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# Lyndon B. Johnson

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**Lyndon Baines Johnson** (/lɪˈndən lɪbeɪnz ldʒɒnsən/; August 27, 1908 – January 22, 1973), often referred to as **LBJ**, was the **36th President of the United States** (1963–1969), a position he assumed after his service as the **37th Vice President of the United States** (1961–1963). He is one of only four people<sup>[1]</sup> who served in all four elected federal offices of the United States: Representative, Senator, Vice President, and President.<sup>[2]</sup> Johnson, a **Democrat** from **Texas**, served as a **United States Representative** from 1937 to 1949 and as a **Senator** from 1949 to 1961, including six years as **United States Senate Majority Leader**, two as Senate Minority Leader and two as **Senate Majority Whip**. After campaigning unsuccessfully for the Democratic nomination in 1960, Johnson was asked by **John F. Kennedy** to be his **running mate** for the **1960 presidential election**. After their election, Johnson **succeeded** to the presidency following **President Kennedy's assassination** on November 22, 1963, completed Kennedy's term and was elected President in his own right, winning by a large margin over **Barry Goldwater** in the **1964 election**.

Johnson was greatly supported by the **Democratic Party** and as President, he was responsible for designing the "**Great Society**" legislation that included laws that upheld **civil rights**, **public broadcasting**, **Medicare**, **Medicaid**, environmental protection, aid to education, aid to the arts, urban and rural development, and his "**War on Poverty**." Assisted in part by a growing economy, the War on Poverty helped millions of Americans rise above the poverty line during Johnson's presidency.<sup>[3]</sup> Civil rights bills signed by Johnson banned racial discrimination in public facilities, interstate commerce, the workplace, and housing, and a powerful **voting rights act** guaranteed full voting rights for citizens of all races. With the passage of the sweeping **Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965**, the country's immigration system was reformed and all national origins quotas were removed. Johnson was renowned for his domineering personality and the "Johnson treatment," his coercion of powerful politicians in order to advance legislation.

Meanwhile, Johnson escalated American involvement in the **Vietnam War**. In 1964, Congress passed the **Gulf of Tonkin Resolution**, which essentially gave Johnson the power to use any degree of military force in Southeast Asia without having to ask for an official declaration of war. The number of American military personnel in Vietnam increased dramatically, from 16,000 advisors in non-combat roles in 1963,<sup>[4]</sup> to 550,000 with many in combat roles in early 1968. American casualties soared and the peace process bogged down. Massive bombing campaigns targeting North Vietnamese cities were ordered, and millions of gallons of the herbicide **Agent Orange** were sprayed on Vietnamese land. Despite the growing number of American troops and the sustained bombing, the war showed no signs of ending and the public began to doubt the administration's optimistic claims that victory was close at hand. Growing unease with the war stimulated a large, angry **antiwar**

## Lyndon B. Johnson



<b>36th President of the United States</b>	
<b>In office</b>	
November 22, 1963 – January 20, 1969	
<b>Vice President</b>	<i>None</i> (1963–1965) Hubert Humphrey (1965–1969)
<b>Preceded by</b>	John F. Kennedy
<b>Succeeded by</b>	Richard Nixon
<b>37th Vice President of the United States</b>	
<b>In office</b>	
January 20, 1961 – November 22, 1963	
<b>President</b>	John F. Kennedy
<b>Preceded by</b>	Richard Nixon
<b>Succeeded by</b>	Hubert Humphrey
<b>Senate Majority Leader</b>	
<b>In office</b>	
January 3, 1955 – January 3, 1961	
<b>Deputy</b>	Earle Clements Mke Mansfield
<b>Preceded by</b>	William F. Knowland
<b>Succeeded by</b>	Mke Mansfield
<b>Senate Minority Leader</b>	
<b>In office</b>	
January 3, 1953 – January 3, 1955	
<b>Deputy</b>	Earle Clements
<b>Preceded by</b>	Styles Bridges
<b>Succeeded by</b>	William F. Knowland
<b>Senate Majority Whip</b>	
<b>In office</b>	
January 3, 1951 – January 3, 1953	
<b>Leader</b>	Ernest McFarland
<b>Preceded by</b>	Francis J. Myers
<b>Succeeded by</b>	Leverett Saltonstall
<b>United States Senator from Texas</b>	

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**movement** based especially on university campuses in the U.S. and abroad.<sup>[5]</sup>

Johnson faced further troubles when summer riots broke out in most major cities after 1965, and crime rates soared, as his opponents raised demands for "law and order" policies. While he began his presidency with widespread approval, support for Johnson declined as the public became further upset with both the war and the growing violence at home. The Democratic Party split in multiple feuding factions, and after Johnson did poorly in the 1968 New Hampshire primary, he ended his bid for reelection. Republican **Richard Nixon** was elected to succeed him, as the **New Deal coalition** that had dominated presidential politics for 36 years collapsed. Johnson died four years after he left office. Historians argue that Johnson's presidency marked the peak of **modern liberalism in the United States** after the **New Deal** era. Johnson is ranked favorably by some historians because of his domestic policies.<sup>[6][7]</sup>

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## Early years

### In office

January 3, 1949 – January 3, 1961

**Preceded by** W. Lee O'Daniel

**Succeeded by** William A. Blakley

**Member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Texas's 10th district**

### In office

April 10, 1937 – January 3, 1949

**Preceded by** James P. Buchanan

**Succeeded by** Homer Thornberry

### Personal details

<b>Born</b>	Lyndon Baines Johnson <div>August 27, 1908</div> Stonewall, Texas, U.S.
<b>Died</b>	January 22, 1973 (aged 64) <div>near Stonewall, Texas, U.S.</div>
<b>Resting place</b>	<span>Johnson Family Cemetery</span> <div>Stonewall, Texas</div>
<b>Political party</b>	Democratic
<b>Spouse(s)</b>	Lady Bird Taylor
<b>Children</b>	Lynda <div>Luci</div>
<b>Alma mater</b>	Southwest Texas State Teachers College
<b>Profession</b>	Teacher
<b>Religion</b>	Disciples of Christ
<b>Signature</b>	<span></span>
	<b>Military service</b>
<b>Allegiance</b>	<span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span> United States
<b>Service/branch</b>	<span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span> United States Navy
<b>Years of service</b>	1941–1942
<b>Rank</b>	<span><span><span></span></span></span> Lieutenant Commander
<b>Battles/wars</b>	World War II <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Salamaua-Lae campaign</li></ul>
<b>Awards</b>	<span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span> Silver Star <p><span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span>Presidential Medal of Freedom (Posthumous 1980)</p>



Lyndon Johnson in 1915

Lyndon Baines Johnson was born in [Stonewall, Texas](#), in a small [farmhouse](#) on the [Pedernales River](#), the oldest of five children. His parents, [Samuel Ealy Johnson, Jr.](#), and Rebekah Baines, had three girls and two boys: Johnson and his brother, [Sam Houston Johnson](#) (1914–78), and sisters Rebekah (1910–78), Josefa (1912–61), and Lucia (1916–97). The nearby small town of [Johnson City, Texas](#), was named after LBJ's father's cousin, James Polk Johnson, whose forebears had moved west from Oglethorpe County, [Georgia](#). Johnson had English, [Ulster Scot](#), and German ancestry.<sup>[8]</sup>

Johnson was maternally descended from a pioneer [Baptist](#) clergyman, [George Washington Baines](#), who pastored eight churches in Texas, as well as others in [Arkansas](#) and [Louisiana](#). Baines was also the president of [Baylor University](#) during the [American Civil War](#). George Baines was the grandfather of Johnson's mother, Rebekah Baines Johnson (1881–1958).

Johnson's grandfather, [Samuel Ealy Johnson, Sr.](#), was raised as a Baptist.

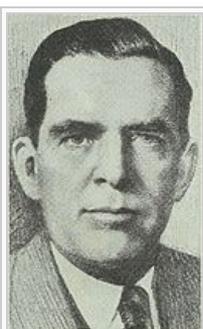
Subsequently, in his early adulthood, he became a member of the [Christian Church \(Disciples of Christ\)](#). In his later years the grandfather became a [Christadelphian](#); Johnson's father also joined the Christadelphian Church toward the end of his life.<sup>[9]</sup> Later, as a politician, Johnson was influenced in his positive attitude toward Jews by the religious beliefs that his family, especially his grandfather, had shared with him (see [Operation Texas](#)).<sup>[10]</sup> Johnson's favorite Bible verse came from the King James Version of Isaiah 1:18. "Come now, and let us reason together..."<sup>[11]</sup>

In school, Johnson was an awkward, talkative youth and was elected president of his 11th-grade class. He graduated from [Johnson City High School](#) (1924), having participated in public speaking, debate, and baseball.<sup>[12][13]</sup>

In 1926, Johnson enrolled in Southwest Texas State Teachers' College (now [Texas State University](#)). He worked his way through school, participated in debate and campus politics, and edited the school newspaper called *The College Star*, now known as *The University Star*.<sup>[14]</sup> The college years refined his skills of persuasion and political organization. For nine months, from 1928 to 1929, Johnson paused his studies to teach Mexican-American children at the segregated Welhausen School in [Cotulla](#), some 90 miles (140 km) south of [San Antonio](#) in [La Salle County](#). The job helped him save money to complete his education, and he graduated in 1930. He then taught in Pearsall High School in [Pearsall, Texas](#), and afterwards took a position as teacher of public speaking at [Sam Houston High School](#) in [Houston](#).<sup>[15]</sup> When he returned to San Marcos in 1965, after having signed the [Higher Education Act of 1965](#), Johnson looked back:

*"I shall never forget the faces of the boys and the girls in that little Welhausen Mexican School, and I remember even yet the pain of realizing and knowing then that college was closed to practically every one of those children because they were too poor. And I think it was then that I made up my mind that this nation could never rest while the door to knowledge remained closed to any American."*<sup>[16]</sup>

## Early political career



Richard Kleberg, Congressman from Texas, on whose staff Johnson served.

