

## Lists of Important Enactments by Congress, 1991-2014

### Divided party control

- 1991-92 \**PERSIAN GULF RESOLUTION*. To roll  
Bush 41 back Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. 1991.  
D Cong \**Surface transportation act (ISTEA)*. \$151  
billion for highways, mass transit. 1991.  
\**Civil Rights Act of 1991*. To allow lawsuits against job  
discrimination.  
\**Omnibus energy act*. To restructure electricity industry,  
spur conservation, encourage new fuels. 1992.  
\**Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty ratified*. 1992.  
\**Economic aid package for ex-Soviet republics*. 1992.  
\**Cable-TV regulation*. To impose new rate and service  
requirements. Over Bush's veto. 1992.  
\**California water policy*. To switch water from agri-  
business to cities and environment. 1992.

### Unified party control

- 1993-94 \**OMNIBUS DEFICIT REDUCTION ACT*.  
Clinton \$496 billion savings over 5 years; top tax  
D Cong bracket to rise to 36% plus 10% surcharge;  
hike in Earned Income Tax Credit. 1993.  
\**NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT  
(NAFTA) APPROVED*. Mexico and Canada. 1993.  
\**Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993*. Mandated 12  
weeks of unpaid leave for family emergencies.  
\**Motor Voter act*. To spur voter registration through use of  
driver, welfare, military-recruitment offices. 1993.  
\**National Service act*. "AmeriCorps" plan to offer college  
money in exchange for community service work. 1993.  
\**Reform of college-student loan financing*. Money to be  
provided directly rather than through banks. 1993.  
\**Brady bill*. To require 5-day waiting period for purchase  
of handguns. 1993.  
\**Goals 2000*. To establish national education goals. 1994.  
\**Omnibus crime act*. Ban on assault weapons; expansion  
of death penalty; new prison construction, police  
officers, prevention programs. 1994.  
\**California desert protection*. To create largest wilderness  
area outside Alaska. 1994.  
\**Abortion clinic access*. Criminal penalties to combat  
violence at abortion clinics. 1994.  
\**General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)  
approved*. To lower tariffs among 124 nations and  
create World Trade Organization (WTO). 1994.

- 1995-96 \**Curb on unfunded mandates*. New protection  
Clinton for state and local governments. 1995.  
R Cong \**Congressional Accountability Act*. Federal  
labor laws to apply to Congress itself. 1995.  
\**Lobbying reform*. New disclosure requirements. 1995.  
\**Curb on shareholder lawsuits*. To curb frivolous suits  
against flagging firms. Over Clinton's veto. 1995.  
\**WELFARE REFORM*. End of 61-year federal welfare  
guarantee to low-income women and children; block  
grants and regulatory leeway to states instead. 1996.  
\**TELECOMMUNICATIONS REFORM*. To spur  
competition in telephone, video, data services; to break  
up local telephone and cable-TV monopolies. 1996.

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- \**Agriculture deregulation.* To undo farm subsidies and move the industry toward free market. 1996.
- \**Line-item veto.* By statute, empowered president to kill individual spending items. (Later struck down by the judiciary.) 1996.
- \**Anti-terrorism act.* New controls on borders, funds of suspected groups; curbs on death-row appeals. 1996.
- \**\$24 billion spending cuts in budget deal for fiscal 1996.* Ending the shut-down-the-government crisis. 1996.
- \**Health insurance portability act.* Kassebaum-Kennedy Act. Insurance to be portable across jobs. 1996.
- \**Minimum wage hike.* From \$4.25 to \$5.15. Bundled with tax breaks for business. 1996.
- \**Overhaul of pesticides regulation.* 1996.
- \**Overhaul of safe drinking water legislation.* 1996.
- \**Immigration reform.* To cut illegal immigration through border controls, deportation, workplace ID's. 1996.

1997-98 \**DEAL TO BALANCE THE BUDGET BY 2002.*  
Clinton \$263 billion in spending cuts; \$95 billion in  
R Cong tax cuts; \$33 billion for new children's health  
insurance; new \$500 child tax credit. 1997.

