

= George W. Bush =

George Walker Bush (born July 6 , 1946) is an American politician who served as the 43rd President of the United States from 2001 to 2009 and 46th Governor of Texas from 1995 to 2000 . The eldest son of Barbara and George H. W. Bush , he was born in New Haven , Connecticut . After graduating from Yale University in 1968 and Harvard Business School in 1975 , he worked in oil businesses . He married Laura Welch in 1977 and ran unsuccessfully for the House of Representatives shortly thereafter . He later co - owned the Texas Rangers baseball team before defeating Ann Richards in the 1994 Texas gubernatorial election . He was elected president in 2000 after a close and controversial election against Al Gore , becoming the fourth president to be elected while receiving fewer popular votes nationwide than an opponent . He is the second president to have been the son of a former president , the first having been John Quincy Adams . He is also the brother of Jeb Bush , a former Governor of Florida and candidate for the Republican presidential nomination in the 2016 presidential election .

Eight months into Bush 's first term as president , the September 11 terrorist attacks occurred . Bush responded with what became known as the Bush Doctrine : launching a " War on Terror " , an international military campaign which included the war in Afghanistan , in 2001 , and the Iraq War , in 2003 . He also promoted policies on the economy , health care , education , social security reform , and amending the Constitution to prohibit same - sex marriage . He signed into law broad tax cuts , the Patriot Act , the No Child Left Behind Act , the Partial - Birth Abortion Ban Act , Medicare prescription drug benefits for seniors , and funding for the AIDS relief program known as PEPFAR . His tenure saw national debates on immigration , Social Security , electronic surveillance , and torture .

Bush successfully ran for re - election against Democratic Senator John Kerry in 2004 , in another relatively close election . After his re - election , Bush received increasingly heated criticism from across the political spectrum for his handling of the Iraq War , Hurricane Katrina , and other challenges . Amid this criticism , the Democratic Party regained control of Congress in the 2006 elections . In December 2007 , the United States entered its longest post - World War II recession , often referred to as the " Great Recession " , prompting the Bush administration to obtain congressional passage of multiple economic programs intended to preserve the country 's financial system . Nationally , Bush was both one of the most popular and unpopular presidents in history , having received the highest recorded presidential approval ratings in the wake of the September 11 attacks , as well as one of the lowest approval ratings during the 2008 financial crisis . He was met with public protests during visits to the United Kingdom .

Bush left office in 2009 , returning to Texas where he purchased a home in suburban Dallas . He is currently a public speaker , and has written a memoir , Decision Points . His presidential library was opened in 2013 . His presidency has been ranked among the worst in surveys of presidential scholars published in the late 2000s and 2010s .

= = Childhood to mid - life = =

= = Early life and education = =

George Walker Bush was born on July 6 , 1946 , at Grace - New Haven Hospital (now Yale - New Haven Hospital) in New Haven , Connecticut , as the first child of George Herbert Walker Bush and Barbara Pierce . He was raised in Midland and Houston , Texas , with four siblings , Jeb , Neil , Marvin and Dorothy . Another younger sister , Robin , died from leukemia at the age of three in 1953 . His grandfather , Prescott Bush , was a U.S. Senator from Connecticut . His father , George H.W. Bush , was Ronald Reagan 's Vice President from 1981 to 1989 and the 41st U.S. President from 1989 to 1993 . Bush has English and some German ancestry , along with more distant Dutch , Welsh , Irish , French , and Scottish roots .

Bush attended public schools in Midland , Texas , until the family moved to Houston after he had

completed seventh grade . He then went to The Kinkaid School , a prep school in Houston for two years .

Bush attended high school at the Phillips Academy , a boarding school (then all @-@ male) in Andover , Massachusetts , where he played baseball , and during his senior year , was the head cheerleader . He attended Yale University from 1964 to 1968 , graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History . During this time , he was a cheerleader and a member of the Delta Kappa Epsilon , serving as the president of the fraternity during his senior year . Bush became a member of the Skull and Bones society as a senior . Bush was a rugby union player and was on Yale 's 1st XV . He characterized himself as an average student . His GPA during his first three years at Yale was 77 , and he had a similar average under a nonnumeric rating system in his final year .

Beginning in the fall of 1973 , Bush attended the Harvard Business School , where he earned an M.B.A. degree . He is the only U.S. President to have earned an M.B.A.

= = = Texas Air National Guard = = =

In May 1968 , Bush was commissioned into the Texas Air National Guard . After two years of active @-@ duty service while training , he was assigned to Houston , flying Convair F @-@ 102s with the 147th Reconnaissance Wing out of the Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base . Critics , including former Democratic National Committee Chairman Terry McAuliffe , have alleged that Bush was favorably treated due to his father 's political standing as a member of the House of Representatives , citing his selection as a pilot despite his low pilot aptitude test scores and his irregular attendance . In June 2005 , the United States Department of Defense released all the records of Bush 's Texas Air National Guard service , which remain in its official archives .

In late 1972 and early 1973 , he drilled with the 187th Fighter Wing of the Alabama Air National Guard , having moved to Montgomery , Alabama , to work on the unsuccessful U.S. Senate campaign of Republican Winton M. Blount . In 1972 , Bush was suspended from flying for failure to take a scheduled physical exam . He was honorably discharged from the Air Force Reserve on November 21 , 1974 .

= = Marriage , family , and personal life = =

At a backyard barbecue in 1977 , friends introduced him to Laura Lane Welch , a school teacher and librarian . Bush proposed to her after a three @-@ month courtship , and they married on November 5 of that year . The couple settled in Midland , Texas . Bush left his family 's Episcopal Church to join his wife 's United Methodist Church . On November 25 , 1981 , Laura Bush gave birth to fraternal twin daughters , Barbara Pierce Bush and Jenna Welch Bush ; they graduated from high school in 2000 and from Yale University and the University of Texas at Austin , respectively , in 2004 .

Prior to his marriage , Bush had multiple episodes of alcohol abuse . In one instance , on September 4 , 1976 , he was arrested near his family 's summer home in Kennebunkport , Maine , for driving under the influence of alcohol . He pleaded guilty , was fined \$ 150 , and had his Maine driver 's license briefly suspended . Bush says his wife has had a stabilizing effect on his life , and attributes to her influence his 1986 decision to give up alcohol . While Governor of Texas , Bush said of his wife , " I saw an elegant , beautiful woman who turned out not only to be elegant and beautiful , but very smart and willing to put up with my rough edges , and I must confess has smoothed them off over time . "

Bush has been an avid reader throughout his adult life , preferring biographies and histories . During his time as president , Bush read the Bible daily . He also read 14 Lincoln biographies and , during the last three years of his presidency , he reportedly read 186 books . Walt Harrington , a journalist , recalls seeing " books by John Fowles , F. Scott Fitzgerald , James Joyce , and Gore Vidal lying about , as well as biographies of Willa Cather and Queen Victoria " in his home when Bush was a Texas oilman . Other hobbies include cigar smoking and golf . Since leaving the White House , Bush has also taken up oil painting .

His first granddaughter , Margaret Laura " Mila " Hager , was born to his daughter Jenna Bush on April 14 , 2013 . She is named after her two grandmothers .

= = Early career = =

In 1978 , Bush ran for the House of Representatives from Texas 's 19th congressional district . His opponent , Kent Hance , portrayed him as out of touch with rural Texans . Bush lost the election by 6 @, @ 000 votes (6 percent) of the 103 @, @ 000 votes cast . He returned to the oil industry and began a series of small , independent oil exploration companies . He created Arbusto Energy , and later changed the name to Bush Exploration . In 1984 , his company merged with the larger Spectrum 7 , and Bush became chairman . The company was hurt by decreased oil prices , and it folded into HKN , Inc . Bush served on the board of directors for HKN . Questions of possible insider trading involving HKN arose , but the Securities and Exchange Commission 's (SEC) investigation concluded that the information Bush had at the time of his stock sale was not sufficient to constitute insider trading .

Bush moved his family to Washington , D.C. in 1988 to work on his father 's campaign for the U.S. presidency . He served as a campaign adviser and liaison to the media ; he assisted his father by campaigning across the country . Returning to Texas after the successful campaign , he purchased a share in the Texas Rangers baseball franchise in April 1989 , where he served as managing general partner for five years . He actively led the team 's projects and regularly attended its games , often choosing to sit in the open stands with fans . Bush 's sale of his shares in the Rangers in 1998 brought him over \$ 15 million from his initial \$ 800 @, @ 000 investment .

In December 1991 , Bush was one of seven people named by his father to run his father 's 1992 Presidential re @-@ election campaign as " campaign advisor " . The previous month , his father asked him to tell White House chief of staff John H. Sununu that he should resign .

