

## George W. Bush



***Did you know? George W. Bush became the second son of a President to serve the country. The first being John Quincy Adams in 1825, the son of President John Adams.***

A different way to understand the Presidency of George W. Bush is to look at the chain of events in a timeline format. By analyzing the events that took place during his two terms, this method shows the complexities of being a modern-day President.

Bush won the contested election of 2000 (see the separate handout) and was sworn in as the 43<sup>rd</sup> President of the United States on January 29, 2001. During his inauguration address, Bush called for the nation to unite after the bitterly disputed election and work towards justice and opportunity in America “through civility, courage, compassion, and character.”

In late January, Bush’s personal beliefs and political agenda passed two laws. In one of his first policy decisions, President Bush decides to reinstate the ban on aid to international groups performing or counseling on **abortion**. The ban was initiated by former President Ronald Reagan but is not enforced during the administration of President Bill Clinton. By executive order, President Bush creates the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. The new office will work to ease regulations on religious charities and promote grass-roots efforts to tackle community issues such as aid to the poor and disadvantaged.

While attempting to change domestic issues, Bush had to focus on major international issues. In February 2001, he ordered the United States airplanes attack Iraqi radar sites to enforce a “no-fly zone.” Bush calls the military action a “routine mission.” The issue of Iraq will be of major importance to his political career.

In addition, in March 2001, The Bush administration affirmed its decision to abandon ratification of the **Kyoto Protocol**, an international treaty signed by 180 countries to reduce global warming that set limits on industrial emissions.

In April 2001, a U.S. spy plane flying over the South China Sea is clipped by a Chinese fighter jet, forcing the American plane to make an emergency landing on Chinese soil. The incident strains diplomatic ties between the two nations as the United States demands that China return both the plane and its crew to American authorities.

President Bush then signaled a change in relations with China by officially **pledging military support for Taiwan** in the event of an attack by China. This is the first time a presidential administration has publicly acknowledged a position that had previously been implicitly accepted.

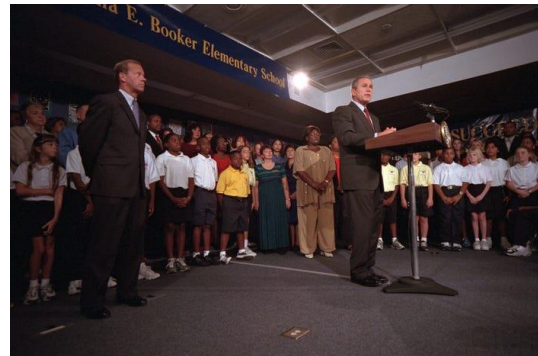
While juggling foreign affairs, George W. Bush continued his domestic policies. In June 2001, President Bush signs a **\$1.35 trillion tax cut into law**. Although the amount falls short of the \$1.60 trillion the administration has been seeking, the bill does slash income tax rates across the board and provides for the gradual elimination of the estate tax.

In August of the same year, President Bush addresses the nation, outlining his plans for the federal funding of **stem cell research**. The new policy allows for continued government funding of existing research on already extracted stem cells but prohibits the extraction of additional stem cells from human embryos for further research.

### **The Presidency of George W. Bush would be in turmoil on September 11, 2001.**

Terrorists hijack four commercial jets and crash them into the World Trade Center in New York City, the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and the Pennsylvania countryside. It is the worst attack on American soil since Pearl Harbor, with fatalities numbering about 3,000.

Bush was visiting an elementary school in Sarasota, Florida that morning when the attacks took place. He remained at the school and watched live television coverage from one of the classrooms. Later that day, he addressed the nation from the school auditorium.



### **A short summary of the attacks of September 11, 2001.**

On September 11, 2001, the United States endured a deadly attack when terrorists hijacked four commercial planes and intentionally crashed them. The hijackers flew the first three planes into important targets: both towers of the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon building in Washington, D.C. The fourth plane, which some speculated was headed for the White House, crashed in Somerset County, Pennsylvania. Passengers aboard the plane, talking on their cell phones, learned what the hijackers intended to do and with astonishing heroism tried to overtake the hijackers, saving the fourth target and sacrificing their lives.