Johnson briefly taught public speaking and debate in a Houston high school, then entered politics. Johnson's father had served six terms in the [Texas legislature](#) and was a close friend of one of Texas's rising political figures, Congressman [Sam Rayburn](#). In 1930, Johnson campaigned for Texas State Senator Welly Hopkins in his run for Congress. Hopkins recommended him to Congressman [Richard M. Kleberg](#), who appointed Johnson as Kleberg's legislative secretary. Johnson was elected speaker of the "Little Congress," a group of Congressional aides, where he cultivated Congressmen, newspapermen and lobbyists. Johnson's friends soon included aides to President [Franklin D. Roosevelt](#), as well as fellow Texans such as Vice President [John Nance Garner](#). He became a surrogate son to Sam Rayburn.

Johnson married [Claudia Alta Taylor](#) (nicknamed "Lady Bird") of [Karnack, Texas](#) on November 17, 1934, after he attended [Georgetown University Law Center](#) for several months. They had two daughters,

[Lynda Bird](#), born in 1944, and [Luci Baines](#), born in 1947. Johnson had a practice of giving people and animals names with his and his wife's initials, as he did with his daughters and with his dog, Little Beagle Johnson.<sup>[17]</sup>

In 1935, he was appointed head of the Texas [National Youth Administration](#), which enabled him to use the government to create education and job opportunities for young people. He resigned two years later to run for Congress. Johnson, a notoriously tough boss throughout his career, often demanded long workdays and work on weekends.<sup>[18]</sup>

He was described by friends, fellow politicians, and historians as motivated



President Roosevelt, Governor James Alred of Texas, and Johnson, 1937. In later campaigns, Johnson edited Alred out of the picture to assist his campaign.

throughout his life by an exceptional lust for power and control. As Johnson's biographer [Robert Caro](#) observes, "Johnson's ambition was uncommon—in the degree to which it was unencumbered by even the slightest excess weight of ideology, of philosophy, of principles, of beliefs."<sup>[19]</sup>

## Congressional career

### House of Representatives

In 1937, Johnson successfully contested a special election for [Texas's 10th congressional district](#), that covered [Austin](#) and the surrounding hill country. He ran on a [New Deal](#) platform and was effectively aided by his wife. He served in the House from April 10, 1937, to January 3, 1949.<sup>[20]</sup>

President [Franklin D. Roosevelt](#) found Johnson to be a welcome ally and conduit for information, particularly with regard to issues concerning internal politics in Texas ([Operation Texas](#)) and the machinations of Vice President [John Nance Garner](#) and [Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn](#). Johnson was immediately appointed to the [Naval Affairs Committee](#). He worked for rural electrification and other improvements for his district. Johnson steered the projects towards contractors that he personally knew, such as the [Brown Brothers](#), Herman and George, who would finance much of Johnson's future career.<sup>[13]</sup> In 1941, he ran for the U.S. Senate in a special election against the sitting [Governor of Texas](#), radio personality [W. Lee "Pappy" O'Daniel](#). Johnson lost the election.

### War record

After America entered [World War II](#) in December 1941, Johnson, still in Congress, became a commissioned officer in the [Naval Reserve](#), then asked Undersecretary of the Navy [James Forrestal](#) for a combat assignment.<sup>[21]</sup> Instead he was sent to inspect the shipyard facilities in Texas and on the [West Coast](#). In the spring of 1942, President Roosevelt needed his own reports on what conditions were like in the [Southwest Pacific](#). Roosevelt felt information that flowed up the military chain of command needed to get delivered by a highly trusted political aide. From a suggestion by Forrestal, President Roosevelt assigned Johnson to a three-man survey team of the Southwest Pacific.

Johnson reported to General [Douglas MacArthur](#) in Australia. Johnson and two Army officers went to the [22nd Bomb Group](#) base, which was assigned the high risk mission of bombing the Japanese [airbase](#) at [Lae](#) in [New Guinea](#). A colonel took Johnson's allocated seat on one bomber, and it was shot down with no survivors. Reports vary on what happened to the [B-26 Marauder](#) carrying Johnson. Lyndon Johnson said it was also attacked by Japanese fighters but survived, while others, including other members of the flight crew, claim it turned back because of generator trouble before reaching the objective and before encountering enemy aircraft and never came under fire, which is supported by official flight records.<sup>[22]</sup> Other airplanes that continued to the target *did* come under fire near the target at about the same time that Johnson's plane was recorded as having landed back at the original airbase. MacArthur awarded Johnson the [Silver Star](#), the military's third-highest medal.<sup>[22]</sup>

Johnson reported back to Roosevelt, to the Navy leaders, and to Congress that conditions were deplorable and unacceptable. He argued the South West Pacific urgently needed a higher priority and a larger share of war supplies. The warplanes sent there, for example, were "far inferior" to Japanese planes, and morale was bad. He told Forrestal that the Pacific Fleet had a "critical" need for 6,800 additional experienced men. Johnson prepared a twelve-point program to upgrade the effort in the region, stressing "greater cooperation and coordination within the various commands and between the different war theaters." Congress responded by making Johnson chairman of a high-powered subcommittee of the Naval Affairs committee. With a mission similar to that of the [Truman Committee](#) in the Senate, he probed into the peacetime "business as usual" inefficiencies that permeated the naval war and demanded that admirals shape up and get the job done. Johnson went too far when he proposed a bill that would crack down on the draft exemptions of shipyard workers if they were absent from work too often. Organized labor blocked the bill and denounced Johnson. Still, Johnson's mission had a substantial impact because it led to upgrading the South Pacific theater and aided the overall war effort immensely. Johnson's biographer concludes, "The mission was a temporary exposure to danger calculated to satisfy Johnson's personal and political wishes, but it also represented a genuine effort on his part, however misplaced, to improve the lot of America's fighting men."<sup>[23]</sup> Later in 1942, Roosevelt ordered all active duty Congressmen to return to Washington.

### Senate

#### 1948 contested election



Lyndon B. Johnson in the uniform of a U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander, March 1942

In the **1948 elections**, Johnson again ran for the Senate and won. This election was highly controversial: in a three-way Democratic Party **primary** Johnson faced a well-known former governor, **Coke Stevenson**, and a third candidate. Johnson drew crowds to fairgrounds with his rented helicopter dubbed "The Johnson City Windmill". He raised money to flood the state with campaign circulars and won over conservatives by voting for the **Taft-Hartley** act (curbing union power) as well as by criticizing unions.

Stevenson came in first but lacked a majority, so a runoff was held. Johnson campaigned even harder this time around, while Stevenson's efforts were surprisingly poor. The runoff count took a week. The Democratic State Central Committee (not the State of Texas, because the matter was a party primary) handled the count, and it finally announced that Johnson had won by 87 votes. By a majority of one member (29–28) the committee voted to certify Johnson's nomination, with the last vote cast on Johnson's behalf by **Temple, Texas**, publisher **Frank W. Mayborn**, who rushed back to Texas from a business trip in **Nashville, Tennessee**. There were many allegations of fraud on both sides. Thus one writer alleges that Johnson's campaign manager, future Texas governor **John B. Connally**, was connected with 202 ballots in Precinct 13 in **Jim Wells County** that had curiously been cast in **alphabetical order** and just at the close of polling. Some of these voters swore that they had not voted that day.<sup>[24]</sup> **Robert Caro** argued in his 1989 book that Johnson had stolen the election in Jim Wells County and other counties in South Texas, as well as rigging 10,000 ballots in **Bexar County** alone.<sup>[25]</sup> An election judge, Luis Salas, said in 1977, that he had certified 202 fraudulent ballots for Johnson.<sup>[26]</sup>

The state Democratic convention upheld Johnson. Stevenson went to court, but—with timely help from his friend **Abe Fortas**—Johnson prevailed. Johnson was elected senator in November and went to Washington tagged with the ironic label "Landslide Lyndon," which he often used deprecatingly to refer to himself.

### Freshman senator

Once in the Senate, Johnson was known among his colleagues for his highly successful "courtships" of older senators, especially Senator **Richard Russell**, Democrat from Georgia, the leader of the **Conservative coalition** and arguably the most powerful man in the Senate. Johnson proceeded to gain Russell's favor in the same way that he had "courted" Speaker Sam Rayburn and gained his crucial support in the House.

Johnson was appointed to the Senate Armed Services Committee, and later in 1950, he helped create the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee. Johnson became its chairman and conducted investigations of defense costs and efficiency. These investigations tended to dig out old forgotten investigations and demand actions that were already being taken by the **Truman** Administration, although it can be said that the committee's investigations caused the changes. Johnson's brilliant handling of the press, the efficiency with which his committee issued new reports, and the fact that he ensured every report was endorsed unanimously by the committee all brought him headlines and national attention.