= = Governor of Texas (1995 ? 2000) = =

As Bush 's brother , Jeb , sought the governorship of Florida , Bush declared his candidacy for the 1994 Texas gubernatorial election . His campaign focused on four themes : welfare reform , tort reform , crime reduction , and education improvement . Bush 's campaign advisers were Karen Hughes , Joe Allbaugh , and Karl Rove .

After easily winning the Republican primary , Bush faced popular Democratic incumbent Governor Ann Richards . In the course of the campaign , Bush pledged to sign a bill allowing Texans to obtain permits to carry concealed weapons . Richards had vetoed the bill , but Bush signed it after he became governor . According to The Atlantic Monthly , the race " featured a rumor that she was a lesbian , along with a rare instance of such a tactic 's making it into the public record ? when a regional chairman of the Bush campaign allowed himself , perhaps inadvertently , to be quoted criticizing Richards for ' appointing avowed homosexual activists ' to state jobs " . The Atlantic , and others , connected the lesbian rumor to Karl Rove , but Rove denied being involved . Bush won the general election with 53 @. @ 5 percent against Richards ' 45 @. @ 9 percent .

Bush used a budget surplus to push through Texas 's largest tax @-@ cut , \$ 2 billion . He extended government funding for organizations providing education of the dangers of alcohol and drug use and abuse , and helping to reduce domestic violence . Critics contended that during his tenure , Texas ranked near the bottom in environmental evaluations . Supporters pointed to his efforts to raise the salaries of teachers and improve educational test scores .

In 1999 , Bush signed a state law obliging electric retailers to buy a certain amount of energy from renewable sources (RPS) , which helped Texas eventually become the leading producer of wind powered electricity in the U.S.

In 1998 , Bush won re @-@ election with a record 69 percent of the vote . He became the first governor in Texas history to be elected to two consecutive four @-@ year terms . For most of Texas history , governors served two @-@ year terms ; a constitutional amendment extended those terms to four years starting in 1975 . In his second term , Bush promoted faith @-@ based organizations

and enjoyed high approval ratings . He proclaimed June 10 , 2000 to be Jesus Day in Texas , a day on which he " urge [d] all Texans to answer the call to serve those in need " .

Throughout Bush 's first term , national attention focused on him as a potential future presidential candidate . Following his re @-@ election , speculation soared . Within a year , he decided to seek the 2000 Republican presidential nomination .

= = Presidential campaigns = =

= = = 2000 presidential candidacy = = =

= = = = Primary = = = =

In June 1999 , while Governor of Texas , Bush announced his candidacy for President of the United States . With no incumbent running , Bush entered a large field of candidates for the Republican Party presidential nomination consisting of John McCain , Alan Keyes , Steve Forbes , Gary Bauer , Orrin Hatch , Elizabeth Dole , Dan Quayle , Pat Buchanan , Lamar Alexander , John Kasich , and Bob Smith .

Bush portrayed himself as a compassionate conservative , implying he was more centrist than other Republicans . He campaigned on a platform that included bringing integrity and honor back to the White House , increasing the size of the United States Armed Forces , cutting taxes , improving education , and aiding minorities . By early 2000 , the race had centered on Bush and McCain .

Bush won the Iowa caucuses , but , although he was heavily favored to win the New Hampshire primary , he trailed McCain by 19 percent and lost that primary . Despite this , Bush regained momentum and , according to political observers , effectively became the front runner after the South Carolina primary , which according to The Boston Globe made history for his campaign 's negativity ; The New York Times described it as a smear campaign .

= = = = General election = = = =

On July 25 , 2000 , Bush surprised some observers by asking Dick Cheney , a former White House Chief of Staff , U.S. Representative , and Secretary of Defense , to be his running mate . Cheney was then serving as head of Bush 's Vice @-@ Presidential search committee . Soon after , Bush and Cheney were officially nominated by the Republican Party at the 2000 Republican National Convention .

Bush continued to campaign across the country and touted his record as Governor of Texas . Bush 's campaign criticized his Democratic opponent , incumbent Vice President Al Gore , over gun control and taxation .

When the election returns came in on November 7 , Bush won 29 states , including Florida . The closeness of the Florida outcome led to a recount . The initial recount also went to Bush , but the outcome was tied up in courts for a month until reaching the U.S. Supreme Court . On December 9 , in the controversial Bush v. Gore ruling , the Court reversed a Florida Supreme Court decision ordering a third count , and stopped an ordered statewide hand recount based on the argument that the use of different standards among Florida 's counties violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment . The machine recount showed that Bush had won the Florida vote by a margin of 537 votes out of six million cast . Although he received 543 @,@ 895 fewer individual votes than Gore nationwide , Bush won the election , receiving 271 electoral votes to Gore 's 266 (Gore 's statewide victories had electoral votes tallying 267 ; however , one of Gore 's pledged electors abstained , rendering the official tally at 266) . Bush was the first person to win an American presidential election with fewer national votes than another candidate since Benjamin Harrison in 1888 .

== 2004 presidential candidacy ==

In 2004 , Bush commanded broad support in the Republican Party and did not encounter a primary challenge . He appointed Ken Mehlman as campaign manager , with a political strategy devised by Karl Rove . Bush and the Republican platform included a strong commitment to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan , support for the USA PATRIOT Act , a renewed shift in policy for constitutional amendments banning abortion and same @-@ sex marriage , reforming Social Security to create private investment accounts , creation of an ownership society , and opposing mandatory carbon emissions controls . Bush also called for the implementation of a guest worker program for immigrants , which was criticized by conservatives .

The Bush campaign advertised across the U.S. against Democratic candidates , including Bush 's emerging opponent , Massachusetts Senator John Kerry . Kerry and other Democrats attacked Bush on the Iraq War , and accused him of failing to stimulate the economy and job growth . The Bush campaign portrayed Kerry as a staunch liberal who would raise taxes and increase the size of government . The Bush campaign continuously criticized Kerry 's seemingly contradictory statements on the war in Iraq , and argued that Kerry lacked the decisiveness and vision necessary for success in the War on Terror .

In the election , Bush carried 31 of 50 states , receiving a total of 286 electoral votes . He won an absolute majority of the popular vote (50 @.@ 7 percent to his opponent 's 48 @.@ 3 percent) . The previous President to win an absolute majority of the popular vote was Bush 's father in the 1988 election . Additionally , it was the first time since Herbert Hoover 's election in 1928 that a Republican president was elected alongside re @-@ elected Republican majorities in both Houses of Congress .

== Presidency (2001 ? 09) ==

Though Bush originally outlined an ambitious domestic agenda , his priorities were significantly altered following the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001 . Wars were waged in Afghanistan and Iraq with significant domestic debates regarding immigration , healthcare , Social Security , economic policy , and treatment of terrorist detainees . Over an eight @-@ year period , Bush 's once @-@ high approval ratings steadily declined , while his disapproval numbers increased significantly . In 2007 , the United States entered the longest post @-@ World War II recession .

== Domestic policy ==

=== Economic policy ===

Bush took office during a period of economic recession in the wake of the bursting of the Dot @-@ com bubble . The terrorist attacks also impacted the economy . The Bush administration increased federal government spending from \$ 1 @.@ 789 trillion to \$ 2 @.@ 983 trillion (60 percent) while revenues increased from \$ 2 @.@ 025 trillion to \$ 2 @.@ 524 trillion (from 2000 to 2008) . Individual income tax revenues increased by 14 percent , corporate tax revenues by 50 percent , customs and duties by 40 percent . Discretionary defense spending was increased by 107 percent , discretionary domestic spending by 62 percent , Medicare spending by 131 percent , social security by 51 percent , and income security spending by 130 percent . Cyclically adjusted , revenues rose by 35 percent and spending by 65 percent .

The increase in spending was more than under any predecessor since Lyndon B. Johnson . The number of economic regulation governmental workers increased by 91 @,@ 196 .

The surplus in fiscal year 2000 was \$ 237 billion ? the third consecutive surplus and the largest surplus ever . In 2001 , Bush 's budget estimated that there would be a \$ 5 @.@ 6 trillion surplus over the next ten years . Facing congressional opposition , Bush held townhall style meetings across the U.S. in order to increase public support for his plan for a \$ 1 @.@ 35 trillion tax cut program ?

one of the largest tax cuts in U.S. history . Bush argued that unspent government funds should be returned to taxpayers , saying " the surplus is not the government 's money . The surplus is the people 's money . " Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan warned of a recession and Bush stated that a tax cut would stimulate the economy and create jobs . Treasury Secretary Paul H. O 'Neill , opposed some of the tax cuts on the basis that they would contribute to budget deficits and undermine Social Security . O 'Neill disputes the claim , made in Bush 's book Decision Points , that he never openly disagreed with him on planned tax cuts . By 2003 , the economy showed signs of improvement , though job growth remained stagnant . Another tax cut program was passed that year .

During the 2001 to 2008 years , GDP grew at an average annual rate of 2 @. @ 125 percent , less than for past business cycles .