Police and fire department personnel in New York City rushed into the twin towers of the World Trade Center after the planes crashed into them to begin rescuing victims from the burning towers. Their colleagues assisting matters outside- like all Americans- were shocked and horrified to see those towers collapse, killing hundreds of the rescue workers and thousands of people who had been trapped inside. Total casualties from September 11, 2001, were nearly 3,000 people.



President George W. Bush spoke passionately of “disbelief, terrible sadness and quiet, unyielding anger.” He pledged that the government would bring the persons responsible for the hijacking to justice. It soon became clear that Al Qaeda, a loosely-knit Sunni Islamic extremist organization, was responsible for the attacks. Al Qaeda's founder was former Saudi citizen and millionaire Osama bin Laden. After Afghanistan's ruling elite- the Taliban- refused to surrender bin Laden, who was a guest in their country, President Bush swiftly gathered international support for the use of military force in Afghanistan to shatter the strength of Al Qaeda.

September 11, 2001, is a date that no American is likely ever to forget. Many Americans spent the day glued to their televisions, as terrible images of lives lost and property destroyed marched across the screens. Mingled with those pictures were others, equally memorable: scenes of magnificent courage, sacrifice, and hope.

### **The Bush Response to the attacks of September 11, 2001**

**September 20:** President Bush appears before a joint session of Congress to outline the administration’s plans to defeat world terrorism, singling out **Osama bin Laden** and his **Al-Qaeda organization** as the primary targets of such a policy. He states that every nation must take sides in the international conflict against worldwide terrorist networks; he also warns Americans to prepare for a protracted campaign against terrorism. The President then appoints Pennsylvania governor **Tom Ridge** to the new cabinet-level post of director of the **Office of Homeland Security**. Governor Ridge will coordinate the efforts of more than forty federal agencies to secure the United States against future terrorist attacks.

**October 7:** Speaking from the Treaty Room of the White House, President Bush announces the commencement of **military action in Afghanistan, an operation code-named “Enduring Freedom.”**

On my order, U.S. forces have begun strikes on terrorist camps of Al Qaeda and the military installations of the **Taliban regime** in Afghanistan,” Bush said in a somber, televised address from the White House Treaty Room. The air assaults, he said, were joined by Britain, with assorted intelligence efforts and logistical support coming from several other nations, including France, Germany, Australia, and Canada.

The United States demanded that the Taliban surrender Osama bin Laden, the leader of Al Qaeda. When the Taliban refused, the United States together with allies launched an attack against the Taliban.

Apparently anticipating a U.S. attack, Al Qaeda had, a few days before the attacks, assassinated Ahmad Shah Massoud, the leader of an anti-Taliban rebel force known as the Northern Alliance. It was widely believed that without Massoud, the Northern Alliance would fracture as a fighting force. Instead, the Northern Alliance fought against the Taliban, bolstered by U.S. warplanes and U.S. Special Forces. First it ousted the Taliban from the city of Mazar Al-Sharif on the northern frontier and then from the capital city of Kabul. By mid-March 2002, the Taliban had been removed from power, and the Al Qaeda network in Afghanistan was severely damaged.

A fledgling democracy was installed in Afghanistan, but even before that country was truly pacified, the Bush administration had turned its attention to Iraq and its dictator **Saddam Hussein**. With U.S. attention diverted, Afghanistan was left in a precarious state, threatened by instability, violence, and a possible Taliban resurgence.

The nation was still on edge from September 11 when another fearful event took place. In October 2001, the Capital shuts down amidst an **Anthrax scare**. Persons in Florida and New York have already tested positive for the frequently fatal bacteria. Bush calls for \$1.5 billion to fight **bioterrorism**.

On December 2, 2001 the **Enron Corporation** filed for Chapter Eleven bankruptcy protection, the largest bankruptcy case in American history. The beleaguered company, once the world's premier energy trading and services firm, files for court protection after watching its stock price plummet as a result of accounting issues relating to its operations. Earlier in the year, discoveries reveal that Enron's chief financial officer engaged in partnerships which allowed the company to hide half a billion dollars worth of debt. The Bush administration has ties to key Enron executives, including CEO Kenneth Lay, but denies any involvement in the scandal.

### **George W. Bush and the American position towards Russia.**

In December of 2001, after conferring with the National Security Council, President Bush notifies Russia of his intention to **withdraw from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty**. Meetings with Russian president **Vladimir Putin** fail to establish an agreement between the two nations. In June 2002, the United States officially withdraws from the Treaty, allowing it to conduct anti-missile defense tests.

