

PERIOD 9 TIMELINE: 1980-present¹

“The ‘culture war’ was another name for a long-standing political struggle, dating to the 1920s, between religious traditionalists and secular liberals. This time, however, Americans struggled over these questions in the long shadow of the sixties, which had taken on an exaggerated meaning in the nation’s politics. Against the backdrop of globalization, American politics in the 1990s and early 200s careened back and forth between contests over divisive social issues and concern over the nation’s economic future.” Historian James Henretta, *America’s History*, p. 1012-1013

1980: Moral Majority registers two million new voters

1980: Ronald Reagan elected by new coalition—suburbanites, southern whites, Christian fundamentalists, Catholics, working class whites (Reagan Democrats)

1981: Economic Recovery Tax Act—23% tax cut, AKA Reaganomics/Supply-Side Economics

1981: HIV identified as a new virus. 100,000 Americans killed in the next decade.

1982: High interest rates by Fed cuts inflation, but also creates economic recession.

1985: USSR reforms with *perestroika* and *glasnost*.

1986: Rehnquist named Chief Justice. Beginning of conservative Supreme Court.

1988: George H.W. Bush elected President

1989: Fall of the Berlin Wall; Ms. Eng sleeps through it. Woke up in late afternoon not understanding what all the excitement was about. *Education indeed wasted on the young. . .*

1991: USSR dissolves, Russian Republic established.

1991: Persian Gulf War

1991: The World Wide Web introduced

1991-1992: Economic recession

1992: Bill Clinton elected President on a message of economic recovery.

1992: *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* allows a law declaring a 24-hour waiting period before an abortion.

1994: Clinton plan for universal health care fails

1994: Republic Resurgence—Republicans win midterm elections in overwhelming numbers. Led by Newt Gingrich and the “Contract with America”

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1996: Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) signed into law

1998: Clinton impeached

2000: George W Bush elected.

2001: September 11th terrorist attacks; war in Afghanistan.

2001 and 2003: Bush tax cuts

2003: US invasion of Iraq

2004: Facebook launched, but only available with college address.

2005: Bush announces plan to partially privatize Social Security. Fails to gain traction.

2008: Economic Recession, TARP bails out banks (\$750 billion), election of Barack Obama

2009: Economic Stimulus package of \$787 billion; organization of the Tea Party

2010: Affordable Health Care Act passed, becomes focus of Republican ire

2010: *Citizens United* case declares campaign donations a protected form of free speech.

2013: DOMA repealed in *United States v. Windsor*

KEY ECONOMIC VOCAB:

- **Supply-side economics:** economic theory that reduces tax rates on wealth Americans to encourage investment and economic growth. Derided by many as “Voodoo Economics” or “Trickle-down Economics”
- **Budget deficit, trade deficit, national debt:** As a result of globalization, Republican tax cuts, and increased military spending, the national debt and deficit skyrocketed during most of this era, with the only exception being a budget surplus during the economic boom of the late 1990s.
- **Deregulation:** Policy of scaling back protections for workers, environment, or consumers to spur economic growth. Includes deregulation of financial services industry, such as repealing Glass-Steagal in the late 1990s. The desirable amount of government regulation over industries continues to sharply divide the political parties, such as the Affordable Care Act’s regulations on the healthcare industry.
- **Free Trade Agreements, i.e. NAFTA (1993):** As globalization accelerated, regions reduced trade barriers like tariffs to remain competitive. NAFTA reduced barriers between the US, Canada, and Mexico. Opponents claim it leads to the outsourcing of skilled and unskilled jobs to areas with less government regulation or with unsafe working conditions.