Bush entered office with the Dow Jones Industrial Average at 10 @, @ 587 , and the average peaked in October 2007 at over 14 @, @ 000 . When Bush left office , the average was at 7 @, @ 949 , one of the lowest levels of his presidency .

Unemployment originally rose from 4 @. @ 2 percent in January 2001 to 6 @. @ 3 percent in June 2003 , but subsequently dropped to 4 @. @ 5 percent as of July 2007 . Adjusted for inflation , median household income dropped by \$ 1 @, @ 175 between 2000 and 2007 , while Professor Ken Homa of Georgetown University has noted that " Median real after @- @ tax household income went up 2 % " . The poverty rate increased from 11 @. @ 3 percent in 2000 to 12 @. @ 3 percent in 2006 after peaking at 12 @. @ 7 percent in 2004 . By October 2008 , due to increases in spending , the national debt had risen to \$ 11 @. @ 3 trillion , an increase of over 100 percent from 2000 when the debt was only \$ 5 @. @ 6 trillion . Most debt was accumulated as a result of what became known as the " Bush tax cuts " and increased national security spending : In March 2006 , then @- @ Senator Barack Obama said when he voted against raising the debt ceiling : " The fact that we are here today to debate raising America 's debt limit is a sign of leadership failure . " By the end of Bush 's presidency , unemployment climbed to 7 @. @ 2 percent .

In December 2007 , the United States entered the longest post ? World War II recession , which included a housing market correction , a subprime mortgage crisis , soaring oil prices , and a declining dollar value . In February , 63 @, @ 000 jobs were lost , a five @- @ year record . To aid with the situation , Bush signed a \$ 170 billion economic stimulus package which was intended to improve the economic situation by sending tax rebate checks to many Americans and providing tax breaks for struggling businesses . The Bush administration pushed for significantly increased regulation of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac in 2003 , and after two years , the regulations passed the House but died in the Senate . Many Republican senators , as well as influential members of the Bush Administration , feared that the agency created by these regulations would merely be mimicking the private sector 's risky practices . In September 2008 , the crisis became much more serious beginning with the government takeover of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac followed by the collapse of Lehman Brothers and a federal bailout of American International Group for \$ 85 billion .

Many economists and world governments determined that the situation became the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression . Additional regulation over the housing market would have been beneficial , according to former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan . Bush , meanwhile , proposed a financial rescue plan to buy back a large portion of the U.S. mortgage market . Vince Reinhart , a former Federal Reserve economist now at the American Enterprise Institute , said " it would have helped for the Bush administration to empower the folks at Treasury and the Federal Reserve and the comptroller of the currency and the FDIC to look at these issues more closely " , and additionally , that it would have helped " for Congress to have held hearings " .

In November 2008 , over 500 @, @ 000 jobs were lost , which marked the largest loss of jobs in the United States in 34 years . The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that in the last four months of 2008 , 1 @. @ 9 million jobs were lost . By the end of 2008 , the U.S. had lost a total of 2 @. @ 6 million jobs .

== == Education and health == ==

Bush undertook a number of educational priorities , such as increasing the funding for the National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health in his first years of office , and creating education programs to strengthen the grounding in science and mathematics for American high school students . Funding for the NIH was cut in 2006 , the first such cut in 36 years , due to rising inflation .

One of the administration 's early major initiatives was the No Child Left Behind Act , which aimed to measure and close the gap between rich and poor student performance , provide options to parents with students in low @-@ performing schools , and target more federal funding to low @-@ income schools . This landmark education initiative passed with broad bipartisan support , including that of Senator Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts . It was signed into law by Bush in early 2002 . Many contend that the initiative has been successful , as cited by the fact that students in the U.S. have performed significantly better on state reading and math tests since Bush signed " No Child Left Behind " into law . Critics argue that it is underfunded and that NCLBA 's focus on " high @-@ stakes testing " and quantitative outcomes is counterproductive .

After being re @-@ elected , Bush signed into law a Medicare drug benefit program that , according to Jan Crawford , resulted in " the greatest expansion in America 's welfare state in forty years ; " the bill 's costs approached \$ 7 trillion . In 2007 , Bush opposed and vetoed State Children 's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) legislation , which was added by the Democrats onto a war funding bill and passed by Congress . The SCHIP legislation would have significantly expanded federally funded health care benefits and plans to children of some low @-@ income families from about six million to ten million children . It was to be funded by an increase in the cigarette tax . Bush viewed the legislation as a move toward socialized health care , and asserted that the program could benefit families making as much as \$ 83 @, @ 000 per year who did not need the help .

= = = Social services and social security = = =

Following Republican efforts to pass the Medicare Act of 2003 , Bush signed the bill , which included major changes to the Medicare program by providing beneficiaries with some assistance in paying for prescription drugs , while relying on private insurance for the delivery of benefits . The retired persons lobby group AARP worked with the Bush Administration on the program and gave their endorsement . Bush said the law , estimated to cost \$ 400 billion over the first ten years , would give the elderly " better choices and more control over their health care " .

Bush began his second term by outlining a major initiative to reform Social Security , which was facing record deficit projections beginning in 2005 . Bush made it the centerpiece of his domestic agenda despite opposition from some in the U.S. Congress . In his 2005 State of the Union Address , Bush discussed the potential impending bankruptcy of the program and outlined his new program , which included partial privatization of the system , personal Social Security accounts , and options to permit Americans to divert a portion of their Social Security tax (FICA) into secured investments . Democrats opposed the proposal to partially privatize the system .

Bush embarked on a 60 @-@ day national tour , campaigning for his initiative in media events known as " Conversations on Social Security " , in an attempt to gain public support . Nevertheless , public support for the proposal declined and the House Republican leadership decided not to put Social Security reform on the priority list for the remainder of their 2005 legislative agenda . The proposal 's legislative prospects were further diminished by the political fallout from Hurricane Katrina in the fall of 2005 . After the Democrats gained control of both houses of Congress as a result of the 2006 midterm elections , there was no prospect of further congressional action on the Bush proposal for the remainder of his term in office .

= = = Environmental policies = = =

Upon taking office in 2001 , Bush stated his opposition to the Kyoto Protocol , an amendment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change which seeks to impose mandatory targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions , citing that the treaty exempted 80 percent of the

world 's population and would have cost tens of billions of dollars per year . He also cited that the Senate had voted 95 ? 0 in 1997 on a resolution expressing its disapproval of the protocol .

In May 2001 , Bush signed an executive order to create an inter @-@ agency task force to streamline energy projects , and later signed two other executive orders to tackle environmental issues .

In 2002 , Bush announced the Clear Skies Act of 2003 , aimed at amending the Clean Air Act to reduce air pollution through the use of emissions trading programs . Many experts argued that this legislation would have weakened the original legislation by allowing higher emission rates of pollutants than were previously legal . The initiative was introduced to Congress , but failed to make it out of committee .

Later in 2006 , Bush declared the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands a national monument , creating the largest marine reserve to date . The Papah?naumoku?kea Marine National Monument comprises 84 million acres (340 @,@ 000 km2) and is home to 7 @,@ 000 species of fish , birds , and other marine animals , many of which are specific to only those islands . The move was hailed by conservationists for " its foresight and leadership in protecting this incredible area " .

Bush has said that he believes that global warming is real and has noted that it is a serious problem , but he asserted there is a " debate over whether it 's man @-@ made or naturally caused " . The Bush Administration 's stance on global warming remained controversial in the scientific and environmental communities . Critics have alleged that the administration misinformed the public and did not do enough to reduce carbon emissions and deter global warming .

= = = = Energy policies = = = =

In his 2006 State of the Union Address , Bush declared , " America is addicted to oil " and announced his Advanced Energy Initiative to increase energy development research .