Johnson used his political influence in the Senate to receive broadcast licenses from the **Federal Communications Commission** in his wife's name.<sup>[26][27]</sup>

In 1951, Johnson was chosen as Senate Majority Whip under a new Majority Leader, **Ernest McFarland** of **Arizona**, and served from 1951 to 1953.<sup>[20]</sup>

### Senate Democratic leader

In the **1952 general election** **Republicans** won a majority in both House and Senate. Among defeated Democrats that year was McFarland, who lost to then-little-known **Barry Goldwater**, Johnson's future presidential opponent.

In January 1953, Johnson was chosen by his fellow Democrats to be the minority leader. Thus, he became the least senior Senator ever elected to this position, and one of the least senior party leaders in the history of the Senate. One of his first actions was to eliminate the seniority system in appointment to a committee, while retaining it in terms of chairmanships. In the **1954 election**, Johnson was re-elected to the Senate, and since the Democrats won the majority in the Senate, Johnson became majority leader. Former majority leader **William Knowland** was elected minority leader. Johnson's duties were to schedule legislation and help pass measures favored by the Democrats. Johnson, Rayburn and President **Dwight D. Eisenhower** worked smoothly together in passing Eisenhower's domestic and foreign agenda.

A 60-cigarette-per-day smoker, Johnson suffered a near-fatal heart attack on July 2, 1955. He completely gave up smoking as a result, with only a couple of exceptions, and did not resume the habit until he left the White House on January 20, 1969. During the **Suez Crisis**, Johnson supported the Anglo-French military attempt to topple the



Lyndon B. Johnson as Senator from Texas



Senate Desk X, used by all Democratic leaders, including Johnson, since **Joseph Taylor Robinson**

Egyptian president Colonel [Gamal Abdel Nasser](#), and tried to prevent the US government from criticizing the Israeli invasion of the Sinai peninsula.

Historians Caro and Dallek consider Lyndon Johnson the most effective Senate majority leader in history. He was unusually proficient at gathering information. One biographer suggests he was "the greatest intelligence gatherer Washington has ever known", discovering exactly where every Senator stood, his philosophy and prejudices, his strengths and weaknesses, and what it took to break him.<sup>[28]</sup> Robert Baker claimed that Johnson would occasionally send senators on NATO trips in order to avoid their dissenting votes.<sup>[29]</sup> Central to Johnson's control was "The Treatment",<sup>[30]</sup> described by two journalists:<sup>[31]</sup>

The Treatment could last ten minutes or four hours. It came, enveloping its target, at the Johnson Ranch swimming pool, in one of Johnson's offices, in the Senate cloakroom, on the floor of the Senate itself — wherever Johnson might find a fellow Senator within his reach.

Its tone could be supplication, accusation, cajolery, exuberance, scorn, tears, complaint and the hint of threat. It was all of these together. It ran the gamut of human emotions. Its velocity was breathtaking, and it was all in one direction. Interjections from the target were rare. Johnson anticipated them before they could be spoken. He moved in close, his face a scant millimeter from his target, his eyes widening and narrowing, his eyebrows rising and falling. From his pockets poured clippings, memos, statistics. Mimicry, humor, and the genius of analogy made The Treatment an almost hypnotic experience and rendered the target stunned and helpless.

Along with the rest of the nation, Johnson was appalled by the threat of possible [Soviet](#) domination of space flight implied by the launch of the first artificial Earth satellite *Sputnik 1*, and used his influence to assure passage of the 1958 [National Aeronautics and Space Act](#), which established the civilian space agency [NASA](#).

## Vice Presidency

### Nomination

See also: *United States presidential election, 1960*

Johnson's success in the Senate made him a possible Democratic presidential candidate. He had been the "[favorite son](#)" candidate of the Texas delegation at the Party's national convention in 1956, and appeared to be in a strong position to run for the 1960 Presidential nomination. However, Johnson's late entry into that campaign, coupled with a reluctance to leave Washington, allowed the rival Kennedy campaign to secure a substantial lead among Democratic state party officials. Caro argues that Johnson's apparent ambivalence towards entering the race was caused by an overwhelming fear of failure.<sup>[32]</sup>

In 1960, after the failure of the "Stop Kennedy" coalition he had formed with [Adlai Stevenson](#), [Stuart Symington](#), and [Hubert Humphrey](#), Johnson received 409 votes on the only ballot at the Democratic convention, which nominated John F. Kennedy. [Tip O'Neill](#), then a representative from Kennedy's home state of [Massachusetts](#), recalled that Johnson approached him at the convention and said, "Tip, I know you have to support Kennedy at the start, but I'd like to have you with me on the second ballot." O'Neill replied, "Senator, there's not going to be any second ballot."<sup>[33]</sup>

Kennedy realized that he could not be elected without support of traditional [Southern Democrats](#), most of whom had backed Johnson. Kennedy offered Johnson the vice-presidential nomination at the [Los Angeles Biltmore Hotel](#) at 10:15 am on July 14, 1960, the morning after being nominated for president.<sup>[34]</sup> [Robert F. Kennedy](#), who hated Johnson for his attacks on the Kennedy family, said later that his brother offered the position to Johnson as a courtesy and did not expect him to accept. [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.](#) and [Seymour Hersh](#) quote Robert Kennedy's version of events, writing that John Kennedy would have preferred [Stuart Symington](#) as his [running-mate](#) but Johnson teamed with [House Speaker Sam Rayburn](#) to pressure Kennedy to favor Johnson.<sup>[35]</sup>

Biographers Robert Caro and [W. Marvin Watson](#) offered a different perspective; they wrote that the Kennedy campaign was desperate to win what was forecast to be a very close [1960 election](#) against [Richard Nixon](#) and [Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr.](#) Johnson was needed on the ticket to help carry Texas and the [Southern states](#). Caro's research showed that on July 14, John Kennedy started the process while Johnson was still asleep. At 6:30 am John Kennedy asked Robert Kennedy to prepare an estimate of upcoming electoral votes "including Texas".<sup>[34]</sup> Robert called [Pierre Salinger](#) and [Kenneth O'Donnell](#) to assist him. Realizing the ramifications of counting Texas votes as his own, Salinger asked him whether he was considering a Kennedy-Johnson ticket, and Robert replied "yes".<sup>[34]</sup>

At 8 am John Kennedy called Johnson to arrange a meeting. Some time between 9 and 10 am, he called Pennsylvania governor [David L. Lawrence](#), a Johnson backer, to request that Lawrence nominate Johnson for vice president if Johnson were to accept the role. At 10:15 am he went to Johnson's suite to discuss a mutual ticket; the two men were alone for about 30 minutes during which time Johnson said Kennedy would have trouble with Kennedy supporters who were strongly against Johnson. John Kennedy then returned to his suite to announce the Kennedy-



President Johnson giving "The Treatment" to Senator [Richard Russell](#) in 1963

Johnson ticket to his closest supporters and Northern political bosses.<sup>[34]</sup> O'Donnell remembers being angry at what he considered a betrayal by Kennedy who had previously cast Johnson as anti-labor and anti-liberal. Afterward, Robert Kennedy visited with labor leaders who were extremely unhappy with the choice of Johnson and after seeing the depth of labor opposition to Johnson, he ran messages between the hotel suites of his brother and Johnson—apparently trying to undermine the proposed ticket without John Kennedy's authorization.

Robert Kennedy tried to get Johnson to agree to be the Democratic Party chairman rather than vice president. Johnson refused to accept a change in plans unless it came directly from John Kennedy. Despite his brother's interference, John Kennedy was firm that Johnson was who he wanted as running mate; he met with staffers such as [Larry O'Brien](#), his national campaign manager, to say Johnson was to be vice president. O'Brien recalled later that John Kennedy's words were wholly unexpected, but that after a brief consideration of the electoral vote situation, he thought "it was a stroke of genius".<sup>[34]</sup> When John and Robert Kennedy next saw their father, [Joe Kennedy](#), he told them signing Johnson as running mate was the smartest thing they had ever done.<sup>[36]</sup>

At the same time as his Vice Presidential run, Johnson also sought a third term in the U.S. Senate. According to Robert Caro, "On November 8, 1960, Lyndon Johnson won election for both the vice presidency of the United States, on the Kennedy-Johnson ticket, and for a third term as Senator (he had Texas law changed to allow him to run for both offices). When he won the vice presidency, he made arrangements to resign from the Senate, as he was required to do under federal law, as soon as it convened on January 3, 1961."<sup>[37]</sup> (In 1988, [Lloyd Bentsen](#), the Vice Presidential running mate of [Democratic](#) presidential candidate [Michael Dukakis](#), and also a [Senator](#) from Texas, took advantage of "Lyndon's law," and was able to retain his seat in the [Senate](#) despite Dukakis' loss to [George H. W. Bush](#).)

Johnson was re-elected Senator with 1,306,605 votes (58 percent) to Republican [John Tower](#)'s 927,653 (41.1 percent). Fellow Democrat [William A. Blakley](#) was appointed to replace Johnson as Senator, but Blakley lost a special election in May 1961 to Tower.

## Office

After the election, Johnson found himself powerless. He initially attempted to transfer the authority of Senate majority leader to the vice presidency, since that office made him president of the Senate, but faced vehement opposition from the Democratic Caucus, including members he had counted as his supporters.<sup>[38]</sup> This episode led to a memorable quote from Johnson: *I now know the difference between a caucus and a cactus: in a cactus, all the pricks are on the outside.*<sup>[39]</sup>

Johnson then also tried to gain advantage in the Executive Branch. Shortly after the inauguration, he sent a proposed executive order to the White House for Kennedy's signature, granting Johnson "general supervision" over matters of national security and requiring all government agencies to "cooperate fully with the vice president in the carrying out of these assignments." Kennedy's response was to sign a non-binding letter requesting Johnson to "review" national security policies instead.<sup>[40]</sup> Kennedy similarly turned down early requests from Johnson to be given an office adjacent to the Oval Office, and to employ a full-time Vice Presidential staff within the White House.<sup>[41]</sup> His lack of influence was thrown into relief later in 1961 when Kennedy appointed Johnson's friend [Sarah T. Hughes](#) to a federal judgeship; whereas Johnson had tried and failed to garner the nomination for Hughes at the beginning of his vice presidency, [House Speaker Sam Rayburn](#) wrangled the appointment from Kennedy in exchange for support of an administration bill.