### **The start of a New Year, 2002.**

**No Child Left Behind:** In the first week of January, President Bush signs an education reform bill with bipartisan support; this reauthorized the Johnson-era Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Known as the **No Child Left Behind Act**, it offers local authorities greater flexibility in spending federal dollars, but requires standardized math and reading tests.

**State of the Union Address:** In his State of the Union address, President Bush warns that the war against terrorism is only beginning. Specifically citing North Korea, Iran, and Iraq, Bush speaks of **"an axis of evil"** threatening world peace.

## Israeli-Palestine Relations

Bush renews his call on Palestinian leader **Yasser Arafat** to end attacks on Israel, indicating that a meeting with **Vice President Dick Cheney** could still take place if Arafat yielded to American demands. Cheney, on a trip to the Middle East, refuses to meet with Arafat in the current environment. Meanwhile, Arafat remains penned in Ramallah by Israeli threats since December. On March 29, Israeli troops will take over most of his headquarters. **Secretary of State Colin Powell** travels to the Middle East for talks with Israel and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

## Cuba and Fidel Castro

In May 2002, Former President **Jimmy Carter** travels to Cuba for a tour and visit with Cuban President **Fidel Castro**. His arrival marks the first trip by an American President in forty years. On May 20, President Bush announces that the forty-year-old trade **embargo against Cuba will continue** until conditions, including free and fair elections, are met.

## Searching for warning signs of the September 11 attacks

In May, 2002, Congress presses the Bush administration for further information about warnings of the September 11, 2001, attacks. **National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice** holds a briefing, maintaining, "I don't think that anybody could have predicted that these people would take an airplane and slam it into the World Trade Center, take another one and slam it into the Pentagon." She insists that there was no lapse in intelligence.



## May 2002 – the Bush-Putin Nuclear Treaty

At the Kremlin, President Bush and Russian president Vladimir Putin sign a **nuclear arms treaty**, vowing to reduce their nations' arsenals by two-thirds over the next ten years.

## Bush expands Homeland Security

In a televised address to the nation, President Bush announces broad changes to security departments in charge of protecting the nation from terrorism. The **Office of Homeland Security** will now coordinate a wide range of functions and oversee more than 100 organizations. The announcement follows criticism of the FBI and CIA for failing to prevent the September 11 attacks.

## June 2002 - Bush calls for new Palestinian leadership

President Bush calls for the Palestinian people to replace Yasser Arafat, head of the Palestinian Authority and leader of the Palestinian cause for more than thirty years. Bush states that "when the Palestinians have new leaders, institutions and security arrangements, the U.S. will support the creation of a Palestinian state."

## Action against Iraq.

In September 2002, seeking support for action against Iraq, President Bush addresses Congress, identifying Iraqi strongman Saddam Hussein as “a serious threat.” Bush mentions the concept of a regime change and announces the visit of **British Prime Minister Tony Blair** in the days to come. House Majority Whip Tom DeLay (R-TX) calls action in Iraq “inevitable.”

President Bush then addresses the **United Nations’ Security Council**, making his case for military action to enforce UN resolutions in Iraq. Additionally, he warns that the United States will move alone if the Council does not act. In the coming days, Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell will continue to press the Security Council for a resolution against Iraq. France, Germany, and Russia, all permanent members of the Security Council, express severe reservations.

In October, a bipartisan Senate vote of 77-23 gives authorization to Bush to **use force against Iraq**. The Senate vote follows a similar vote of 296-133 in the House in support of the bill. In December, following a United Nations report issued by arms inspectors indicating that Iraq remained in violation of Security Council Resolution 1441, Bush speaks out again against Iraq. Inspections in Iraq continue.

## The November Elections of 2002.

Partly due to his domestic policies and his efforts regarding the September 11 attacks and the war on terrorism, in a sweeping mid-term election victory, Republicans gain control of the Senate and maintain their edge in the House.

During the first week of 2003, Bush reveals a tax-cut plan of \$674 billion over ten years. He suggests that the plan will stimulate the U.S. economy, end the recession, and create jobs. Democrats dismiss the plan as financially irresponsible and favorable to the rich.