In his 2007 State of the Union Address , Bush renewed his pledge to work toward diminished reliance on foreign oil by reducing fossil fuel consumption and increasing alternative fuel production . Amid high gasoline prices in 2008 , Bush lifted a ban on offshore drilling . However , the move was largely symbolic as there is still a federal law banning offshore drilling . Bush said , " This means that the only thing standing between the American people and these vast oil reserves is action from the U.S. Congress . " Bush had said in June 2008 , " In the long run , the solution is to reduce demand for oil by promoting alternative energy technologies . My administration has worked with Congress to invest in gas @-@ saving technologies like advanced batteries and hydrogen fuel cells ... In the short run , the American economy will continue to rely largely on oil . And that means we need to increase supply , especially here at home . So my administration has repeatedly called on Congress to expand domestic oil production . "

In his 2008 State of the Union Address , Bush announced that the U.S. would commit \$ 2 billion over the next three years to a new international fund to promote clean energy technologies and fight climate change , saying , " Along with contributions from other countries , this fund will increase and accelerate the deployment of all forms of cleaner , more efficient technologies in developing nations like India and China , and help leverage substantial private @-@ sector capital by making clean energy projects more financially attractive . " He also announced plans to reaffirm the United States ' commitment to work with major economies , and , through the UN , to complete an international agreement that will slow , stop , and eventually reverse the growth of greenhouse gases ; he stated , " This agreement will be effective only if it includes commitments by every major economy and gives none a free ride . "

= = = = Stem cell research and first veto = = = =

Federal funding for medical research involving the creation or destruction of human embryos through the Department of Health and Human Services and the National Institutes of Health has been forbidden by law since the passage in 1995 of the Dickey @-@ Wicker Amendment by Congress and the signature of President Bill Clinton . Bush has said that he supports adult stem cell

research and has supported federal legislation that finances adult stem cell research . However , Bush did not support embryonic stem cell research . On August 9 , 2001 , Bush signed an executive order lifting the ban on federal funding for the 71 existing " lines " of stem cells , but the ability of these existing lines to provide an adequate medium for testing has been questioned . Testing can be done on only 12 of the original lines , and all approved lines have been cultured in contact with mouse cells , which creates safety issues that complicate development and approval of therapies from these lines . On July 19 , 2006 , Bush used his veto power for the first time in his presidency to veto the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act . The bill would have repealed the Dickey @-@ Wicker Amendment , thereby permitting federal money to be used for research where stem cells are derived from the destruction of an embryo .

= = = = Genetic Nondiscrimination = = = =

On May 21 , 2008 President George W. Bush signed into law the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) . The bill aims to protect Americans against discrimination based on their genetic information when it comes to health insurance and employment . The issue had been debated for 13 years before becoming law . It is designed to protect citizens while not hindering genetic research .

= = = = Immigration = = = =

Nearly 8 million immigrants came to the United States from 2000 to 2005 , more than in any other five @-@ year period in the nation 's history . Almost half entered illegally . In 2006 , Bush urged Congress to allow more than 12 million illegal immigrants to work in the United States with the creation of a " temporary guest @-@ worker program " . Bush also urged Congress to provide additional funds for border security and committed to deploying 6 @,@ 000 National Guard troops to the Mexico ? United States border . From May to June 2007 , Bush strongly supported the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007 , which was written by a bipartisan group of Senators with the active participation of the Bush administration . The bill envisioned a legalization program for illegal immigrants , with an eventual path to citizenship ; establishing a guest worker program ; a series of border and work site enforcement measures ; a reform of the green card application process and the introduction of a point @-@ based " merit " system for green cards ; elimination of " chain migration " and of the Diversity Immigrant Visa ; and other measures . Bush argued that the lack of legal status denies the protections of U.S. laws to millions of people who face dangers of poverty and exploitation , and penalizes employers despite a demand for immigrant labor . Bush contended that the proposed bill did not amount to amnesty .

A heated public debate followed , which resulted in a substantial rift within the Republican Party , most conservatives opposed it because of its legalization or amnesty provisions . The bill was eventually defeated in the Senate on June 28 , 2007 , when a cloture motion failed on a 46 ? 53 vote . Bush expressed disappointment upon the defeat of one of his signature domestic initiatives . The Bush administration later proposed a series of immigration enforcement measures that do not require a change in law .

On September 19 , 2010 , former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said that Bush offered to accept 100 @,@ 000 Palestinian refugees as American citizens if a permanent settlement had been reached between Israel and the Palestinian Authority .

= = = = Hurricane Katrina = = = =

Hurricane Katrina , one of the most damaging natural disasters in U.S. history , struck early in Bush 's second term . Katrina formed in late August during the 2005 Atlantic hurricane season and devastated much of the north @-@ central Gulf Coast of the United States , particularly New Orleans .

Bush declared a state of emergency in Louisiana on August 27 , and in Mississippi and Alabama

the following day ; he authorized the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to manage the disaster , but his announcement failed to spur these agencies to action . The eye of the hurricane made landfall on August 29 , and New Orleans began to flood due to levee breaches ; later that day , Bush declared that a major disaster existed in Louisiana , officially authorizing FEMA to start using federal funds to assist in the recovery effort .

On August 30 , DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff declared it " an incident of national significance " , triggering the first use of the newly created National Response Plan . Three days later , on September 2 , National Guard troops first entered the city of New Orleans . The same day , Bush toured parts of Louisiana , Mississippi , and Alabama and declared that the success of the recovery effort up to that point was " not enough " .

As the disaster in New Orleans intensified , critics charged that Bush was misrepresenting his administration 's role in what they saw as a flawed response . Leaders attacked Bush for having appointed apparently incompetent leaders to positions of power at FEMA , notably Michael D. Brown ; it was also argued that the federal response was limited as a result of the Iraq War and Bush himself did not act upon warnings of floods . Bush responded to mounting criticism by accepting full responsibility for the federal government 's failures in its handling of the emergency . It has been argued that with Katrina , Bush passed a political tipping point from which he would not recover .

= = = Midterm dismissal of U.S. attorneys = = =

During Bush 's second term , a controversy arose over the Justice Department 's midterm dismissal of seven United States Attorneys . The White House maintained that the U.S. attorneys were fired for poor performance . Attorney General Alberto Gonzales later resigned over the issue , along with other senior members of the Justice Department . The House Judiciary Committee issued subpoenas for advisers Harriet Miers and Josh Bolten to testify regarding this matter , but Bush directed Miers and Bolten to not comply with those subpoenas , invoking his right of executive privilege . Bush maintained that all of his advisers were protected under a broad executive privilege protection to receive candid advice . The Justice Department determined that the President 's order was legal .

Although Congressional investigations focused on whether the Justice Department and the White House were using the U.S. Attorney positions for political advantage , no official findings have been released . On March 10 , 2008 , the Congress filed a federal lawsuit to enforce their issued subpoenas . On July 31 , 2008 , a United States district court judge ruled that Bush 's top advisers were not immune from Congressional subpoenas .

In all , twelve Justice Department officials resigned rather than testify under oath before Congress . They included Attorney General Alberto Gonzales and his chief of staff Kyle Sampson , Gonzales ' liaison to the White House Monica Goodling , aide to the president Karl Rove and his senior aide Sara Taylor . In addition , legal counsel to the president Harriet Miers and deputy chief of staff to the president Joshua Bolten were both found in contempt of Congress .

In 2010 , the Justice Department investigator concluded that though political considerations did play a part in as many as four of the attorney firings , the firings were " inappropriately political " , but not criminal . According to the prosecutors , there was insufficient evidence to pursue prosecution for any criminal offense .

= = = Foreign policy = = =

In July 2001 , Bush visited Pope John Paul II at Castel Gandolfo .

During his Presidential campaign , Bush 's foreign policy platform included support for stronger economic and political relationship with Latin America , especially Mexico , and a reduction of involvement in " nation @-@ building " and other small @-@ scale military engagements . The administration pursued a national missile defense . Bush was an advocate of China 's entry into the World Trade Organization .

In his 2002 State of the Union Address , Bush referred to an axis of evil including Iraq , Iran and North Korea . After the September 11 attacks on New York , Bush launched the War on Terror , in which the United States military and a small international coalition invaded Afghanistan . In 2003 , Bush then launched the invasion of Iraq , searching for Weapons of Mass Destruction , which he described as being part of the War on Terrorism . Those invasions led to the toppling of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and the removal of Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq .

Bush began his second term with an emphasis on improving strained relations with European nations . He appointed long @-@ time adviser Karen Hughes to oversee a global public relations campaign . Bush lauded the pro @-@ democracy struggles in Georgia and Ukraine .

In March 2006 , a visit to India led to renewed ties between the two countries , reversing decades of U.S. policy . The visit focused particularly on areas of nuclear energy and counter @-@ terrorism cooperation , discussions that would lead eventually to the India ? United States Civil Nuclear Agreement .

This is in stark contrast to the stance taken by his predecessor , Clinton , whose approach and response to India after the 1998 nuclear tests was that of sanctions and hectoring . The relationship between India and the United States was one that dramatically improved during Bush 's tenure .

Midway through Bush 's second term , it was questioned whether Bush was retreating from his freedom and democracy agenda , highlighted in policy changes toward some oil @-@ rich former Soviet republics in central Asia .

In an address before both Houses of Congress on September 20 , 2001 , Bush thanked the nations of the world for their support following the September 11 attacks . He specifically thanked UK Prime Minister Tony Blair for traveling to Washington to show " unity of purpose with America " , and said " America has no truer friend than Great Britain . "

= = = = September 11 attacks = = = =

The September 11 terrorist attacks were a major turning point in Bush 's presidency . That evening , he addressed the nation from the Oval Office , promising a strong response to the attacks . He also emphasized the need for the nation to come together and comfort the families of the victims . On September 14 , he visited Ground Zero , meeting with Mayor Rudy Giuliani , firefighters , police officers , and volunteers . Bush addressed the gathering via a megaphone while standing on a heap of rubble , to much applause : " I can hear you . The rest of the world hears you . And the people who knocked these buildings down will hear all of us soon . "

In a September 20 speech , Bush condemned Osama bin Laden and his organization Al @-@ Qaeda , and issued an ultimatum to the Taliban regime in Afghanistan , where bin Laden was operating , to " hand over the terrorists , or ... share in their fate " .