Moreover, many members of the Kennedy White House, including the president's brother and [Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy](#), were actively contemptuous of Johnson and ridiculed his brusque, crude manner. Congressman Tip O'Neill recalled that the Kennedy men "had a disdain for Johnson that they didn't even try to hide....They actually took pride in snubbing him."<sup>[42]</sup>

Kennedy, however, made efforts to keep Johnson busy, informed, and at the White House often, telling aides "I can't afford to have my vice president, who knows every reporter in Washington, going around saying we're all screwed up, so we're going to keep him happy."<sup>[43]</sup> Kennedy appointed him to jobs such as head of the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunities, through which he worked with African Americans and other minorities. Though Kennedy may have intended this to remain a more nominal position, [Taylor Branch](#) in *Pillar of Fire* contends that Johnson served to push the Kennedy administration's actions for civil rights further and faster than Kennedy originally intended to go. Branch notes the irony of Johnson, who the Kennedy family hoped would appeal to conservative southern voters, being the advocate for [civil rights](#). In particular he notes Johnson's [Memorial Day](#) 1963 speech at [Gettysburg, Pennsylvania](#) as being a catalyst that led to more action.

Johnson took on numerous minor diplomatic missions, which gave him limited insights into global issues. He was allowed to observe Cabinet and [National Security Council](#) meetings. Kennedy gave Johnson control over all presidential appointments involving Texas, and appointed him chairman of the President's Ad Hoc Committee for



President Kennedy and Vice President Johnson prior to a ceremony

Science.

Kennedy also appointed Johnson to fill his role as Chairman of the [National Aeronautics Space Council](#). When, in April 1961, the Soviets beat the US with [the first manned spaceflight](#), Kennedy tasked Johnson with evaluating the state of the US space program, and recommending a project that would allow the US to catch up or beat the Soviets.<sup>[44]</sup> Johnson responded with a recommendation that the US gain the leadership role by committing the resources to embark on a [project to land an American on the Moon in the 1960s](#).<sup>[45][46]</sup>

Johnson was touched by a Senate scandal in August 1963 when [Bobby Baker](#), the Senate Majority Secretary and a protégé of Johnson's, came under investigation by the [Senate Rules Committee](#) for allegations of bribery and financial malfeasance. One witness alleged that Baker had arranged for the witness to give kickbacks for the Vice President. Baker resigned in October, and the investigation stopped from expanding to Johnson. The negative publicity from the affair fed rumors in Washington circles that Kennedy was planning on dropping Johnson from the Democratic ticket in the upcoming 1964 presidential election. However, when a reporter asked on October 31, 1963, if he intended and expected to have Johnson on the ticket the following year, Kennedy replied, "Yes to both those questions."<sup>[47]</sup>

## Presidency 1963–1969

### Assassination of President John F. Kennedy

*Main article: [First inauguration of Lyndon B. Johnson](#)*

Johnson was sworn in as President on [Air Force One](#) at [Dallas Love Field](#) in Dallas on November 22, 1963, two hours and eight minutes after [President Kennedy was assassinated](#) in [Dealey Plaza](#) in Dallas.<sup>[48]</sup> He was sworn in by U.S. District Judge [Sarah T. Hughes](#), a family friend, making him the first (and so far only) President sworn in by a woman. He is also the only President to have been sworn in on Texas soil. Johnson did not swear on a Bible, as there was none on [Air Force One](#); a Roman Catholic [missal](#) was found in Kennedy's desk and was used for the swearing-in ceremony.<sup>[49]</sup> Johnson being sworn in as president has become the most famous photo ever taken aboard a presidential aircraft.<sup>[50][51]</sup>

In the days following the assassination, Lyndon B. Johnson made an address to Congress: "No memorial oration or eulogy could more eloquently honor President Kennedy's memory than the earliest possible passage of the Civil Rights Bill for which he fought so long."<sup>[52]</sup> The wave of national grief following the assassination gave enormous momentum to Johnson's promise to carry out Kennedy's programs.

One week after the assassination, on November 29, Johnson issued an executive order to rename NASA's [Apollo Launch Operations Center](#) and the NASA/Air Force [Cape Canaveral launch facilities](#) as the *John F. Kennedy Space Center*. Canaveral became popularly known as "Cape Kennedy" for a decade.<sup>[53]</sup>

On the same day, Johnson created a panel headed by Chief Justice [Earl Warren](#), known as the [Warren Commission](#), to investigate Kennedy's assassination. The commission conducted hearings and concluded that [Lee Harvey Oswald](#) acted alone in the assassination. Not everyone agreed with the Warren Commission, and numerous public and private investigations continued for decades after Johnson left office.<sup>[54]</sup>

Johnson retained senior Kennedy appointees, some for the full term of his presidency. The late President's brother, [Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy](#), with whom Johnson had a notoriously difficult relationship, remained in office for a few months until leaving in 1964, to run for the Senate.<sup>[55]</sup> Robert F. Kennedy has been quoted as saying that LBJ was "mean, bitter, vicious—[an] animal in many ways...I think his reactions on a lot of things are correct... but I think he's got this other side of him and his relationship with human beings which makes it difficult unless you want to 'kiss his behind' all the time. That is what [Bob McNamara](#) suggested to me...if I wanted to get along."<sup>[56]</sup>

### 1964 presidential election

*Main article: [United States presidential election, 1964](#)*

Early in the 1964 presidential campaign, [Barry Goldwater](#) appeared to be a strong contender, especially because of support from the South, which threatened Johnson's position. However, Goldwater lost momentum as his campaign progressed. On September 7, 1964, Johnson's campaign managers broadcast the "[Daisy ad](#)". It portrayed a little girl picking petals from a [daisy](#), counting up to ten. Then a baritone voice took over, counted down from ten to zero and the visual showed the explosion of a nuclear bomb. The message conveyed was that electing Goldwater president held the danger of nuclear war. Although it only aired one time, it became an issue during the campaign. Johnson won



Foreign trips of Lyndon Johnson during his presidency

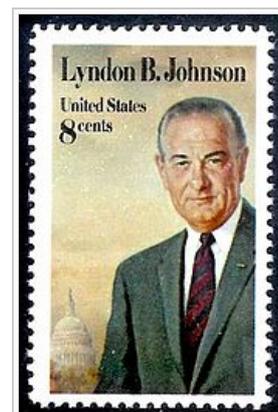


Johnson being sworn in aboard *Air Force One* by Federal Judge Sarah T. Hughes. On the right is Mrs. Kennedy; to the left is Mrs. Johnson; sitting down near the airplane window is [Jack Valenti](#), White House aide. Assistant Press Secretary [Malcolm Kilduff](#), at bottom left, records the event with a [dictaphone](#).

the presidency by a landslide, with 61.05 percent of the vote (the highest ever [share of the popular vote](#))<sup>[57][58]</sup> and the then-widest popular margin in the 20th century — more than 15.95 million votes (this was later surpassed by incumbent President Nixon's defeat of Senator [McGovern](#) in 1972).<sup>[59]</sup>

In mid-1964, the [Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party](#) (MFDP) was organized with the purpose of challenging Mississippi's all-white and anti-civil rights delegation to the Democratic National Convention of that year as not representative of all Mississippians. At the [national convention](#) in [Atlantic City](#), New Jersey the MFDP claimed the seats for delegates for Mississippi, not on the grounds of the Party rules, but because the official Mississippi delegation had been elected by a primary conducted under [Jim Crow laws](#) in which blacks were excluded because of poll taxes, literacy tests, and even violence against black voters. The national Party's liberal leaders supported a compromise in which the white delegation and the MFDP would have an even division of the seats; Johnson was concerned that, while the regular Democrats of Mississippi would probably vote for Goldwater anyway, if the Democratic Party rejected the regular Democrats, he would lose the Democratic Party political structure that he needed to win in the South. Eventually, Hubert Humphrey, [Walter Reuther](#) and black civil rights leaders (including [Roy Wilkins](#), [Martin Luther King](#), and [Bayard Rustin](#)) worked out a compromise with MFDP leaders: the MFDP would receive two non-voting seats on the floor of the Convention; the regular Mississippi delegation would be required to pledge to support the party ticket; and no future Democratic convention would accept a delegation chosen by a discriminatory poll. When the leaders took the proposal back to the 64 members who had made the bus trip to Atlantic City, they voted it down. As MFDP Vice Chair [Fannie Lou Hamer](#) said, "We didn't come all the way up here to compromise for no more than we'd gotten here. We didn't come all this way for no two seats, 'cause all of us is tired." The failure of the compromise effort allowed the rest of the Democratic Party to conclude that the MFDP was simply being unreasonable, and they lost a great deal of their liberal support. After that, the convention went smoothly for Johnson without a searing battle over civil rights.<sup>[60]</sup> Despite the landslide victory, Johnson, who carried the South as a whole in the election, lost the [Deep South](#) states of [Louisiana](#), [Alabama](#), [Mississippi](#), [Georgia](#) and [South Carolina](#), the first time a Democratic candidate had done so since Reconstruction.