- \**Chemical Weapons Convention ratified.* 1997.
- \**Overhaul of Food and Drug Administration.* To expedite approval of new drugs. 1997.
- \**Adoption of foster children.* To ease the process. 1997.
- \**Transportation construction act.* \$218 billion for highways and mass transit. 1998.
- \**Overhaul of Internal Revenue Service.* More rights and protections to taxpayers. 1998.
- \**NATO expansion ratified.* To add Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic. 1998.
- \**Reform of public housing.* New decision-making leeway to local authorities. 1998.
- \**100,000 new school teachers.* A Clinton plan. 1998.

- 1999-2000 \**Banking reform.* Authorized cross-owner-  
Clinton ship of banks, brokerages, insurance  
R Cong companies. 1999.
- \**Y2K planning.* To limit firms' liability for new-millennium computer mixups. 1999.
  - \**Ed-flex program.* New state leeway in spending federal education money. 1999.
  - \**Permanent Normal Trading Relations (PNTR) with China.* 2000.
  - \**Florida Everglades restoration act.* 2000.
  - \**Community Renewal and New Markets Act.* \$25 billion over 10 years for development in poor locales. 2000.

## Unified party control

2001-02 \**BUSH TAX CUT.* \$1.35 trillion over 10 years;  
Bush 43 rate cuts; phaseout of estate tax; ease of  
R Cong marriage penalty; expansion of child tax  
(early 2001) credit. 2001.

## Divided party control

- 2001-02 \**USE OF FORCE RESOLUTION*. After  
Bush 43 September 11, authorized president to use  
D Senate all necessary force against terrorism,  
(after notably in Afghanistan. 2001.  
May 01) \**USA PATRIOT ACT*. Broad new authority  
R House to president to track, arrest, and prosecute  
domestic terrorists. 2001.
- \**Airline bailout*. \$15 billion to help stabilize the industry  
after September 11. 2001.
- \**Airline security*. New government program to hire 30,000  
airport screeners. 2001.
- \**\$40 billion emergency spending*. For defense, domestic  
security, recovery of New York.
- \**Education reform*. To require annual student testing;  
\$263 billion in new funds. 2001.
- \**IRAQ RESOLUTION*. Authorized use of US force  
against Iraq, regardless of UN view. 2002.
- \**NEW HOMELAND SECURITY DEPARTMENT*.  
Combined parts of 22 existent agencies. 2002.
- \**Campaign finance reform*. To ban soft money and certain  
pre-election ads. 2002.
- \**Agriculture subsidies*. \$180 billion over 10 years. A  
rollback of 1996 deregulation. 2002.
- \**Corporate Responsibility Act*. To regulate the accounting  
industry and crack down on corporate fraud. After the  
collapse of Enron. 2002.
- \**Fast-track trade authority*. New authority to president to  
negotiate foreign trade deals. 2002.
- \**Election reform*. New nationwide standards; 3.9 billion to  
help the states meet them. 2002.
- \**Terrorism insurance*. \$100 billion back-up guarantee  
against future attacks; to aid insurance and real estate  
industries. 2002.
- \**Commission created to investigate September 11 attacks*.  
2002.

## Unified party control

- 2003-04 \**MEDICARE REFORM*. New prescription drug  
Bush 43 benefit; large new role for private health  
R Cong plans. To cost a projected \$400 billion over a  
decade. 2003.
- \**\$350 billion tax cut*. Bush administration plan. Cuts for  
families, investors, businesses. 2003.
- \**AIDS funding*. \$15 billion to fight AIDS in Africa and the  
Caribbean. 2003.
- \**Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003*.
- \**\$87.5 billion special defense funding*. To finance military  
operations and reconstruction in Afghanistan and Iraq.  
2003.
- \**Healthy forests law*. To prevent fires by expanding forest-  
thinning operations and limiting anti-logging  
injunctions in national forests. 2003.
- \**Corporate tax overhaul*. \$143 billion in tax breaks for  
businesses over ten years offset by loophole closures  
and other revenue raisers. 2004.
- \**Disaster relief*. \$14 billion for hurricane relief in Florida  
and other states, drought relief in farm areas. 2004.
- \**Unborn Victims of Violence Act*. "Laci and Connor's  
law." Makes it a crime to harm a fetus during  
commission of a violent federal crime. 2004.

## Divided party control

2007-08 \**Minimum wage hike*. To \$7.25 per hour in  
Bush 43 three stages over two years. Combined with  
D Cong \$4.84 billion in tax breaks for small  
businesses. 2007.