= = = = War on Terrorism = = = =

After September 11 , Bush announced a global War on Terror . The Afghan Taliban regime was not forthcoming with Osama bin Laden , so Bush ordered the invasion of Afghanistan to overthrow the Taliban regime . In his January 29 , 2002 State of the Union Address , he asserted that an " axis of evil " consisting of North Korea , Iran , and Iraq was " arming to threaten the peace of the world " and " pose [d] a grave and growing danger " . The Bush Administration asserted both a right and the intention to wage preemptive war , or preventive war . This became the basis for the Bush Doctrine which weakened the unprecedented levels of international and domestic support for the United States which had followed the September 11 attacks .

Dissent and criticism of Bush 's leadership in the War on Terror increased as the war in Iraq continued . In 2006 , a National Intelligence Estimate concluded that the Iraq War had become the " cause célèbre for jihadists " .

= = = = Afghanistan invasion = = = =

On October 7 , 2001 , U.S. and British forces initiated bombing campaigns that led to the arrival of Northern Alliance troops in Kabul on November 13 . The main goals of the war were to defeat the Taliban , drive al @-@ Qaeda out of Afghanistan , and capture key al @-@ Qaeda leaders . In December 2001 , the Pentagon reported that the Taliban had been defeated , but cautioned that the war would go on to continue weakening Taliban and al @-@ Qaeda leaders . Later that month the UN had installed the Afghan Transitional Administration chaired by Hamid Karzai . In 2002 , based on UNICEF figures , Nicholas Kristof reported that " our invasion of Afghanistan may end up saving one million lives over the next decade " as the result of improved healthcare and greater access to humanitarian aid .

Efforts to kill or capture al @-@ Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden failed as he escaped a battle in December 2001 in the mountainous region of Tora Bora , which the Bush Administration later acknowledged to have resulted from a failure to commit enough U.S. ground troops . It was not until May 2011 , two years after Bush left office , that bin Laden was killed by U.S. forces . Bin Laden 's successor , Ayman al @-@ Zawahiri , remains at large .

Despite the initial success in driving the Taliban from power in Kabul , by early 2003 the Taliban was regrouping , amassing new funds and recruits . The 2005 failure of Operation Red Wings showed that the Taliban had returned . In 2006 , the Taliban insurgency appeared larger , fiercer and better organized than expected , with large @-@ scale allied offensives such as Operation Mountain Thrust attaining limited success . As a result , Bush commissioned 3 @, @ 500 additional troops to the country in March 2007 .

= = = = Iraq invasion = = = =

Beginning with his January 29 , 2002 State of the Union address , Bush began publicly focusing attention on Iraq , which he labeled as part of an " axis of evil " allied with terrorists and posing " a grave and growing danger " to U.S. interests through possession of weapons of mass destruction .

In the latter half of 2002 , CIA reports contained assertions of Saddam Hussein 's intent of reconstituting nuclear weapons programs , not properly accounting for Iraqi biological and chemical weapons , and that some Iraqi missiles had a range greater than allowed by the UN sanctions . Contentions that the Bush Administration manipulated or exaggerated the threat and evidence of Iraq 's weapons of mass destruction capabilities would eventually become a major point of criticism for the president .

In late 2002 and early 2003 , Bush urged the United Nations to enforce Iraqi disarmament mandates , precipitating a diplomatic crisis . In November 2002 , Hans Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei led UN weapons inspectors in Iraq , but were advised by the U.S. to depart the country four days prior to the U.S. invasion , despite their requests for more time to complete their tasks . The U.S. initially sought a UN Security Council resolution authorizing the use of military force but dropped the bid for UN approval due to vigorous opposition from several countries .

More than 20 nations (most notably the United Kingdom) , designated the " coalition of the willing " joined the United States in invading Iraq . They launched the invasion on March 20 , 2003 . The Iraqi military was quickly defeated . The capital , Baghdad , fell on April 9 , 2003 . On May 1 , Bush declared the end of major combat operations in Iraq . The initial success of U.S. operations increased his popularity , but the U.S. and allied forces faced a growing insurgency led by sectarian groups ; Bush 's " Mission Accomplished " speech was later criticized as premature . From 2004 until 2007 , the situation in Iraq deteriorated further , with some observers arguing that there was a full @-@ scale civil war in Iraq . Bush 's policies met with criticism , including demands domestically to set a timetable to withdraw troops from Iraq . The 2006 report of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group , led by James Baker , concluded that the situation in Iraq was " grave and deteriorating " . While Bush admitted that there were strategic mistakes made in regards to the stability of Iraq , he maintained he would not change the overall Iraq strategy .

In January 2005 , free , democratic elections were held in Iraq for the first time in 50 years . According to Iraqi National Security Advisor Mowaffak al @-@ Rubaie , " This is the greatest day in the history of this country . " Bush praised the event as well , saying that the Iraqis " have taken

rightful control of their country 's destiny " . This led to the election of Jalal Talabani as President and Nouri al @-@ Maliki as Prime Minister of Iraq . A referendum to approve a constitution in Iraq was held in October 2005 , supported by most Shiites and many Kurds .

On January 10 , 2007 , Bush announced a surge of 21 @,@ 500 more troops for Iraq , as well as a job program for Iraqis , more reconstruction proposals , and \$ 1 @.@ 2 billion for these programs . On May 1 , 2007 , Bush used his second @-@ ever veto to reject a bill setting a deadline for the withdrawal of U.S. troops , saying the debate over the conflict was " understandable " but insisting that a continued U.S. presence there was crucial .

In March 2008 , Bush praised the Iraqi government 's " bold decision " to launch the Battle of Basra against the Mahdi Army , calling it " a defining moment in the history of a free Iraq " . He said he would carefully weigh recommendations from his commanding General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker about how to proceed after the end of the military buildup in the summer of 2008 . He also praised the Iraqis ' legislative achievements , including a pension law , a revised de @-@ Baathification law , a new budget , an amnesty law , and a provincial powers measure that , he said , set the stage for the Iraqi elections . By July 2008 , American troop deaths had reached their lowest number since the war began , and due to increased stability in Iraq , Bush announced the withdrawal of additional American forces .

= = = = Surveillance = = = =

Following the events of September 11 , Bush issued an executive order authorizing the President 's Surveillance Program which included allowing the NSA to monitor communications between suspected terrorists outside the U.S and parties within the U.S. without obtaining a warrant as required by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act . As of 2009 , the other provisions of the program remained highly classified . Once the Department of Justice Office of Legal Counsel questioned its original legal opinion that FISA did not apply in a time of war , the program was subsequently re @-@ authorized by the President on the basis that the warrant requirements of FISA were implicitly superseded by the subsequent passage of the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Terrorists . The program proved to be controversial , as critics of the administration , as well as organizations such as the American Bar Association , argued that it was illegal . In August 2006 , a U.S. district court judge ruled that the NSA electronic surveillance program was unconstitutional , but on July 6 , 2007 , that ruling was vacated by the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit on the grounds that the plaintiffs lacked standing . On January 17 , 2007 , Attorney General Alberto Gonzales informed U.S. Senate leaders that the program would not be reauthorized by the President , but would be subjected to judicial oversight . Later in 2007 , the NSA launched a replacement for the program , referred to as PRISM , that was subject to the oversight of the United States Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court . This program was not publicly revealed until reports by The Washington Post and The Guardian emerged in June 2013 .

= = = = Interrogation policies = = = =

Bush authorized the CIA to use waterboarding as one of several enhanced interrogation techniques . Between 2002 and 2003 the CIA considered certain enhanced interrogation techniques , such as waterboarding , to be legal based on a secret Justice Department legal opinion arguing that terror detainees were not protected by the Geneva Conventions ' ban on torture and Vice President Cheney said enhanced interrogation including waterboarding was not torture or illegal . The CIA had exercised the technique on certain key terrorist suspects under authority given to it in the Bybee Memo from the Attorney General , though that memo was later withdrawn . While not permitted by the U.S. Army Field Manuals which assert " that harsh interrogation tactics elicit unreliable information " , the Bush administration believed these enhanced interrogations " provided critical information " to preserve American lives . Critics , such as former CIA officer Bob Baer , have stated that information was suspect , " you can get anyone to confess to anything if the torture 's bad enough . "

On October 17 , 2006 , Bush signed into law the Military Commissions Act of 2006 , a law enacted in the wake of the Supreme Court 's decision in *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld* , 548 U.S. 557 (2006) , which allows the U.S. government to prosecute unlawful enemy combatants by military commission rather than a standard trial . The law also denies them access to habeas corpus and bars the torture of detainees , but allows the president to determine what constitutes torture .