Johnson began his elected presidential term, ready to fulfill his earlier commitment to "carry forward the plans and programs of John Fitzgerald Kennedy. Not because of our sorrow or sympathy, but because they are right."<sup>[61]</sup>



President Johnson, Issue of 1973

## Civil rights

In conjunction with the [Civil Rights Movement](#), Johnson overcame southern resistance and convinced the Democratic-Controlled Congress to pass the [Civil Rights Act of 1964](#), which outlawed most forms of racial segregation. John F. Kennedy originally proposed the civil rights bill in June 1963.<sup>[62]</sup> In late October 1963, Kennedy officially called the House leaders to the White House to line up the necessary votes for passage.<sup>[63][64]</sup> After Kennedy's death, Johnson took the initiative in finishing what Kennedy started and broke a [filibuster](#) by [Southern Democrats](#) in March 1964; as a result, this pushed the bill for passage in the Senate.<sup>[65]</sup> Johnson signed the revised and stronger bill into law on July 2, 1964.<sup>[65]</sup> Legend has it that, as he put down his pen, Johnson told an aide, "We have lost the South for a generation", anticipating a coming backlash from Southern whites against Johnson's Democratic Party. Moreover, [Richard Nixon](#) politically counterattacked with the [Southern Strategy](#) where it would "secure" votes for the Republican Party by grabbing the advocates of segregation as well as most of the Southern Democrats.<sup>[66]</sup>

In 1965, he achieved passage of a second civil rights bill, the [Voting Rights Act](#), which outlawed discrimination in voting, thus allowing millions of southern blacks to vote for the first time. In accordance with the act, several states, "seven of the eleven southern states of the former confederacy" – Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Virginia — were subjected to the procedure of preclearance in 1965, while Texas, home to the majority of the African American population at the time, followed in 1975.<sup>[67]</sup>

After the murder of civil rights worker [Viola Liuzzo](#), Johnson went on television to announce the arrest of four [Ku Klux Klansmen](#) implicated in her death. He angrily denounced the Klan as a "hooded society of bigots," and warned them



President Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Among the guests behind him is [Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)

### Remarks upon Signing the Civil Rights Act of 1964



Public statement by Johnson of July 2, 1964 about the [Civil Rights Act of 1964](#).

"Remarks upon Signing the Civil Rights Act of 1964".



audio only

*Problems playing these files? See [media help](#).*

to "return to a decent society before it's too late." Johnson was the first President to arrest and prosecute members of the Klan since [Ulysses S. Grant](#) about 93 years earlier.<sup>[68]</sup> He turned the themes of Christian redemption to push for civil rights, thereby mobilizing support from churches North and South.<sup>[69]</sup>

At the [Howard University](#) commencement address on June 4, 1965, he said that both the government and the nation needed to help achieve goals:

“ To shatter forever not only the barriers of law and public practice, but the walls which bound the condition of many by the color of his skin. To dissolve, as best we can, the antique enmities of the heart which diminish the holder, divide the great democracy, and do wrong — great wrong — to the children of God...<sup>[70]</sup> ”

In 1967, Johnson nominated civil rights attorney [Thurgood Marshall](#) to be the first African American [Associate Justice](#) of the Supreme Court. To head the new [Department of Housing and Urban Development](#), Johnson appointed [Robert C. Weaver](#)—the first African-American cabinet secretary in any U.S. presidential administration.

In 1968 Johnson signed the [Civil Rights Act of 1968](#), which provided for equal housing opportunities regardless of race, creed, or national origin. The impetus for the law's passage came from the 1966 [Chicago Open Housing Movement](#), the April 4, 1968 [assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.](#), and the [civil unrest](#) across the country following King's death.<sup>[71]</sup> On April 5, Johnson wrote a letter to the [United States House of Representatives](#) urging passage of the Fair Housing Act.<sup>[72]</sup> With newly urgent attention from legislative director [Joseph Califano](#) and [Democratic Speaker of the House John McCormack](#), the bill (which was previously stalled) passed the House by a wide margin on April 10.<sup>[71][73]</sup>

## Immigration

Johnson signed the [Immigration Act of 1965](#),<sup>[74]</sup> which substantially changed U.S. immigration policy toward non-Europeans.<sup>[75]</sup> According to [OECD](#), "While European-born immigrants accounted for nearly 60% of the total foreign-born population in 1970, they accounted for only 15% in 2000."<sup>[76]</sup> Immigration doubled between 1965 and 1970, and doubled again between 1970 and 1990.<sup>[26]</sup> Since the liberalization of immigration policy in 1965,<sup>[77]</sup> the number of first-generation immigrants living in the United States has quadrupled,<sup>[78]</sup> from 9.6 million in 1970, to about 38 million in 2007.<sup>[79]</sup>



President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the [Immigration Act of 1965](#) at [Liberty Island](#) as Vice President [Hubert Humphrey](#), [Senator Edward Kennedy](#), [Senator Robert F. Kennedy](#), and others look on.

## Great Society

The [Great Society](#) program, with its name coined from one of Johnson's speeches,<sup>[26]</sup> became Johnson's agenda for Congress in January 1965: aid to education, attack on disease, Medicare, Medicaid, [urban renewal](#),

beautification, conservation, development of depressed regions, a wide-scale fight against poverty, control and prevention of crime, and removal of obstacles to the [right to vote](#). Congress, at times augmenting or amending, enacted most of Johnson's recommendations.<sup>[80]</sup> Johnson's achievements in social policy were made possible by liberal strength, especially after the Democratic landslide of 1964.<sup>[81]</sup>

After the Great Society legislation of the 1960s, for the first time, a person who was not elderly or disabled could receive need-based aid from the U.S. government.<sup>[82]</sup>

## Federal funding for education



[Robert Kennedy](#) and Lyndon Johnson

Johnson had a lifelong commitment to the belief that education was the cure for both ignorance and poverty, and was an essential component of the [American dream](#), especially for minorities who endured poor facilities and tight-fisted budgets from local taxes.<sup>[83]</sup> He made education a top priority of the Great Society, with an emphasis on helping poor children. After the 1964 landslide brought in many new liberal Congressmen, he had the votes for the [Elementary and Secondary Education Act](#) (ESEA) of 1965.

For the first time, large amounts of federal money went to public schools. In practice ESEA meant helping all public school districts, with more money going to districts that had large proportions of students from poor families (which

included all the big cities).<sup>[84]</sup> For the first time private schools (most of them Catholic schools in the inner cities) received services, such as library funding, comprising about 12 percent of the ESEA budget. As [Dallek](#) reports, researchers<sup>[*who?*]</sup> soon found that poverty had more to do with family background and neighborhood conditions than the quantity of education a child received. Early studies suggested initial improvements for poor children helped by ESEA reading and math programs, but later assessments indicated that benefits faded quickly and left pupils little better off than those not in the schemes. Johnson's second major education program was the [Higher Education Act of 1965](#), which focused on funding for lower income students, including grants, work-study money, and government

loans.

He set up the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) and the [National Endowment for the Arts](#), to support humanists and artists (as the [WPA](#) once did). Although ESEA solidified Johnson's support among K-12 teachers' unions, neither the Higher Education Act nor the new endowments mollified the college professors and students growing increasingly uneasy with the war in Vietnam.<sup>[85]</sup> In 1967, Johnson signed the [Public Broadcasting Act](#) to create educational television programs to supplement the broadcast networks.

### "War on Poverty" and healthcare reform

In 1964, upon Johnson's request, Congress passed the [Revenue Act of 1964](#) and the [Economic Opportunity Act](#), which was in association with the [war on poverty](#). Johnson set in motion bills and acts,<sup>[86]</sup> creating programs such as [Head Start](#), [food stamps](#), [Work Study](#), [Medicare](#) and [Medicaid](#). During Johnson's years in office, national poverty declined significantly, with the percentage of Americans living below the poverty line dropping from 23% to 12%.<sup>[6]</sup>

The Medicare program was established on July 30, 1965, to offer cheaper medical services to the elderly,<sup>[87]</sup> today covering tens of millions of Americans. Johnson gave the first two Medicare cards to former President [Harry S Truman](#) and his wife [Bess](#) after signing the Medicare bill at the [Truman Library in Independence, Missouri](#). Lower-income groups receive government-sponsored medical coverage through the [Medicaid](#) program.<sup>[88]</sup>

In 1965, Johnson signed the [Coinage Act of 1965](#),<sup>[89]</sup> changing the metal composition of US coins and calling silver a "scarce material".<sup>[90]</sup>

### Gun control

On October 22, 1968, Lyndon Johnson signed the [Gun Control Act of 1968](#), one of the largest and farthest-reaching federal gun control laws in American history. Much of the motivation for this large expansion of federal gun regulations came as a response to the assassinations of [John F. Kennedy](#), [Robert F. Kennedy](#), and [Martin Luther King Jr.](#).