## February 1, 2003 – The Space Shuttle Columbia explodes after take-off.



The seven-member crew of the shuttle Columbia dies in an explosion in space. Debris falls in Texas.

## **Bush's Global War Against Terrorism continues. (February to July 2003)**

CIA director George Tenet announces that **North Korea possesses a nuclear ballistic missile** capable of hitting the United States. In the following weeks, reports emerge which suggest that North Korea will soon possess the ability to create a nuclear arsenal.

After months of debate in the United Nations Security Council, President Bush announces the U.S. intention to move against Iraq with its coalition of allies. Bush issues an **ultimatum for military action**, giving Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein and his sons forty-eight hours to leave Iraq.

The 8:00 p.m. deadline for Hussein to leave Iraq passes. At 10:15 p.m., Bush addresses the nation and informs the American people that the **United States is at war with Iraq**.

Citing costs of the Iraq War, the Senate approves the reduction of **Bush's tax cut plan** to \$350 billion, less than half of the original amount.

President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair air a joint address on Iraqi television that describes the goals of coalition forces and reassures the Iraqi people that they will be able to live their lives in peace and security in a post-Saddam era.

May 1<sup>st</sup>, in a nationally televised address aboard the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, Bush stands in front of a **"Mission Accomplished"** banner and declares that major combat operations in Iraq are over. He links the Iraq War to the War on Terror and vows to continue searching for banned weapons in Iraq.

The UN Security Council votes to lift sanctions on Iraq imposed since the 1991 Gulf War. The resolution gives the United States and United Kingdom control of Iraq until it establishes a legitimate government and authority to use Iraqi oil revenues for humanitarian aid and reconstruction.

Bush meets with **Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon** and **Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas** in Aqaba, Jordan, to discuss implementation of a **"road-map" for peace**.

U.S. forces kill **Saddam Hussein's two sons** Uday and Qusay in Mosul, Iraq. Officials hope that anti-U.S. attacks in Iraq will decrease as a result. **Saddam Hussein's whereabouts are unknown**.

The joint Congressional Committee on Intelligence releases an 800-page document on the findings of its inquiry into intelligence failures leading up to the terrorist attacks of September 11, which concludes that **intelligence agencies failed to respond to alerts** about potential targets and methods. The report faults the NSA, CIA, and the FBI for a breakdown in communications and advocates the creation of a cabinet-level "intelligence czar" to remove obstacles between agencies.

In **October**, Chief U.S. Weapons Inspector David Kay reports that his 1,400-member team, the Iraq Survey Group, **failed to find any biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons in Iraq**. Kay acknowledged that they did find evidence that Iraq sought the capacity to create those weapons in the future. Bush used these findings as validation of his prewar claims that Iraq posed a significant security threat to the United States.

## Domestic Policy Changes in 2003

In May, Bush signed into law his **\$350 billion tax-cut package**, the third-largest in history, in an effort to strengthen the U.S. economy and reverse a trend of increasing unemployment. Congressional Democrats who opposed the bill argued it is skewed towards the wealthy.

President Bush then issued comprehensive guidelines **forbidding federal law enforcement agencies from considering race or ethnicity in routine patrol duties**. Although more extensive than previous federal law, the guidelines provided clear exceptions for matters of national security and counterterrorism operations.

Bush also signed into law a **ban on late-term abortion**, the first law to ban an abortion procedure since the Supreme Court's 1973 decision in *Roe v. Wade*. The Supreme Court later upholds the ban.

Bush signed a landmark bill in December, overhauling **Medicare** that includes the program's first prescription drug benefits to begin in 2006 and creates incentives for private insurance companies to cover Medicare subscribers.

While trying to focus on domestic issues again, the Iraq situation still plagued the U.S. Presidency. The Iraqi Governing Council had signed an interim constitution to provide a framework for establishment of a transitional government. U.S. forces in Iraq confront a violent uprising beginning with **Shiite Muslims** in Baghdad and spreading to opposing **Sunni Muslims** in **Fallujah**, leading to the heaviest fighting since the invasion began in March of 2003. CBS broadcasts photographs of U.S. Army abuse of Iraqi prisoners in Abu Ghraib prison, a facility on the outskirts of Baghdad. Bush and other senior administration officials voice deep disapproval over these abuses.