\**Implementation of recommendations of the 9/11  
commission*. Includes reallocation of homeland security  
grants; screening of air and sea cargo. 2007.

\**Ethics and lobbying reform*. New restrictions on gifts,  
meals, and travel supplied by lobbyists, and on the  
“revolving door” into the private sector. 2007.

\**Overhaul of college student aid programs*. Subsidies to  
private lenders cut; grants to needy students increased.  
2007.

\**Energy conservation*. Includes boost in fuel-efficiency  
standards for automobiles, biofuels subsidies, phase-out  
of incandescent light bulbs. 2007.

## Unified party control

\**Intelligence overhaul*. Restructuring of government  
intelligence services; new intelligence czar to  
coordinate anti-terrorism activities. 2004.

2005-06 \**Bankruptcy reform*. Makes it harder for  
Bush 43 consumers to shed their debts. 2005.

R Cong \**Class Action Fairness Act*. Shifts class-action  
suits to federal courts, making it harder to  
bring them against businesses. 2005.

\**\$286 billion transportation measure*. Funds for highways,  
mass transit, a record 6,371 pet member projects. 2005.

\**Energy measure*. \$14.5 billion in tax breaks to encourage  
energy production and efficiency. 2005.

\**Central American Free Trade Agreement*. Lowers  
barriers to U.S. trade and investment relations with five  
Central American countries and the Dominican  
Republic. 2005.

\**Hurricane assistance after Katrina*. \$29 billion in relief  
money plus altered federal policies to spur  
redevelopment. 2005.

\**Pension reform*. To shore up often-shaky private  
retirement programs for 44 million workers and  
retirees. 2006.

\**Military Commissions Act*. Sets rules for the government  
to prosecute terrorism suspects in military tribunals.  
2006.

\**Port security*. \$5 billion six-year package to shore up  
security at U.S. ports. 2006.

\**700 miles of new fencing authorized for U.S.-Mexico  
border*. 2006.

\**Gulf of Mexico opened to oil and gas drilling*. 8.3 million  
acres. 2006.

\**Trade measures*. To normalize trade with Vietnam and  
extend trade benefits to four Andean nations, sub-  
Saharan countries, and Haiti. 2006.

\**Postal Service reform*. To stabilize postage rates, ease  
pension costs, improve efficiency. 2006.

\**India pact*. Agreement allowing the U.S. to share civilian  
nuclear technology with India. 2006.

## Divided party control

- \**HOUSING RELIEF PROGRAM*. Includes \$300 billion authorization to insure home mortgages; rescue and tightened regulation of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. 2008.
- \**\$700 BAILOUT OF THE FINANCIAL SECTOR*. Combined with \$150 billion in tax breaks. 2008.
- \**\$168 billion economic stimulus package*. Includes rebates to taxpayers, tax incentives for business investment. 2008.
- \**Agriculture subsidy bill*. \$307 billion over five years. Enacted over Bush veto. 2008.
- \**Domestic surveillance*. Major expansion of federal anti-terrorism surveillance powers asked by Bush; telecoms immunized against liability for previous wiretapping. 2008.
- \**New G.I. bill for veterans*. \$62.8 billion over 11 years to guarantee a four-year college education. 2008.
- \**Nuclear trade agreement with India*. Gives India access to U.S. civilian nuclear technology. 2008.
- \**Guarantee of mental illness insurance*. Insurance companies required to cover mental and physical illnesses equally. 2008.

## Unified party control

- 2009-10 \**\$787 BILLION STIMULUS MEASURE TO Obama JUMP-START THE ECONOMY*. Many ingredients, including \$288 billion in tax cuts; credits for renewable energy, home buying, and college tuition; spurs to education reform; investments in green technologies, clean water, electric grid; a total of \$70 billion for energy and the environment; support for unemployment benefits and food stamps. 2009.
- D Cong \**Expansion of State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)*. 2009.
- \**Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act*. Mandated equal pay for women in workplace. 2009.
- \**Credit card bill of rights*. New restrictions on credit card industry. 2009.
- \**Tobacco regulation*. New authority to FDA to regulate contents and marketing of tobacco products. 2009.
- \**Expansion of national and community service programs*. Including AmeriCorps. Participation to be tripled. 2009.
- \**Expansion of hate crimes law*. To cover attacks based on gender, gender identity, sexual orientation and disability. 2009.
- \**Public lands preservation*. Over 2 million acres in the West set aside as protected wilderness. 2009.
- \**AFFORDABLE CARE ACT*. Long-sought commitment to national health insurance. Individual mandate, guaranteed insurance regardless of pre-existing conditions, state insurance exchanges, expansion of Medicaid, all to cost an estimated \$1 trillion over ten years. 2010.
- \**FINANCIAL SERVICES REGULATION*. Sweeping overhaul of the industry. To create a process to assess and mitigate risk incurred by large financial units; plan for faltering institutions; augment transparency; create a new consumer protection agency. 2010.

