Obama was born in [Honolulu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honolulu), [Hawaii](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawaii). After graduating from [Columbia University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbia_University) in 1983, he worked as a community organizer in [Chicago](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicago). In 1988, he enrolled in [Harvard Law School](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harvard_Law_School), where he was the first black president of the [*Harvard Law Review*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harvard_Law_Review). After graduating, he became a civil rights attorney and an academic, teaching constitutional law at the [University of Chicago Law School](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Chicago_Law_School) from 1992 to 2004. Turning to elective politics, he [represented the 13th district](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illinois_Senate_career_of_Barack_Obama) in the [Illinois Senate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illinois_Senate) from 1997 until 2004, when he [ran for the U.S. Senate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2004_United_States_Senate_election_in_Illinois). Obama received national attention in 2004 with his March Senate primary win, his well-received July [Democratic National Convention](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2004_Democratic_National_Convention) [keynote address](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2004_Democratic_National_Convention_keynote_address), and his landslide November election to the Senate. In 2008, he was nominated by the Democratic Party for president a year after beginning [his campaign](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama_2008_presidential_campaign), and after [a close primary campaign](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2008_Democratic_Party_presidential_primaries) against [Hillary Clinton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hillary_Clinton). Obama was elected over [Republican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republican_Party_(United_States)) nominee [John McCain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_McCain) in the [general election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2008_United_States_presidential_election) and was [inaugurated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_inauguration_of_Barack_Obama) alongside his running mate, [Joe Biden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Biden), on January 20, 2009. Nine months later, he was named the [2009 Nobel Peace Prize](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2009_Nobel_Peace_Prize) laureate.

Obama signed many landmark bills into law during his first two years in office. The main reforms that were passed include the [Affordable Care Act](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Affordable_Care_Act) (commonly referred to as ACA or "Obamacare"), although without a [public health insurance option](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_health_insurance_option), the [Dodd–Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dodd%E2%80%93Frank_Wall_Street_Reform_and_Consumer_Protection_Act), and the [Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act of 2010](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don%27t_Ask,_Don%27t_Tell_Repeal_Act_of_2010). The [American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Recovery_and_Reinvestment_Act_of_2009) and [Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tax_Relief,_Unemployment_Insurance_Reauthorization,_and_Job_Creation_Act_of_2010) served as economic stimuli amidst the [Great Recession](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Recession_in_the_United_States). After a [lengthy debate over the national debt limit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_debt-ceiling_crisis_of_2011), he signed the [Budget Control](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Budget_Control_Act_of_2011) and the [American Taxpayer Relief Acts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Taxpayer_Relief_Act_of_2012). In foreign policy, he increased U.S. troop levels in [Afghanistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_in_Afghanistan_(2001%E2%80%93present)), reduced nuclear weapons with the United States–[Russia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia) [New START](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_START) treaty, and [ended military involvement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Withdrawal_of_U.S._troops_from_Iraq_(2007%E2%80%932011)) in the [Iraq War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq_War). He ordered [military involvement in Libya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_military_intervention_in_Libya) for the implementation of the [UN Security Council Resolution 1973](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council_Resolution_1973), contributing to the overthrow of [Muammar Gaddafi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muammar_Gaddafi). He also ordered the military operation that resulted in the [killing of Osama bin Laden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Killing_of_Osama_bin_Laden).

After winning [re-election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2012_United_States_presidential_election) by defeating Republican opponent [Mitt Romney](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitt_Romney), Obama was [sworn in for a second term](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_inauguration_of_Barack_Obama) in 2013. During this term, he promoted inclusion for [LGBT Americans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_American). His administration filed briefs that urged the [Supreme Court](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supreme_Court_of_the_United_States) to strike down [same-sex marriage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Same-sex_marriage_in_the_United_States) bans as unconstitutional ([*United States v. Windsor*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_v._Windsor) and [*Obergefell v. Hodges*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obergefell_v._Hodges)); same-sex marriage was [legalized](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Same-sex_marriage_in_the_United_States) nationwide in 2015 after the Court ruled so in *Obergefell*. He advocated for [gun control](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gun_politics_in_the_United_States) in response to the [Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sandy_Hook_Elementary_School_shooting), indicating support for a ban on [assault weapons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assault_weapons), and issued wide-ranging executive actions concerning [global warming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_warming) and immigration. In foreign policy, he ordered successful [military interventions in Iraq](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American-led_intervention_in_Iraq_(2014%E2%80%93present)) and [Syria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American-led_intervention_in_the_Syrian_civil_war) in response to gains made by [ISIL](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_State_of_Iraq_and_the_Levant) after the 2011 withdrawal from Iraq, continued the process of [ending U.S. combat operations in Afghanistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ending_U.S._combat_operations_in_Afghanistan) in 2016, promoted discussions that led to the 2015 [Paris Agreement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris_Agreement) on global climate change, initiated [sanctions against Russia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_sanctions_during_the_Ukrainian_crisis) following the [invasion in Ukraine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_military_intervention_in_Ukraine_(2014%E2%80%93present)) and again after [interference in the 2016 U.S. elections](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_interference_in_the_2016_United_States_elections), brokered the [JCPOA nuclear deal with Iran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joint_Comprehensive_Plan_of_Action), and [normalized U.S. relations with Cuba](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuban_thaw). Obama nominated [three justices to the Supreme Court](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama_Supreme_Court_candidates): [Sonia Sotomayor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sonia_Sotomayor) and [Elena Kagan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elena_Kagan) were confirmed as justices, while [Merrick Garland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merrick_Garland) faced partisan [obstruction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merrick_Garland_Supreme_Court_nomination) from the Republican-led [Senate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Senate) led by [Mitch McConnell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitch_McConnell), which never held hearings or a vote on the nomination. Obama left office in January 2017 and continues to reside in [Washington, D.C.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington,_D.C.)[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama#cite_note-2)[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama#cite_note-How_Does_Trump_Stack_Up_Against_the_Best%E2%80%94and_Worst%E2%80%94Presidents?-3)

During Obama's terms in office, the United States' reputation abroad, as well as the American economy, significantly improved.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama#cite_note-4) Obama's presidency has generally been regarded favorably, and evaluations of his presidency among historians, political scientists, and the general public frequently place him among [the upper tier](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_rankings_of_presidents_of_the_United_States#Notable_scholar_surveys) of American presidents.