## May 17, 2004 – Massachusetts approves Same-Sex Marriages

Massachusetts becomes the first state to offer marriage licenses to same-sex couples. Bush reiterates to Congress his call for a constitutional amendment banning same sex marriage.

## June, 2004

The CIA Director George Tenet resigns. Bush announces he has accepted the resignation of CIA Director George Tenet, widely blamed for **intelligence failures** in the months leading up to September 11.

Attorney General John Ashcroft appears before the Senate Judiciary Committee to answer questions regarding two leaked government memoranda that contained legal arguments for circumventing U.S. and **international bans on torture**, specifically for the questioning of terrorist suspects.

The formal **occupation of Iraq ends**. The U.S.-led Coalition for Provisional Authority formerly ends foreign occupation of Iraq, granting the provisional government sovereignty. Still, 130,000 troops remain in Iraq.



## The 2004 Presidential Election



**George W. Bush and John Kerry**

President Bush and Vice President Cheney are renominated as the Republican candidates at the GOP convention in New York City. The Democrats nominated **John Kerry**, a Senator from Massachusetts and his running mate was **John Edwards** from North Carolina.

Bush's popularity had soared early in his first term after the September 11 attacks, but his popularity declined between 2001 and 2004. Foreign policy was the dominant theme throughout the election campaign, particularly Bush's conduct of the War on Terrorism and the aftermath of the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Bush presented himself as a decisive leader and attacked Kerry as a "flip-flopper", while Kerry criticized Bush's conduct of the Iraq War. Domestic issues were debated as well, including the economy and jobs, health care, abortion, same-sex marriage and embryonic stem cell research.

The two men took part in a series of three debates before the election. The first one focused on national security issues and foreign policy. The Bush administration's handling of the Iraq War is the main focus. Bush and Kerry have their second debate in a town-hall format in St. Louis, Missouri. Polls show the two candidates in a dead heat as Bush and Kerry meet for their third and final presidential debate on domestic policy.

On October 29, 2004, Qatar-based television channel **Al-Jazeera** airs excerpts from a videotape of **Osama bin-Laden**, leader of the terrorist network al-Qaeda, who addresses the American people; he accepts responsibility for and justifies the September 11th attacks while condemning Bush's response to them. Many view this tape as an attempt by al-Qaeda to influence the U.S. presidential election.

The election took place on November 3, 2004 and **George W. Bush wins a second term** with a close 51 percent of the popular vote and 274 electoral votes to John Kerry's 252. The Republican Party builds slightly on its majority in the House and Senate.

A key political change after the election saw Retired Army general and Secretary of State Colin Powell resigns. Bush appoints former National Security Advisor **Condoleezza Rice** to the position.

In his second State of the Union, President Bush calls for an historic restructuring of Social Security, allowing workers to use their payroll taxes to invest in the stock market. However, he is unable to move the policy through Congress.

In June 2005, the Iraqi government announces that a war crimes trial for Saddam Hussein is likely to begin within the next two months and prosecutors would seek the death penalty. Bush continued with his anti-terrorism campaign when South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun met with Bush to discuss efforts to persuade North Korea to join the six-party talks intended to end North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons.

In addition, Vietnamese Premier Phan Van Khai meets with Bush to discuss human rights and treatment of ethnic and religious minorities in Vietnam. This marks the first visit by a Vietnamese Premier to the United States since the country reunited under Communist rule in 1975.

### **Bush's focus on Domestic Issues**

Back home, in June 2005, the Senate passes an **omnibus energy bill** aimed at supporting the traditional energy industries of oil and natural gas, but also provide tax incentives for the use of alternative energy sources such as solar and wind power.

In July, the **space shuttle Discovery** takes off from the Kennedy Space Center on a mission to deliver repairs to the **International Space Station**. This is the first U.S. space mission since the failed return of the Columbia in 2003.

On August 28, 2005, **Hurricane Katrina** strikes the Gulf coast of the United States with devastating effects. The storm breaches the levee system in New Orleans, causing massive flooding and destruction of property. The Bush administration is harshly criticized for an inadequate response by the federal government to the storm's destruction.



### **Bush and the Supreme Court**

**John G. Roberts** who was then confirmed as Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Roberts replaced William Rehnquist, who died in office, and is President Bush's first nominee to the Court.