On March 8 , 2008 , Bush vetoed H.R. 2082 , a bill that would have expanded congressional oversight over the intelligence community and banned the use of waterboarding as well as other forms of interrogation not permitted under the United States Army Field Manual on Human Intelligence Collector Operations , saying that " the bill Congress sent me would take away one of the most valuable tools in the War on Terror " . In April 2009 , the ACLU sued and won release of the secret memos that had authorized the Bush administration 's interrogation tactics . One memo detailed specific interrogation tactics including a footnote that described waterboarding as torture as well as that the form of waterboarding used by the CIA was far more intense than authorized by the Justice Department .

== == North Korea condemnation == ==

Bush publicly condemned Kim Jong @-@ il of North Korea , naming North Korea one of three states in an " axis of evil " , and saying that " the United States of America will not permit the world 's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world 's most destructive weapons . " Within months , " both countries had walked away from their respective commitments under the U.S. ? DPRK Agreed Framework of October 1994 . " North Korea 's October 9 , 2006 , detonation of a nuclear device further complicated Bush 's foreign policy , which centered for both terms of his presidency on " [preventing] the terrorists and regimes who seek chemical , biological , or nuclear weapons from threatening the United States and the world " . Bush condemned North Korea 's position , reaffirmed his commitment to " a nuclear @-@ free Korean Peninsula " , and stated that " transfer of nuclear weapons or material by North Korea to states or non @-@ state entities would be considered a grave threat to the United States " , for which North Korea would be held accountable . On May 7 , 2007 , North Korea agreed to shut down its nuclear reactors immediately pending the release of frozen funds held in a foreign bank account . This was a result of a series of three @-@ way talks initiated by the United States and including China . On September 2 , 2007 , North Korea agreed to disclose and dismantle all of its nuclear programs by the end of 2007 . By May 2009 , North Korea had restarted its nuclear program and threatened to attack South Korea .

On June 22 , 2010 , " While South Korea prospers , the people of North Korea have suffered profoundly , " he said , adding that , " communism had resulted in dire poverty , mass starvation and brutal suppression . " In recent years , " he went on to say , " the suffering has been compounded by the leader who wasted North Korea 's precious few resources on personal luxuries and nuclear weapons programs . "

== == Syria sanctions == ==

Bush expanded economic sanctions on Syria . In early 2007 , the Treasury Department , acting on a June 2005 executive order , froze American bank accounts of Syria 's Higher Institute of Applied Science and Technology , Electronics Institute , and National Standards and Calibration Laboratory . Bush 's order prohibits Americans from doing business with these institutions suspected of helping spread weapons of mass destruction and being supportive of terrorism . Under separate executive orders signed by Bush in 2004 and later 2007 , the Treasury Department froze the assets of two Lebanese and two Syrians , accusing them of activities to " undermine the legitimate political process in Lebanon " in November 2007 . Those designated included : Assaad Halim Hardan , a member of Lebanon 's parliament and current leader of the Syrian Socialist National Party ; Wi 'am Wahhab , a former member of Lebanon 's government (Minister of the Environment) under Prime Minister Omar Karami (2004 ? 2005) ; Hafiz Makhlef , a colonel and senior official in the Syrian General Intelligence Directorate and a cousin of Syrian President Bashar al @-@ Assad ; and

Muhammad Nasif Khayrbik , identified as a close adviser to Assad .

===== Africa =====

Bush initiated the President 's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief Program (PEPFAR) . The U.S. government has spent some \$ 44 billion on the project since 2003 (a figure that includes \$ 7 billion contributed to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS , Tuberculosis , and Malaria , a multilateral organization) , saving an estimated 5 million lives . According to The New York Times correspondent Peter Baker , " Bush did more to stop AIDS and more to help Africa than any president before or since . "

===== Assassination attempt =====

On May 10 , 2005 , Vladimir Arutyunian , a native Georgian who was born to a family of ethnic Armenians , threw a live hand grenade toward a podium where Bush was speaking at Freedom Square in Tbilisi , Georgia . Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili was seated nearby . It landed in the crowd about 65 feet (20 m) from the podium after hitting a girl , but it did not detonate . Arutyunian was arrested in July 2005 , confessed , was convicted and was given a life sentence in January 2006 .

===== Other issues =====

Bush withdrew U.S. support for several international agreements , including the Anti @-@ Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) with Russia . He also signed the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty with Russia .

Bush emphasized a careful approach to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians ; he denounced Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat for his support of violence , but sponsored dialogues between Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian National Authority President Mahmoud Abbas . Bush supported Sharon 's unilateral disengagement plan , and lauded the democratic elections held in Palestine after Arafat 's death .

Bush also expressed U.S. support for the defense of Taiwan following the stand @-@ off in April 2001 with the People 's Republic of China over the Hainan Island incident , when an EP @-@ 3E Aries II surveillance aircraft collided with a People 's Liberation Army Air Force jet , leading to the detention of U.S. personnel . From 2003 to 2004 , Bush authorized U.S. military intervention in Haiti and Liberia to protect U.S. interests . Bush condemned the militia attacks Darfur and denounced the killings in Sudan as genocide . Bush said that an international peacekeeping presence was critical in Darfur , but opposed referring the situation to the International Criminal Court .

In the State of the Union address in January 2003 , Bush outlined a five @-@ year strategy for global emergency AIDS relief , the President 's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief . Bush announced \$ 15 billion for this effort which directly supported life @-@ saving antiretroviral treatment for more than 3 @.@ 2 million men , women and children worldwide .

On June 10 , 2007 , Bush met with Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha and became the first president to visit Albania . Bush has voiced his support for the independence of Kosovo . Bush opposed South Ossetia 's independence . On August 15 , 2008 , Bush said of Russia 's invasion of the country of Georgia : " Bullying and intimidation are not acceptable ways to conduct foreign policy in the 21st century . "

Bush opened the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City , Utha . Departing from previous practice , he stood among a group of U.S. athletes rather than from a ceremonial stand or box , saying : " On behalf of a proud , determined , and grateful nation , I declare open the Games of Salt Lake City , celebrating the Olympic Winter Games . " In 2008 , in the course of a good @-@ will trip to Asia , he attended the Summer Olympics in Beijing .

Bush twice invoked Section 3 of the Twenty @-@ fifth Amendment , which allows a President to temporarily transfer the powers and duties of his office to the Vice President who then becomes

Acting President . On June 29 , 2002 , Bush underwent a colonoscopy and chose to invoke Section 3 of the amendment , making Vice President Dick Cheney the Acting President . The medical procedure began at 7 : 09 a.m. EDT and ended at 7 : 29 a.m. EDT . Bush woke up twenty minutes later , but did not resume his presidential powers and duties until 9 : 24 a.m. EDT after the president 's doctor , Richard Tubb , conducted an overall examination . Tubb said he recommended the additional time to make sure the sedative had no after effects . On July 21 , 2007 , Bush again invoked Section 3 in response to having to undergo a colonoscopy , again making Vice President Cheney the Acting President . Bush invoked Section 3 at 7 : 16 a.m. EDT . He reclaimed his powers at 9 : 21 a.m. EDT . In both cases , Bush specifically cited Section 3 when he transferred the Presidential powers to the Vice President and when he reclaimed those powers .

= = = Judicial appointments = = =

= = = = Supreme Court = = = =

Following the announcement of Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O 'Connor 's retirement on July 1 , 2005 , Bush nominated John Roberts to succeed her . On September 5 , following the death of Chief Justice William Rehnquist , this nomination was withdrawn and Bush instead nominated Roberts for Chief Justice to succeed Rehnquist . Roberts was confirmed by the Senate as the 17th Chief Justice on September 29 , 2005 .

On October 3 , 2005 , Bush nominated long time White House Counsel Harriet Miers for O 'Connor 's position . After facing significant opposition from both parties , who found her to be ill @-@ prepared and uninformed on the law , Miers asked that her name be withdrawn on October 27 . Four days later , on October 31 , Bush nominated federal appellate judge Samuel Alito . Alito was confirmed as the 110th Supreme Court Justice on January 31 , 2006 .

= = = = Other courts = = = =

In addition to his two Supreme Court appointments , Bush appointed 61 judges to the United States courts of appeals and 261 judges to the United States district courts . Each of these numbers , along with his total of 324 judicial appointments , is third in American history , behind both Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton . Bush experienced a number of judicial appointment controversies . Debate during one confirmation session lasted " 39 stupefying hours " according to The New York Times . On August 3 , 2001 , the Senate did not consent to keep existing nominations in status quo , returning 40 judicial nominations , and 164 total nominations .