### Space Program

During Johnson's administration, [NASA](#) conducted the [Gemini](#) manned space program, developed the [Saturn V](#) rocket and [its launch facility](#), and prepared to make the first manned [Apollo program](#) flights. On January 27, 1967, the nation was stunned when the entire crew of [Apollo 1](#) was killed in a cabin fire during a spacecraft test on the launch pad, stopping Apollo in its tracks. Rather than appointing another Warren-style commission, Johnson accepted Administrator [James E. Webb](#)'s request for NASA to do its own investigation, holding itself accountable to Congress and the President.<sup>[91]</sup> Johnson maintained his staunch support of Apollo through Congressional and press controversy, and the program recovered. The first two manned missions, [Apollo 7](#) and the first manned flight to the Moon, [Apollo 8](#), were completed by the end of Johnson's term. He congratulated the Apollo 8 crew, saying, "You've taken ... all of us, all over the world, into a new era."<sup>[92][93]</sup> On July 16, 1969, Johnson attended the launch of the first Moon landing mission [Apollo 11](#), becoming the first former or incumbent US president to witness a rocket launch.

### Urban riots

Major riots in black neighborhoods caused a series of "long hot summers." They started with a violent disturbance in [Harlem riots](#) in 1964, and the [Watts district](#) of Los Angeles in 1965, and extended to 1971. The biggest wave came in April 1968, when riots occurred in over a hundred cities in the wake of the assassination of Martin Luther King. [Newark burned](#) in 1967, where six days of rioting left 26 dead, 1500 injured, and the inner city a burned out shell. In [Detroit in 1967](#), Governor [George Romney](#) sent in 7400 national guard troops to quell fire bombings, looting, and attacks on businesses and on police. Johnson finally sent in federal troops with tanks and machine guns. Detroit continued to burn for three more days until finally 43 were dead, 2250 were injured, 4000 were arrested; property damage ranged into the hundreds of millions. Johnson called for even more billions to be spent in the cities and another federal civil rights law regarding housing, but his political capital had been spent, and his Great Society programs lost support. Johnson's popularity plummeted as a massive white political backlash took shape, reinforcing the sense Johnson had lost control of the streets of major cities as well as his party.<sup>[94]</sup>

Johnson created the [Kerner Commission](#) to study the problem of urban riots, headed by Illinois Governor [Otto Kerner](#).<sup>[26]</sup>

Days after Johnson announced his withdrawal from the 1968 race, Martin Luther King, Jr., was [assassinated](#) in Memphis. In the next week, Johnson faced one of the biggest [wave of riots](#) the nation had ever seen.<sup>[73]</sup> According to press secretary George Christian, Johnson was unsurprised by the riots, saying: "What did you expect? I don't know why we're so surprised. When you



Truman (seated right) and his wife Bess (behind him) attend the signing of the Medicare Bill on July 30, 1965, by President Johnson.



put your foot on a man's neck and hold him down for three hundred years, and then you let him up, what's he going to do? He's going to knock your block off."<sup>[71]</sup>

### Backlash against Johnson: 1966–67

Johnson's problems began to mount in 1966. The press had sensed a "**credibility gap**" between what Johnson was saying in press conferences and what was happening on the ground in Vietnam, which led to much less favorable coverage of Johnson.<sup>[95]</sup>

By year's end, the Democratic governor of **Missouri**, **Warren E. Hearnes**, warned that Johnson would lose the state by 100,000 votes, despite a winning by a 500,000 margin in 1964. "Frustration over Vietnam; too much federal spending and... taxation; no great public support for your Great Society programs; and ... public disenchantment with the civil rights programs" had eroded the President's standing, the governor reported. There were bright spots; in January 1967, Johnson boasted that wages were the highest in history, unemployment was at a 13-year low, and corporate profits and farm incomes were greater than ever; a 4.5% jump in consumer prices was worrisome, as was the rise in **interest rates**. Johnson asked for a temporary 6% surcharge in **income taxes** to cover the mounting deficit caused by increased spending. Johnson's approval ratings stayed below 50%; by January 1967, the number of his strong supporters had plunged to 16%, from 25% four months before. He ran about even with Republican **George Romney** in trial matchups that spring. Asked to explain why he was unpopular, Johnson responded, "I am a dominating personality, and when I get things done I don't always please all the people." Johnson also blamed the press, saying they showed "complete irresponsibility and lie and misstate facts and have no one to be answerable to." He also blamed "the preachers, liberals and professors" who had turned against him.<sup>[96]</sup> In the **congressional elections of 1966**, the Republicans gained three seats in the Senate and 47 in the House, reinvigorating the **conservative coalition** and making it more difficult for Johnson to pass any additional Great Society legislation. However, in the end Congress passed almost 96% of the administration's Great Society programs, which Johnson then signed into law.<sup>[97]</sup>

In October 1966, Johnson became the first serving U.S. president to visit Australia. His visit sparked demonstrations from anti-war protesters.<sup>[98]</sup>

### Vietnam War

Johnson increasingly focused on the American military effort in Vietnam. He firmly believed in the **Domino Theory** and that his **containment** policy required America to make a serious effort to stop all Communist expansion.<sup>[99]</sup> At Kennedy's death, there were 16,000 American military personnel in Vietnam.<sup>[100]</sup> As President, Lyndon Johnson immediately reversed his predecessor's order to withdraw 1,000 military personnel by the end of 1963 with his own National Security Action Memorandum No. 273 on November 26, 1963.<sup>[101][102][103]</sup> Johnson expanded the numbers and roles of the American military following the **Gulf of Tonkin Incident** (less than three weeks after the **Republican Convention of 1964**, which had nominated **Barry Goldwater** for President).

The **Gulf of Tonkin Resolution**, which gave the President the exclusive right to use military force without consulting the Senate, was based on a false pretext, as Johnson later admitted.<sup>[104]</sup> By the end of 1964, there were approximately 23,000 military personnel in South Vietnam. U.S. casualties for 1964 totaled 1,278.<sup>[100]</sup> Johnson began America's direct involvement in the ground war in Vietnam when the first U.S. combat troops began arriving in March 1965.<sup>[105]</sup> By 1968, over 550,000 American soldiers were in Vietnam; during 1967 and 1968 they were being killed at the rate of 1,000 a month.<sup>[106]</sup>

Politically, Johnson closely watched the public opinion polls. His goal was not to adjust his policies to follow opinion, but rather to adjust opinion to support his policies. Until the **Tet Offensive** of 1968, he systematically downplayed the war; he made very few speeches about Vietnam, and held no rallies or parades or advertising campaigns. He feared that publicity would charge up the hawks who wanted victory, and weaken both his containment policy and his higher priorities in domestic issues. Jacobs and Shapiro conclude, "Although Johnson held a core of support for his position, the president was unable to move Americans who held hawkish and dovish



President Johnson with **Australian Prime Minister Harold Holt** at Government House (**Canberra**, Australia) in October 1966



Lyndon and **Lady Bird Johnson** with **Ferdinand** and **Imelda Marcos** on September 12, 1966



Johnson awards a medal to a US soldier during a visit to Vietnam in 1966.



**Walt Whitman Rostow** shows President Lyndon B. Johnson a model of the **Khe Sanh** area in February 1968.



positions." Polls showed that beginning in 1965, the public was consistently 40–50 percent hawkish and 10–25 percent dovish. Johnson's aides told him, "Both hawks and doves [are frustrated with the war] ... and take it out on you."<sup>[107]</sup>

Additionally, domestic issues were driving his polls down steadily from spring 1966 onward. A few analysts have theorized that "Vietnam had no independent impact on President Johnson's popularity at all after other effects, including a general overall downward trend in popularity, had been taken into account."<sup>[108]</sup> The war grew less popular, and continued to split the Democratic Party. The Republican Party was not completely pro or anti-war, and Nixon managed to get support from both groups by running on a reduction in troop levels with an eye toward eventually ending the campaign.

He often privately cursed the [Vietnam War](#), and in a conversation with [Robert McNamara](#), Johnson assailed "the bunch of commies" running *The New York Times* for their articles against the war effort.<sup>[109]</sup> Johnson believed that America could not afford to lose and risk appearing weak in the eyes of the world. In a discussion about the war with former President [Dwight Eisenhower](#) on October 3, 1966, Johnson said he was "trying to win it just as fast as I can in every way that I know how" and later stated that he needed "all the help I can get."<sup>[110]</sup> Johnson escalated the war effort continuously from 1964 to 1968, and the number of American deaths rose. In two weeks in May 1968 alone American deaths numbered 1,800 with total casualties at 18,000. Alluding to the *Domino Theory*, he said, "If we allow Vietnam to fall, tomorrow we'll be fighting in Hawaii, and next week in San Francisco."

After the [Tet Offensive](#) of January 1968, his presidency was dominated by the Vietnam War more than ever. Following evening news broadcaster [Walter Cronkite](#)'s editorial report during the Tet Offensive that the war was unwinnable, Johnson is reported to have said, "If I've lost Cronkite, I've lost Middle America."<sup>[111]</sup>

As casualties mounted and success seemed further away than ever, Johnson's popularity plummeted. College students and others protested, burned [draft](#) cards, and chanted, "Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?"<sup>[99]</sup> Johnson could scarcely travel anywhere without facing protests, and was not allowed by the Secret Service to attend the [1968 Democratic National Convention](#), where thousands of [hippies](#), [yippies](#), [Black Panthers](#) and other opponents of Johnson's policies both in Vietnam and in the ghettos converged to protest.<sup>[112]</sup> Thus by 1968, the public was polarized, with the "hawks" rejecting Johnson's refusal to continue the war indefinitely, and the "doves" rejecting his current war policies. Support for Johnson's middle position continued to shrink until he finally rejected containment and sought a peace settlement. By late summer, he realized that Nixon was closer to his position than Humphrey. He continued to support Humphrey publicly in the election, and personally despised Nixon. One of Johnson's well known quotes was "the Democratic party at its worst, is still better than the Republican party at its best".<sup>[113]</sup>

Perhaps Johnson, himself, best summed up his involvement in the [Vietnam War](#) as President:

“ I knew from the start that I was bound to be crucified either way I moved. If I left the woman I really loved—the [Great Society](#)—in order to get involved in that bitch of a war on the other side of the world, then I would lose everything at home. All my programs.... But if I left that war and let the Communists take over [South Vietnam](#), then I would be seen as a coward and my nation would be seen as an appeaser and we would both find it impossible to accomplish anything for anybody anywhere on the entire globe.<sup>[114]</sup> ”

Many political pundits and experts said that Johnson suffered "agonizing decisions" in foreign policy in the involvement in Vietnam and felt it caused divisions both in the U.S. and abroad.<sup>[115]</sup>

Johnson was afraid that if he tried to defeat the North Vietnamese regime with an invasion of North Vietnam, rather than simply try to protect South Vietnam, he might provoke the Chinese to stage a full-scale military intervention similar to their intervention in 1950 during the [Korean War](#), as well as provoke the Soviets into launching a full-scale military invasion of western Europe. It was not until the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s that it was finally confirmed that the Soviets had several thousand troops stationed in North Vietnam throughout the conflict, as did China.

