stat. 917; PL98-144](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

Deficit Reduction Act of 1984. Repealed scheduled 15% net interest exclusion (\$900 cap); reduced benefits from income averaging; reduced tax benefits for property leased by tax exempt entities; temporarily extended telephone excise tax (through 1987); and increased depreciation lives for real property from 15 years to 18 years. Approved July 8, 1984. ([98 Stat. 494; PL98-369](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act. Improved access for handicapped and elderly individuals to registration facilities and polling places for Federal elections by requiring access to polling places used in Federal elections and available registration and voting aids. Approved Sept. 28, 1984. ([98 Stat 1678; PL98-435](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

Comprehensive Crime Control Act (Continuing Appropriations for FY85). Enhanced sentences for felons who commit crimes with firearms, if convicted of certain crimes three or more times; created the United States Sentencing Commission; extended the Secret Services' jurisdiction to include credit card and computer fraud; increased federal penalties for marijuana related crimes; added the crime of hostage-taking to the criminal code; and reinstated the federal death penalty. Approved Oct. 12, 1984. ([98 Stat 1976; PL98-473](#))

Veteran's Dioxin and Radiation Exposure Compensation Standards Act. Created a process to handle claims of veterans exposed to Agent Orange in Vietnam, low-level ionizing radiation from atomic weapons atmospheric testing program in the 1950's and early 1960's, and from the occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It also required the Administrator of Veterans Affairs to publish regulations assuring the fair and consistent adjudication of exposure claims. Approved Oct. 24, 1984. ([98 Stat. 2725; PL98-542](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984. Established national policy concerning cable communications by that created franchise procedures and standards that encouraged growth and development of cable systems and assured cable systems were responsive to the needs and interests of the local community; set guidelines for Federal, State, and local authorities related to cable systems regulation; established processes for franchise renewal to protect cable operators from unfair denials of renewal where the operator's past performance and proposal for future performance meet standards; and promoted competition in cable communications and minimized unnecessary regulation that imposed an undue economic burden on cable systems. Approved Oct. 30, 1984. ([98 Stat. 2779; PL98-549](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

Trade and Tariff Act of 1984. Clarified conditions for going after unfair trade cases under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974; provided bilateral trade negotiating authority for the U.S.-Israel Free Trade Agreement and the

U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement, and established procedures to be followed for congressional approval of future bilateral trade agreements. Approved Oct. 30, 1984. ([98 Stat. 2948; PL98-573](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

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