The Senate Judiciary Committee also approved President Bush's nomination of **Samuel A. Alito, Jr.**, to the U.S. Supreme Court by a vote of 10-8. Previously, concerns were voiced over the disruption of the court's ideological balance that would result from conservative Alito's replacement of moderate Sandra Day O'Connor.

## Events of 2006 during the Bush Presidency

In a White House news conference, President Bush admitted for the first time that the complete removal of U.S. troops from Iraq during the remainder of his term is improbable. He continues to assert the fact that progress is being made in the establishment of Iraqi democracy.

**The Bird Flu Scare:** After several cases of avian influenza are reported in Central and Southeast Asia, the Bush administration proposes a plan to minimize losses in the case of a deadly pandemic. The plan includes coordination with the World Health Organization, reorganization of international travel, and the authorization of military assistance in the case of public unrest.

The U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Virginia, sentences Zacarias Moussaoui to life in prison without parole for his role in the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Moussaoui was the first person to stand trial for the attacks.

The Senate voted 49-48 to conclude debate on a constitutional amendment **banning same sex marriages** in the United States, thereby preventing a vote on the actual passage of the amendment. President Bush had previously expressed support of the proposed amendment.

President Bush **veto**s a bill to lift constraints on federal funding of **embryonic stem cell research**, and subsequently, the House unsuccessfully attempts to override the veto. This is the first veto Bush issues during his administration.

President Bush signs a bill providing for the construction of a **700-mile fence along the United States-Mexico border**, in an effort to increase border security and stem illegal immigration.

**The Republican Party sees Democrats recapture control of the U.S. House and Senate in the midterm elections.** Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat from California, takes office as the first woman Speaker of the House.



## The war on terrorism continues

On December 30, 2006, the former Iraqi President **Saddam Hussein is hanged** in Baghdad, Iraq, after being convicted of crimes against humanity dating back to 1982.

The U.S. Air Force launches an air attack on extremist militias and suspected **al-Qaeda operatives in Somalia**.

Bush announces what would be termed a **“troop surge”** in Iraq in an attempt to increase security in the capital of Baghdad and smother insurgency centers throughout the country. General David Petraeus takes over command of the multinational forces in Iraq to oversee the surge.

**Scooter Libby**, Vice President Cheney's Chief of Staff, is convicted of perjury and obstruction of justice in the case of CIA operative, Valerie Plame Wilson, whose covert identity was exposed. Bush later commutes Libby's sentence.

Seung-Hui Cho kills himself and 32 fellow students at **Virginia Tech** in the deadliest campus gun rampage in U.S. history. President Bush and the First Lady attend the memorial.

Bush **vetoes a war spending bill** passed by Congress, which set a timetable for troop withdrawal from Iraq. Within days Bush reaches a record low approval rating.

The Supreme Court **reverses** an April decision and agrees to hear appeals from **Guantanamo Bay** detainees who have not had access to the federal courts.

Congress passes the **Antiterrorism Bill**, which will allow for the screening of air and sea cargo and will give more money in government antiterrorism grants to states with the greatest risk for terrorist attacks.

President Bush hosts a **Middle East Peace Conference** in Annapolis, Maryland, with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel and Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas.

A U.S. missile strikes in Pakistan kill a top al-Qaeda leader, Abu Laith al-Libi, who trained terror operatives in the region.

### **More domestic issues and problems facing George W. Bush.**

In 2007, the Stock Market reached an all-time high, passing the 14,000 mark and then it went into a serious decline. By the New Year (2008),

Congress passes new energy legislation to increase automobile fuel efficiency standards and mandates increases in **biofuel production**. The bill passes the House and Senate, and President Bush signs it into law.

President Bush proposes a **\$145 billion stimulus package** in response to a housing crisis and rapidly increasing oil prices. The package gives individuals several hundred dollars to facilitate spending, as well as rebates for families with children and tax deductions for businesses in order to jump-start the slowing economy.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the **U.S. economy lost more than 15,000 jobs** during the previous month. Such an elimination of jobs from the economy had not occurred for more than four years. On February 7, 2008, the Senate passes a **\$170-billion stimulus package** to give many Americans tax rebates as large as \$600 or more, and to implement tax breaks for certain businesses in an effort to head-off impending economic slowdown.