### The Six Day War and Israel

In a 1993 interview for the [Johnson Presidential Library](#) oral history archives, Johnson's [Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara](#) stated that a [carrier battle group](#), the [U.S. 6th Fleet](#), sent on a training exercise toward [Gibraltar](#) was re-positioned back towards the eastern [Mediterranean](#) to be able to assist Israel during the [Six Day War](#) of June 1967. Given the rapid Israeli advances following their strike on Egypt, the administration "thought the situation was so tense in Israel that perhaps the Syrians, fearing Israel would attack them, or the Soviets supporting the Syrians might wish to redress the balance of power and might attack Israel". The Soviets learned of this course correction and



By the time this photo was taken in Washington, D.C. in October 1967, support for the Vietnam War was dropping and the [anti-Vietnam War movement](#) was gaining momentum.



Johnson (right) next to Soviet Premier [Alexei Kosygin](#) (left) during the

and might attack Israel. The Soviets learned of this source collection and regarded it as an offensive move. In a **hotline** message from Moscow, Soviet Premier **Alexei Kosygin** said, "If you want war you're going to get war."<sup>[116]</sup>

The Soviet Union supported its Arab allies.<sup>[117]</sup> In May 1967, the Soviets started a surge deployment of their naval forces into the East Mediterranean. Early in the crisis they began to shadow the US and British carriers with destroyers and intelligence collecting vessels. The Soviet naval squadron in the Mediterranean was sufficiently strong to act as a major restraint on the U.S. Navy.<sup>[118]</sup> In a 1983 interview with *The Boston Globe*, McNamara claimed that "We damn near had war". He said Kosygin was angry that "we had turned around a carrier in the Mediterranean".<sup>[119]</sup>

## Pardons

During his presidency, Johnson issued 1187 **pardons** and **commutations**,<sup>[120]</sup> granting over 20 percent of such requests.<sup>[121]</sup>

## 1968 presidential election

*Main article: [United States presidential election, 1968](#)*

As he had served less than 24 months of President Kennedy's term, Johnson was constitutionally permitted to run for a second full term in the 1968 presidential election under the provisions of the **22nd Amendment**.<sup>[122][123]</sup> Initially, no prominent Democratic candidate was prepared to run against a sitting president of the Democratic party. Only Senator **Eugene McCarthy** of **Minnesota** challenged Johnson as an anti-war candidate in the **New Hampshire primary**, hoping to pressure the Democrats to oppose the Vietnam War. On March 12, McCarthy won 42 percent of the primary vote to Johnson's 49 percent, an amazingly strong showing for such a challenger. Four days later, Sen. **Robert F. Kennedy** of New York entered the race. Internal polling by Johnson's campaign in **Wisconsin**, the next state to hold a primary election, showed the President trailing badly. Johnson did not leave the White House to campaign.

By this time Johnson had lost control of the Democratic Party, which was splitting into four factions, each of which despised the other three. The first consisted of Johnson (and Humphrey), labor unions, and local party bosses (led by Chicago Mayor **Richard J. Daley**). The second group consisted of students and intellectuals who were vociferously against the war and rallied behind McCarthy. The third group were Catholics, Hispanics and African Americans, who rallied behind **Robert Kennedy**. The fourth group were traditionally segregationist white Southerners, who rallied behind **George C. Wallace** and the **American Independent Party**. Vietnam was one of many issues that splintered the party, and Johnson could see no way to win the war<sup>[99]</sup> and no way to unite the party long enough for him to win re-election.<sup>[124]</sup>

In addition, although it was not made public at the time, Johnson became more worried about his failing health and was concerned that he might not live through another four-year term. Therefore, at the end of a March 31 speech, he shocked the nation when he announced he would not run for re-election by concluding with the line: "I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your President."<sup>[125]</sup> The next day, his approval ratings increased from 36% to 49%.<sup>[126]</sup>

Historians have debated the factors that led to Johnson's surprise decision. Shesol says Johnson wanted out of the White House but also wanted vindication; when the indicators turned negative he decided to leave.<sup>[127]</sup> Gould says that Johnson had neglected the party, was hurting it by his Vietnam policies, and underestimated McCarthy strength until the very last minute, when it was too late for Johnson to recover.<sup>[128]</sup> Woods said Johnson realized he needed to leave in order for the nation to heal.<sup>[129]</sup> Dallek says that Johnson had no further domestic goals, and realized that his personality had eroded his popularity. His health was not good, and he was preoccupied with the Kennedy campaign; his wife was pressing for his retirement and his base of support continued to shrink. Leaving the race would allow him to pose as a peacemaker.<sup>[130]</sup> Bennett, however, says Johnson, "had been forced out of a reelection race in 1968 by outrage over his policy in Southeast Asia."<sup>[131]</sup>

Johnson did rally the party bosses and unions to give Humphrey the nomination at the **1968 Democratic National Convention**. Personal correspondences between the President and some in the Republican Party suggested Johnson tacitly supported **Nelson Rockefeller's** campaign. He reportedly said that if Rockefeller became the Republican nominee, he would not campaign against him (and would not campaign for Humphrey).<sup>[132]</sup> In what was termed the **October surprise**, Johnson announced to the nation on October 31, 1968, that he had ordered a complete cessation of "all air, naval and artillery bombardment of **North Vietnam**", effective November 1, should the **Hanoi** Government be willing to negotiate and citing progress with the **Paris peace talks**. In the end, Democrats did not fully unite behind Humphrey, enabling Republican candidate **Richard Nixon** to win the election.

## Administration and Cabinet

*(All of the cabinet members when Johnson became President in 1963 had been serving under John F. Kennedy*

[Glassboro Summit Conference](#)



President Johnson meets with Republican candidate Richard Nixon in the White House, July 1968.

previously.)

The Johnson Cabinet		
Office	Name	Term
President	<b>Lyndon B. Johnson</b>	1963–1969
Vice President	<b>none</b>	1963–1965
	<b>Hubert Humphrey</b>	1965–1969
Secretary of State	<b>Dean Rusk</b>	1963–1969
Secretary of Treasury	<b>C. Douglas Dillon</b>	1963–1965
	<b>Henry H. Fowler</b>	1965–1968
	<b>Joseph W. Barr</b>	1968–1969
Secretary of Defense	<b>Robert McNamara</b>	1963–1968
	<b>Clark M. Clifford</b>	1968–1969
Attorney General	<b>Robert F. Kennedy</b>	1963–1964
	<b>Nicholas deB. Katzenbach</b>	1964–1966
	<b>Ramsey Clark</b>	1966–1969
Postmaster General	<b>John A. Gronouski</b>	1963–1965
	<b>Larry O'Brien</b>	1965–1968
	<b>W. Marvin Watson</b>	1968–1969
Secretary of the Interior	<b>Stewart Lee Udall</b>	1963–1969
Secretary of Agriculture	<b>Orville Lothrop Freeman</b>	1963–1969
Secretary of Commerce	<b>Luther Hartwell Hodges</b>	1963–1965
	<b>John Thomas Connor</b>	1965–1967
	<b>Alexander Buel Trowbridge</b>	1967–1968
	<b>Cyrus Rowlett Smith</b>	1968–1969
Secretary of Labor	<b>W. Willard Wirtz</b>	1963–1969
Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare	<b>Anthony Celebrezze</b>	1963–1965
	<b>John William Gardner</b>	1965–1968
	<b>Wilbur Joseph Cohen</b>	1968–1969
Secretary of Housing and Urban Development	<b>Robert Clifton Weaver</b>	1966–1968
	<b>Robert Coldwell Wood</b>	1969
Secretary of Transportation	<b>Alan Stephenson Boyd</b>	1967–1969

## Judicial appointments

See also: *Lyndon B. Johnson judicial appointment controversies*

### Supreme Court

*Main article: Lyndon B. Johnson Supreme Court candidates*

Johnson appointed the following Justices to the [Supreme Court of the United States](#):

- [Abe Fortas](#)–1965
- [Thurgood Marshall](#)–1967 (the first African-American)

When [Earl Warren](#) announced his retirement in 1968, Johnson nominated Fortas to succeed him as [Chief Justice of the United States](#), and nominated [Homer Thornberry](#) to succeed Fortas as Associate Justice. However, Fortas was filibustered by senators and neither nominee was voted upon by the full Senate.

