**Reagan Presidency - Reality**

**Prayer in schools and a moment of silence**

In 1981, Reagan became the first president to propose a constitutional amendment on [school prayer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School_prayer_in_the_United_States).[[121]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-Law_of_Church_and_State-121) Reagan's election reflected an opposition[[121]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-Law_of_Church_and_State-121) to the 1962 Supreme Court case [*Engel v. Vitale*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Engel_v._Vitale), prohibiting state officials from composing an official state prayer and requiring that it be recited in the public schools.[[122]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-122) Reagan's 1981 proposed amendment stated: "Nothing in this Constitution shall be construed to prohibit individual or group prayer in public schools or other public institutions. No person shall be required by the United States or by any state to participate in prayer." In 1984, Reagan again raised the issue, asking Congress "why can't [the] freedom to acknowledge God be enjoyed again by children in every schoolroom across this land?"[[123]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-123) In 1985, Reagan expressed his disappointment that the Supreme Court ruling still bans a moment of silence for public schools, and said he had "an uphill battle."[[124]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-124) In 1987 Reagan renewed his call for Congress to support voluntary prayer in schools and end "the expulsion of God from America's classrooms."[[125]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-NYT-125) Critics argue that any governmental imposition of prayer on public school students is involuntary.[[125]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-NYT-125) No Supreme Court rulings suggest that students cannot engage in silent prayer on their own.[[125]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-NYT-125) During his term in office, Reagan campaigned vigorously to restore organized prayer to the schools, first as a moment of prayer and later as a Moment of Silence

**Economics**

During Reagan's presidency, federal [income tax rates](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Income_tax_in_the_United_States) were lowered significantly with the signing of the [Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_Recovery_Tax_Act_of_1981),[[145]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-145) which lowered the top marginal tax bracket from 70% to 50% and the lowest bracket from 14% to 11%. Other tax increases passed by Congress and signed by Reagan ensured however that tax revenues over his two terms were 18.2% of GDP as compared to 18.1% over the 40-year period of 1970–2010.[[146]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-146) Then, in 1982 the [Job Training Partnership Act of 1982](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_Training_Partnership_Act_of_1982) was signed into law, initiating one of the United States' first [public–private partnerships](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public%E2%80%93private_partnership) and a major part of the president's [job creation program](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_creation_program). Reagan's Assistant Secretary of Labor and Chief of Staff, [Al Angrisani](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Angrisani), was a primary architect of the bill.

Conversely, Congress passed and Reagan signed into law tax increases of some nature in every year from 1981 to 1987 to continue funding such government programs as [Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tax_Equity_and_Fiscal_Responsibility_Act_of_1982) (TEFRA), [Social Security](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_Security_(United_States)), and the [Deficit Reduction Act of 1984](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deficit_Reduction_Act_of_1984) (DEFRA).[[147]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-147)[[148]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-forbes.com-148) Despite the fact that TEFRA was the "largest peacetime tax increase in American history,"[[148]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-forbes.com-148)[[149]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-149)[[150]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-150)[[151]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-151) gross domestic product (GDP) growth recovered strongly after the [early 1980s recession](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_1980s_recession)ended in 1982, and grew during his eight years in office at an annual rate of 7.9% per year, with a high of 12.2% growth in 1981.[[152]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-152) Unemployment peaked at 10.8% monthly rate in December 1982—higher than any time since the Great Depression—then dropped during the rest of Reagan's presidency.[[153]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-153) Sixteen million new jobs were created, while inflation significantly decreased.[[154]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-Cannon128-154) The [Tax Reform Act of 1986](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tax_Reform_Act_of_1986), another bipartisan effort championed by Reagan, simplified the tax code by reducing the number of tax brackets to four and slashing a number of tax breaks. The top rate was dropped to 28%, but capital gains taxes were increased on those with the highest incomes from 20% to 28%. The increase of the lowest tax bracket from 11% to 15% was more than offset by expansion of the personal exemption, [standard deduction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standard_deduction), and [earned income tax credit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earned_income_tax_credit). The net result was the removal of six million poor Americans from the income tax roll and a reduction of income tax liability at all income levels

Reagan is viewed as an antitax hero despite raising taxes eleven times over the course of his presidency, all in the name of fiscal responsibility.[[167]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-167) According to [Paul Krugman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Krugman), "Over all, the 1982 tax increase undid about a third of the 1981 cut; as a share of GDP, the increase was substantially larger than [Mr. Clinton's 1993 tax increase](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omnibus_Budget_Reconciliation_Act_of_1993)."[[168]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-168) According to historian and domestic policy adviser [Bruce Bartlett](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruce_Bartlett), Reagan's tax increases over the course of his presidency took back half of the 1981 tax cut.[[169]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-169)

Further following his opposition to government intervention, Reagan cut the budgets of non-military[[170]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-budgetc-170) programs[[171]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-171) including [Medicaid](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medicaid), [food stamps](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food_Stamp_Program), federal education programs[[170]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-budgetc-170) and the [EPA](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Environmental_Protection_Agency).[[172]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-172) While he protected entitlement programs, such as [Social Security](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_Security_(United_States)) and [Medicare](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medicare_(United_States)),[[173]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan" \l "cite_note-173) his administration attempted to purge many people with disabilities from the Social Security disability rolls.

He reappointed [Paul Volcker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Volcker) as [Chairman of the Federal Reserve](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chairman_of_the_Federal_Reserve), and in 1987 he appointed monetarist [Alan Greenspan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan_Greenspan) to succeed him. Reagan ended the [price controls](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Price_controls) on domestic oil which had contributed to energy crises in the early 1970s.[[178]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-178)[[179]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-heritage-179) The price of oil subsequently dropped, and the 1980s did not see the fuel shortages that the 1970s had.[[179]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-heritage-179) Reagan also fulfilled a 1980 campaign promise to repeal the [windfall profits tax](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Windfall_profits_tax) in 1988, which had previously increased dependence on foreign oil.[[180]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-180) Some economists, such as Nobel Prize winners [Milton Friedman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milton_Friedman) and [Robert Mundell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Mundell), argue that Reagan's tax policies invigorated America's economy and contributed to the economic boom of the 1990s.[[181]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan#cite_note-Reagan.27s_Economic_Legacy-181) Other economists, such as Nobel Prize winner [Robert Solow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Solow), argue that Reagan's deficits were a major reason his successor, George H. W. Bush, reneged on a [campaign promise](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Read_my_lips:_no_new_taxes) and resorted to raising taxes.