Bush's **approval ratings begin to decline** and 2008 is an election year with the Democrats hoping to take back control of the country. Minor events will start to add up against the Republicans and time for a change of leadership begins to take shape.

## Late-Stage events during the Bush Presidency that have an effect on the 2008 election.

Six detainees at **Guantanamo Bay** who were thought to have had roles in orchestrating the September 11 terrorist attacks are charged with conspiracy, murder in violation of the law of war, terrorism, and other charges. All six face the death penalty in military tribunals.

In March, after a **roadside bomb** exploded in Baghdad, the U.S. death toll for the war in Iraq reached 4,000.

The State Department renews a controversial deal with **Blackwater Worldwide**, the private defense contractor whose guards killed 17 civilians in 2007, to provide defense for U.S. diplomats in the Middle East.

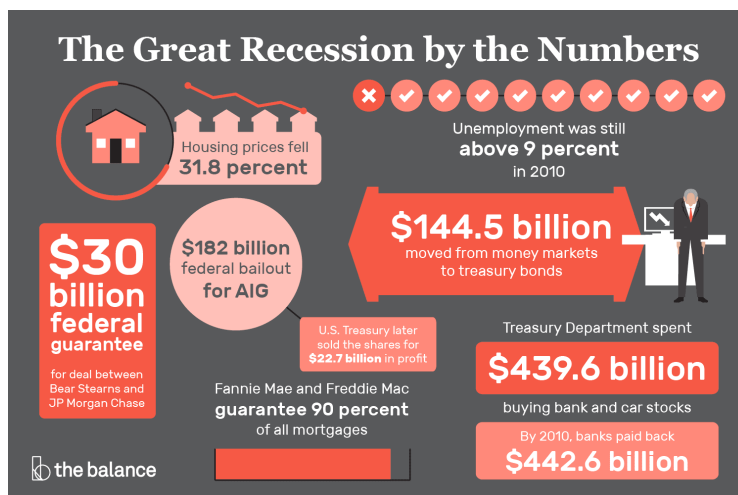
**In May, the House and Senate override President Bush's veto of the Farm Bill**, a \$307 billion bill which will provide subsidies to farmers. More than \$10 billion of the funds will go to expanding nutritional programs such as food stamps. Bush originally vetoed the bill, which he felt to be excessive.

**By June of 2008, the Republican Party is under immense pressure for the upcoming election.** Democratic candidate **Barack Obama** secures the party's nomination for the presidency.

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence finds, after a five-year study, that **President Bush and other officials greatly exaggerated the evidence showing that Saddam Hussein held weapons of mass destruction.**

In a new report issued on the situation in Iraq, the U.S. Army admits that while it was able to adequately topple Hussein's regime, it did not have the capability to rebuild Iraq into a fully-functioning new country.

The U.S. government places federal mortgage lenders **Fannie Mae (Federal National Mortgage Association) and Freddie Mac (Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation)** under control of the U.S. Treasury to prevent the institutions from going under and endangering more than half of the country's mortgages. At the onset of financial crisis, President Bush signs a \$700 billion bailout plan for failing bank assets, the largest in U.S. history. The U.S. **Gross Domestic Product drops** by 0.3 percent, the first time GDP has shrunk in 17 years.



### **November 4, 2008 Barack Obama is elected.**

**Barack Obama** is elected the next President of the United States in an historic election in which Democrats win in several traditionally Republican states and pick up seats in the House and Senate. Obama is the first black American elected President.



### **George Bush's actions during the Lame-Duck Period.**

#### **November 25, 2008**

The Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve agree to provide another \$800 billion in lending programs to buy debt insured by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and to provide more small loans to consumers.

#### **December 16, 2008**

Federal Reserve cuts interest rates to an all-time low of **zero percent**, down from 1 percent and 0.25 percent earlier in the year as part of a plan to stimulate the economy.

#### **December 19, 2008**

President Bush issues a \$17.4-billion **auto bailout to General Motors and Chrysler** to keep the two American automotive giants from going bankrupt.

**On January 20, 2009 Barack Obama is inaugurated the 44th President of the United States. President Bush leaves Washington, D.C. for Dallas, Texas.**

**Source:** <https://millercenter.org/president/george-w-bush/key-events>  
(University of Virginia, Miller Center)