At the outset , Judicature magazine noted that the " Senate Democrats were gearing up for the approaching confirmation hearings " before the first set of nominees were sent to the Senate . It then cites The New York Times as saying " Senate Democrats have pledged they will not automatically vote to confirm Mr. Bush 's judicial nominees and will subject them to intense scrutiny . "

The Senate confirmed only 8 out of 60 judicial nominations by October 2001 . In February 2003 , the Democrats successfully filibustered the nomination of Miguel Estrada .

= = = Public image and perception = = =

= = = = Domestic = = = =

= = = = = Image = = = = =

Bush 's upbringing in West Texas , his accent , his vacations on his Texas ranch , and his penchant

for country metaphors contribute to his folksy , American cowboy image . " I think people look at him and think John Wayne , " said Piers Morgan , editor of the British Daily Mirror . It has been suggested that Bush 's accent was an active choice , as a way of distinguishing himself from Northeastern intellectuals and anchoring himself to his Texas roots . Both supporters and detractors have pointed to his country persona as reasons for their support or criticism .

Bush has been parodied by the media , comedians , and other politicians . Detractors tended to cite linguistic errors made by Bush during his public speeches , which are colloquially referred to as Bushisms . Some pundits labeled Bush " the worst president ever " . In contrast to his father , who was perceived as having troubles with an overarching unifying theme , Bush embraced larger visions and was seen as a man of larger ideas and associated huge risks . Tony Blair wrote in 2010 that the caricature of Bush as being dumb is " ludicrous " and that Bush is " very smart " . In an interview with Playboy , New York Times columnist David Brooks said George W. Bush " was 60 IQ points smarter in private than he was in public . He doesn 't want anybody to think he 's smarter than they are , so puts on a Texas act . "

= = = = Job approval = = = =

Bush began his presidency with approval ratings near 50 percent . After the September 11 attacks , Bush gained an approval rating of 90 percent , maintaining 80 to 90 percent approval for four months after the attacks . It remained over 50 percent during most of his first term and then fell to as low as 19 percent in his second term .

In 2000 and again in 2004 , Time magazine named George W. Bush as its Person of the Year , a title awarded to someone who the editors believe " has done the most to influence the events of the year " . In May 2004 , Gallup reported that 89 percent of the Republican electorate approved of Bush . However , the support waned due mostly to a minority of Republicans ' frustration with him on issues of spending , illegal immigration , and Middle Eastern affairs .

Within the United States armed forces , according to an unscientific survey , the president was strongly supported in the 2004 presidential elections . While 73 percent of military personnel said that they would vote for Bush , 18 percent preferred his Democratic rival , John Kerry . According to Peter Feaver , a Duke University political scientist who has studied the political leanings of the U.S. military , members of the armed services supported Bush because they found him more likely than Kerry to complete the War in Iraq .

Bush 's approval rating went below the 50 percent mark in AP @-@ Ipsos polling in December 2004 . Thereafter , his approval ratings and approval of his handling of domestic and foreign policy issues steadily dropped . Bush received heavy criticism for his handling of the Iraq War , his response to Hurricane Katrina and to the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse , NSA warrantless surveillance , the Plame affair , and Guantanamo Bay detention camp controversies . There were calls for Bush 's impeachment , though most polls showed a plurality of Americans would not support such an action . The arguments offered for impeachment usually centered on the NSA warrantless surveillance controversy , the Bush administration 's justification for the war in Iraq , and alleged violations of the Geneva Conventions . Representative Dennis Kucinich (D @-@ OH) , who had run against Bush during the 2004 presidential campaign , introduced 35 articles of impeachment on the floor of the House of Representatives against Bush on June 9 , 2008 , but Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D @-@ CA) declared that impeachment was " off the table " .

Polls conducted in 2006 showed an average of 37 percent approval ratings for Bush , the lowest for any second @-@ term president at that point of his term since Harry S. Truman in March 1951 (when Truman 's approval rating was 28 percent) , which contributed to what Bush called the " thumping " of the Republican Party in the 2006 mid @-@ term elections . Throughout most of 2007 , Bush 's approval rating hovered in the mid @-@ thirties ; the average for his entire second term was 37 percent , according to Gallup .

By the beginning of 2008 , his final year in office , Bush 's approval rating had dropped to a low of just 19 percent , largely from the loss of support among Republicans . Commenting on his low poll numbers and accusations of being " the worst president , " Bush would say , " I make decisions on

what I think is right for the United States based upon principles . I frankly don 't give a damn about the polls . "

In the spring of that year , Bush 's disapproval ratings reached the highest ever recorded for any president in the 70 @-@ year history of the Gallup poll , with 69 percent of those polled in April 2008 disapproving of the job Bush was doing as president and 28 percent approving ? although the majority (66 percent) of Republicans still approved of his job performance .

In polls conducted in the fall , just before the 2008 election , his approval ratings remained at record lows of 19 to 20 percent , while his disapproval ratings ranged from 67 percent to as high as 75 percent . In polling conducted January 9 ? 11 , 2009 , his final job approval rating by Gallup was 34 percent , which placed him on par with Jimmy Carter and Harry S. Truman , the other presidents whose final Gallup ratings measured in the low 30s (Richard Nixon 's final Gallup approval rating was even lower , at 24 percent) . According to a CBS News / New York Times poll conducted January 11 ? 15 , 2009 , Bush 's final approval rating in office was 22 percent , the lowest in American history .

= = = = Foreign perceptions = = = =

Bush was criticized internationally and targeted by the global anti @-@ war and anti @-@ globalization campaigns for his administration 's foreign policy . Views of him within the international community ? even in France , a close ally of the United States ? were more negative than those of most previous American presidents in history .

Bush was described as having especially close personal relationships with Tony Blair of Great Britain and Vicente Fox of Mexico , although formal relations were sometimes strained . Other leaders , such as Afghan president Hamid Karzai , Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni , Spanish prime minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero , and Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez , openly criticized the president . Later in Bush 's presidency , tensions arose between him and Vladimir Putin , which led to a cooling of their relationship .

In 2006 , most respondents in 18 of 21 countries surveyed around the world were found to hold an unfavorable opinion of Bush . Respondents indicated that they judged his administration as negative for world security . In 2007 , the Pew Global Attitudes Project reported that during the Bush presidency , attitudes towards the United States , and towards Americans , became less favorable around the world .

A March 2007 survey of Arab opinion conducted by Zogby International and the University of Maryland found that Bush was the most disliked leader in the Arab world .

The Pew Research Center 's 2007 Global Attitudes poll found that out of 47 countries , in only nine countries did most respondents express " a lot of confidence " or " some confidence " in Bush : Ethiopia , Ghana , India , Israel , Ivory Coast , Kenya , Mali , Nigeria , and Uganda .

During a June 2007 visit to the predominantly Muslim Albania , Bush was greeted enthusiastically . Albania has a population of 2 @.@ 8 million , has troops in both Iraq and Afghanistan , and the country 's government is highly supportive of American foreign policy . A huge image of the President was hung in the middle of the capital city of Tirana flanked by Albanian and American flags while a local street was named after him . A shirt @-@ sleeved statue of Bush was unveiled in Fushë @-@ Krujë , a few kilometers northwest of Tirana . The Bush administration 's support for the independence of Albanian @-@ majority Kosovo , while endearing him to the Albanians , has troubled U.S. relations with Serbia , leading to the February 2008 torching of the U.S. embassy in Belgrade .

= = = = Acknowledgments and dedications = = = =

On May 7 , 2005 , during an official state visit to Latvia , Bush was awarded the Order of the Three Stars presented to him by President Vaira V??e @-@ Freiberga . A few places outside the United States bear Bush 's name . In 2005 , the Tbilisi City Council voted to rename a street in honor of the U.S. president . Previously known as Melaani Drive , the street links the Georgian capital 's airport

with the city center and was used by Bush 's motorcade during his visit four months earlier . A street in Tirana , formerly known as Rruga Puntorët e Rilendjes , situated directly outside the Albanian Parliament , was renamed after Bush a few days before he made the first @-@ ever visit by an American president to Albania in June 2007 . In Jerusalem , a small plaza with a monument bearing his name is also dedicated to Bush .

In 2012 , Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves awarded Bush the Order of the Cross of Terra Mariana for his work in expanding NATO .

= = = Criticism = = =

The Bush Presidency has been ranked among the worst in surveys of presidential scholars published in the late 2000s and 2010s .

After his re @-@ election in 2004 , Bush received increasingly heated criticism from across the political spectrum for his handling of the Iraq War , Hurricane Katrina , and other challenges . Amid this criticism , the Democratic Party regained control of Congress in the 2006 elections . In December 2007 , the United States entered its longest post @-@ World War II recession , often referred to as the " Great Recession " , prompting the Bush administration to obtain congressional passage of multiple economic programs intended to preserve the country 's financial system . Nationally , Bush was both one of the most popular and unpopular presidents in history , having received the highest recorded presidential approval ratings in the wake of the September 11 attacks , as well as one of the lowest approval ratings during the 2008 financial crisis .