## Divided party control

2011-12 \**DEBT CEILING DEAL*. Bipartisan  
Obama compromise to raise the debt ceiling, and to  
D Senate cut government spending by \$2.1 trillion in  
R House two stages--\$900 billion immediately, and  
\$1.2 trillion via decisions delegated to a  
congressional supercommittee or else via a stipulated  
sequester of domestic and military spending if that  
committee couldn't later come to an agreement (it  
couldn't). 2011.

\**Modernization of patent law*. To cut an application  
backlog, make obtaining patents easier, align US law  
with other countries. 2011.

\**Trade agreements with Colombia, Panama, South Korea*.  
2011.

\**Ban on insider trading by members of Congress* 2012.

\**Jumpstart Our Business Startups (JOBS) Act*. To ease  
small businesses' access to investments and capital  
markets. 2012.

\**Normalization of trade relations with Russia*, including  
the "Magnitsky Act" banning certain rights abusers  
from traveling or banking in the U.S. 2012.

\**FISCAL CLIFF DEAL*. Income and other taxes hiked on  
the high brackets; Bush tax cuts of 2001 made  
permanent for the bulk of taxpayers; capital gains and  
dividend taxes set permanently at 20%; estate tax set  
permanently at 40% with a \$5 million exemption; the  
Alternative Minimum Tax permanently patched to  
inflation. (enacted in early January 2013 at the tail end  
of the lame-duck session of the 112th). 2013.

2013-14 \**Superstorm Sandy aid*. \$60.2 billion for  
Obama insurance backup, homeowners, businesses,  
D Senate infrastructure, shorelines, local governments.  
R House 2013.

\**Violence Against Women Act*. Renewal of  
1994 program plus extension of protections to LGBT  
victims, American Indians, illegal immigrants. 2013.

\**Overhaul of student loan program*. Shift from a fixed  
interest rate to variable rates pegged to financial market  
trading. 2013.

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\**Student loan overhaul*. Government to be the sole  
provider of college student loans; existing program  
subsidizing private lenders killed. 2010.

\**BIPARTISAN TAX DEAL*. Bush tax cuts of 2001 and  
2003 extended two years for all income levels; estate  
tax pegged at 35%; Social Security withholding tax  
reduced for one year; unemployment benefits  
expanded. 2010.

\**New START treaty ratified*. Nuclear arms agreement with  
Russia. 2010.

\**Repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell*. Ended the military's  
restrictive policy on gays. 2010.

\**Regulation of food safety*. Major new authority to the  
FDA. 2010.

\**Help to 9/11 first responders*. \$4.2 billion aid to fire  
fighters and others suffering health problems due to  
World Trade Center attack of 2001. 2010.

- \**Curb sexual assaults in the military.* Overhaul of process to protect victims (part of defense authorization bill). 2013.
- \**Agriculture program.* Five-year authorization; direct crop payments replaced by new risk management design; food stamps trimmed somewhat. 2014.
- \**Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA).* \$12.3 billion over ten years to back new port, dam, flood-protection projects; a new process to curb congressional earmarking. 2014.
- \**Overhaul of Department of Veterans Affairs.* \$16.3 billion to curb long waits in facilities, privatize certain care. 2014.
- \**Arm and equip Syria rebels to fight against ISIL* (part of short-term continuing resolution). 2014.
- \**Flexibility for multi-employer pension plans.* To ward off crisis; allows cuts in certain promised benefits to shore up plans from collapse (part of “cromnibus” funding bill). 2014.
- \**Campaign finance loosening.* A hike in the ceiling on contributions by wealthy individuals to the parties, allowing a tenfold increase in the size of donations (part of “cromnibus” funding bill). 2014.