= = Post @-@ presidency = =

= = = Residence (since 2009) = = =

Following the inauguration of Barack Obama , Bush and his family flew from Andrews Air Force Base to a homecoming celebration in Midland , Texas , following which they returned to their ranch in Crawford , Texas . They bought a home in the Preston Hollow neighborhood of Dallas , Texas , where they settled down .

He makes regular appearances at various events throughout the Dallas / Fort Worth area , most notably when he conducted the opening coin toss at the Dallas Cowboys first game in the team 's new stadium in Arlington and an April 2009 visit to a Texas Rangers game , where he thanked the people of Dallas for helping him settle in and was met with a standing ovation . He also attended every home playoff game for the Texas Rangers 2010 season and , accompanied by his father , threw out the ceremonial first pitch at Rangers Ballpark in Arlington for Game 4 of the 2010 World Series on October 31 , 2010 .

On August 6 , 2013 , Bush was successfully treated for a coronary artery blockage with a stent . The blockage had been found during an annual medical examination .

In reaction to the 2016 shooting of Dallas police officers , Bush stated : " Laura and I are heartbroken by the heinous acts of violence in our city last night . Murdering the innocent is always evil , never more so than when the lives taken belong to those who protect our families and communities . "

= = = Publications and appearances = = =

Since leaving office , Bush has kept a relatively low profile though he has made public appearances , most notably after the release of his memoirs in 2010 and for the 10th anniversary of the September 11 attacks in 2011 . In March 2009 , he delivered his first post @-@ presidency speech in Calgary , Alberta , appeared via video on The Colbert Report during which he praised U.S. troops for earning a " special place in American history , " and attended the funeral of Senator Ted Kennedy . Bush made his debut as a motivational speaker on October 26 at the " Get Motivated "

seminar in Dallas . In the aftermath of the Fort Hood shooting that took place on November 5 , 2009 , in Texas , the Bushes paid an undisclosed visit to the survivors and victims ' families the day following the shooting , having contacted the base commander requesting that the visit be private and not involve press coverage .

Bush released his memoirs , *Decision Points* , on November 9 , 2010 . During a pre @-@ release appearance promoting the book , Bush said he considered his biggest accomplishment to be keeping " the country safe amid a real danger " , and his greatest failure to be his inability to secure the passage of Social Security reform . He also made news defending his administration 's enhanced interrogation techniques , specifically the waterboarding of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed , saying , " I 'd do it again to save lives . "

In 2012 , he wrote the foreword of *The 4 % Solution : Unleashing the Economic Growth America Needs* , an economics book published by the George W. Bush Presidential Center . He also presented the book at the Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas , Texas .

Bush appeared on NBC 's *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno on November 19 , 2013 , along with the former First Lady , Laura Bush . When asked by Leno why he does not comment publicly about the Obama administration , Bush said , " I don 't think it 's good for the country to have a former president criticize his successor . " Despite this statement , on Saturday , April 25 , 2015 , Bush criticized President Barack Obama at a meeting of the Republican Jewish Coalition at the Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas . Bush criticized Obama 's handling of Iran , specifically with respect to sanctions and a nuclear deal , saying : " You think the Middle East is chaotic now ? Imagine what it looks like for our grandchildren . That 's how Americans should view the deal . " Bush also attacked Obama 's withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq in 2011 , calling it a " strategic blunder " , borrowing a term that had been used by South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham .

Alongside the 2014 United States ? Africa Leaders Summit , Bush , Michelle Obama , the State Department , and the George W. Bush Institute hosted a daylong forum on education and health with the spouses of the African leaders attending the summit . Bush urged African leaders to avoid discriminatory laws that make the treatment of HIV / AIDS more difficult .

Bush has spoken in favor of increased global participation of women in politics and societal matters in foreign countries .

On November 2 , 2014 , Bush spoke at an event to 200 business and civic leaders at the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum to raise awareness for the upcoming Museum of the Bible in Washington D.C.

Bush published a biography of his father , George Bush , called *41 : A Portrait of My Father* . It was released on November 11 , 2014 .

In an interview published by Israel Hayom magazine on June 12 , 2015 , Bush said that " boots on the ground " would be needed in order to defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) . He added that people had said during his Presidency that he should withdraw American troops from Iraq , but he chose the opposite , sending 30 @,@ 000 more troops in order to defeat Al Qaeda in Iraq , and that Al Qaeda in Iraq was defeated . Bush was also asked about Iran but declined to answer , stating that any answer he gives would be interpreted as undermining President Barack Obama .

Bush declined to endorse the 2016 Republican nominee Donald Trump and he didn 't attend the 2016 Republican National Convention that formally nominated Trump . On the eve of Trump 's nomination , it was reported that Bush had privately expressed concern about the current direction of the Republican Party and told a group of his former aides and advisors , " I 'm worried that I will be the last Republican president . "

= = = Collaborations = = =

In January 2010 , at President Obama 's request , Bush and Bill Clinton established the Clinton Bush Haiti Fund to raise contributions for relief and recovery efforts following the 2010 Haiti earthquake earlier that month .

On May 2 , 2011 , President Obama called Bush , who was at a restaurant with his wife , to inform

him that Osama bin Laden had been killed . The Bushes joined the Obamas in New York City to mark the tenth anniversary of the September 11 , 2001 , terrorist attacks . At the Ground Zero memorial , Bush read a letter that President Abraham Lincoln wrote to a widow who lost five sons during the Civil War .

= = = Visual art = = =

After serving as president , Bush began painting as a hobby . Subjects have included dogs and still life . He has also painted self @-@ portraits and portraits of world leaders , including Vladimir Putin and Tony Blair .

His paintings have been met with a middling reception from art critics . Bill Arning , director of the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston , called his portraits " thickly painted in what I would call ' high @-@ amateur ' mode " and wrote , " I would say they need to be less based on photographic reproduction . You can tell when someone is taking a found photograph and making a painting out of it [...] I think he 'd be well advised to work from other , multiple photographic sources or the real person to get a little bit more liveliness going on . "

= = Legacy = =

George W. Bush 's legacy remains a contested one . Supporters credit Bush 's counterterrorism policies with preventing another major terrorist attack from occurring in the US after 9 / 11 and also praise individual policies such as the Medicare prescription drug benefit and the AIDS relief program known as PEPFAR . Critics often point to his handling of the Iraq War , specifically the failure to find weapons of mass destruction , that were the main rationale behind the initial invasion ? as well as his handling of tax policy , Hurricane Katrina and the 2008 financial crisis as proof that George W. Bush was unfit to be president .

Several historians and commentators hold the view that Bush was one of the most consequential presidents in American history . Princeton University scholar Julian Zelizer described Bush 's presidency as a " transformative " one , and said that " some people hate him , some people love him , but I do think he 'll have a much more substantive perception as time goes on " . Bryon Williams of The Huffington Post referred to Bush as " the most noteworthy president since FDR " and said that the Patriot Act " increased authority of the executive branch at the expense of judicial opinions about when searches and seizures are reasonable " as evidence . Bush 's administration presided over the largest tax cuts since the Reagan administration , and his homeland security reforms proved to be the most significant expansion of the federal government since the Great Society . Much of these policies have endured in the administration of Bush 's Democratic successor , Barack Obama .

Among the public , his reputation has improved somewhat since his presidency ended in 2009 . In February 2012 , Gallup reported that " Americans still rate George W. Bush among the worst presidents , though their views have become more positive in the three years since he left office . " Gallup had earlier noted that Bush 's favorability ratings in public opinion surveys had begun to rise a year after he had left office , from 40 percent in January 2009 and 35 percent in March 2009 , to 45 percent in July 2010 , a period during which he had remained largely out of the news . Other pollsters have noted similar trends of slight improvement in Bush 's personal favorability since the end of his presidency . In April 2013 , Bush 's approval rating stood at 47 percent approval and 50 percent disapproval in a poll jointly conducted for The Washington Post and ABC , his highest approval rating since December 2005 . Bush had achieved notable gains among seniors , non @-@ college whites , and moderate and conservative Democrats since leaving office , although majorities disapproved of his handling of the economy (53 percent) and the Iraq War (57 percent) . His 47 percent approval rating was equal to that of President Obama 's in the same polling period . A CNN poll conducted that same month found that 55 percent of Americans said Bush 's presidency had been a failure , with 80 percent of Republican calling it a success , but only 43 percent of independents calling it a success and nearly 90 percent of Democrats calling it a failure .

While President Bush 's approval rating among the public has seen an improvement , the most recent survey of the opinions of historians , political scientists , and Presidential scholars , conducted in 2010 by the Siena Research Institute , ranked him 39th out of 43 Presidents . The survey respondents gave President Bush low ratings on his handling of the U.S. economy , communication , ability to compromise , foreign policy accomplishments , and intelligence .