### Other courts

*Main article: Lyndon B. Johnson judicial appointments*

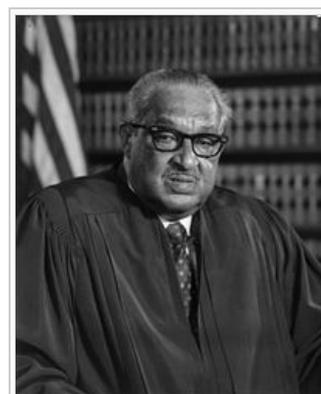
In addition to his Supreme Court appointments, Johnson appointed 40 judges to the [United States Courts of Appeals](#), and 126 judges to the [United States district courts](#). Johnson also had a small number of [judicial appointment controversies](#), with one appellate and three district court nominees not being confirmed by the [United States Senate](#) before Johnson's presidency ended.

## Scandals and controversies

During 1973 testimony before Congress, the CEO of America's largest cooperative of milk producers said that while Johnson was President, his cooperative had leased Johnson's private jet at a "plush" price, which Johnson wanted to



Official [White House portrait](#) of Lyndon B. Johnson



With the appointment of [Thurgood Marshall](#), Johnson placed the first African American on the Supreme Court.

continue once he was out of office.<sup>[26]</sup>

Johnson continued the FBI's wiretapping of [Martin Luther King, Jr.](#) that had been previously authorized by the Kennedy administration under Attorney General [Robert Kennedy](#).<sup>[133]</sup> As a result of listening to the FBI's tapes, remarks on King's personal lifestyle were made by several prominent officials, including Johnson, who once said that King was a "hypocritical preacher."<sup>[134]</sup> Johnson also authorized the tapping of phone conversations of others, including the Vietnamese friends of a Nixon associate.<sup>[135]</sup>

In Latin America, Johnson directly and indirectly supported the overthrow of left-wing, [democratically elected](#) president [Juan Bosch](#) of the [Dominican Republic](#) and [João Goulart](#) of [Brazil](#), maintaining US support for anti-communist, authoritarian Latin American regimes. American foreign policy towards Latin America remained largely static until election of [Jimmy Carter](#) to the presidency in 1977.

[Madeleine Duncan Brown](#) was an American woman who alleged that she was Johnson's longtime mistress.<sup>[136][137][138]</sup> In addition to claiming that her second child was born out of that relationship, Brown also implicated Johnson in a [conspiracy to assassinate President John F. Kennedy](#).<sup>[136][137][138]</sup> Brown's allegations have never been substantiated.<sup>[138]</sup>

### Personality and public image

Johnson was often seen as a wildly ambitious, tireless, and imposing figure who was ruthlessly effective at getting legislation passed. He worked 18–20-hour days without break and was apparently absent of any leisure activities. "There was no more powerful majority leader in American history," biographer Robert Dallek writes. Dallek stated that Johnson had biographies on all the Senators, knew what their ambitions, hopes, and tastes were and used it to his advantage in securing votes. Another Johnson biographer noted, "He could get up every day and learn what their fears, their desires, their wishes, their wants were and he could then manipulate, dominate, persuade and cajole them." At 6 feet 4 inches (1.93 m) tall, Johnson had his own particular brand of persuasion, known as "The Johnson Treatment".<sup>[139]</sup> A contemporary writes, "It was an incredible blend of badgering, cajolery, reminders of past favors, promises of future favors, predictions of gloom if something doesn't happen. When that man started to work on you, all of a sudden, you just felt that you were standing under a waterfall and the stuff was pouring on you."<sup>[139]</sup>



Johnson as he appears in the [National Portrait Gallery](#) in Washington, D.C.

Johnson's cowboy hat and boots reflected his Texas roots and genuine love of the rural hill country. From 250 acres (100 ha) of land that he was given by an aunt in 1951, he created a 2,700-acre (1,100 ha) working ranch with 400 head of registered Hereford cattle. The [National Park Service](#) keeps a herd of Hereford cattle descended from Johnson's registered herd and maintains the ranch property.<sup>[140]</sup>

### Post-presidency

After leaving the presidency in January 1969, Johnson went home to his ranch in Stonewall, Texas, accompanied by former Aide and speech writer [Harry J. Middleton](#), who would draft Johnson's first book, *The Choices We Face*, and work with him on his memoirs entitled *The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency 1963-1969*, published in 1971.<sup>[141]</sup> That year, the [Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum](#) opened near the campus of [The University of Texas at Austin](#). He donated his Texas ranch in his will to the public to form the [Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park](#), with the provision that the ranch "remain a working ranch and not become a sterile relic of the past".<sup>[142]</sup>

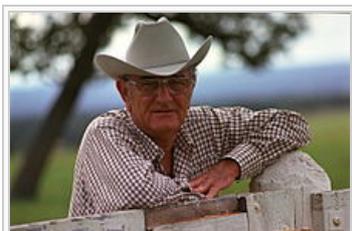


Johnson during an interview in August 1972, sporting longer hair

Johnson gave Nixon "high grades" in foreign policy, but worried that his successor was being pressured into removing U.S. forces too quickly, before the South Vietnamese were really able to defend themselves. "If the South falls to the Communists, we can have a serious backlash here at home," he warned.<sup>[143]</sup>

During the [1972 presidential election](#), Johnson endorsed Democratic presidential nominee [George S. McGovern](#), a Senator from [South Dakota](#), although McGovern had long opposed Johnson's foreign and defense policies. The McGovern nomination and presidential platform dismayed him. Nixon could be defeated "if only the Democrats don't go too far left," he had insisted. Johnson had felt [Edmund Muskie](#) would be more likely to defeat Nixon; however, he declined an invitation to try to stop McGovern receiving the nomination as he felt his unpopularity within the Democratic party was such that anything he said was more likely to help McGovern. Johnson's protégé [John Connally](#) had served as President Nixon's Secretary of the Treasury and then stepped down to head "[Democrats for Nixon](#)", a group funded by Republicans. It was the first time that Connally and Johnson were on opposite sides of a general

election campaign.<sup>[144]</sup>



Johnson at his ranch in Texas, 1972

In March 1970, Johnson was hospitalized at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, after suffering an attack of [angina](#). He was urged to lose considerable weight. He had grown dangerously heavier since leaving the White House, gaining more than 25 pounds (11 kg) and weighing around 235 pounds (107 kg). The following summer, again gripped by chest pains, he embarked on a crash water diet, shedding about 15 pounds (6.8 kg) in less than a month. In April 1972, Johnson experienced a massive heart attack while visiting his daughter, Lynda, in Charlottesville, Virginia. "I'm hurting real bad," he confided to friends. The chest pains hit him nearly every afternoon – a series of sharp, jolting pains that left him scared and breathless. A portable

oxygen tank stood next to his bed, and he periodically interrupted what he was doing to lie down and don the mask to gulp air. He continued to smoke heavily, and, although placed on a low-calorie, low-cholesterol diet, kept to it only in fits and starts. Meanwhile, he began experiencing severe stomach pains. Doctors diagnosed this problem as diverticulosis, pouches forming on the intestine. His condition rapidly worsened and surgery was recommended. Johnson flew to Houston to consult with heart specialist Dr. [Michael DeBakey](#), who decided that Johnson's heart condition presented too great a risk for any sort of surgery, including coronary bypass of two almost totally destroyed heart arteries.<sup>[143]</sup>

## Death and funeral

Johnson died at his [ranch](#) at 3:39 p.m. CST on January 22, 1973, at age 64 after suffering a massive heart attack. His death came the day before a ceasefire was signed in Vietnam and just a month after former President [Harry S. Truman](#) died. (Truman's funeral on December 28, 1972 had been one of Johnson's last public appearances). His death also occurred just two days after the end of what would have been his final term in office had he successfully won reelection in 1968. His health had been affected by years of [heavy smoking](#), poor diet, and extreme stress; the former president had advanced [coronary artery disease](#). He had his first, nearly fatal, heart attack in July 1955 and suffered a second one in April 1972, but had been unable to quit smoking after he left the Oval Office in 1969. He was found dead by Secret Service agents, in his bed, with a telephone receiver in his hand. The agents were responding to a desperate call Johnson had made to the Secret Service compound on his ranch minutes earlier complaining of "massive chest pains".<sup>[146]</sup>

Shortly after Johnson's death, his press secretary [Tom Johnson](#) (no relation), telephoned [Walter Cronkite](#) at CBS; Cronkite was live on the air with the *CBS Evening News* at the time, and a report on Vietnam was cut abruptly while Cronkite was still on the line, so he could break the news.<sup>[147]</sup>



A memorial wreath at President Johnson's grave in Texas

Johnson was honored with a [state funeral](#) in which Texas Congressman [J. J. Pickle](#) and former Secretary of State [Dean Rusk](#) eulogized him at the [Capitol](#).<sup>[2]</sup> The final

services took place on January 25. The funeral was held at the [National City Christian Church](#) in Washington, D.C., where he had often worshiped as president. The service was presided over by President Richard Nixon and attended by foreign dignitaries, led by former Japanese prime minister [Eisaku Satō](#), who served as Japanese prime minister during Johnson's presidency.<sup>[148]</sup> Eulogies were given by the Rev. Dr. George Davis, the church's pastor, and [W. Marvin Watson](#), former postmaster general.<sup>[149]</sup> Nixon did not speak, though he attended, as is customary for presidents during state funerals, but the eulogists turned to him and lauded him for his tributes,<sup>[149]</sup> as Rusk did the day before, as Nixon mentioned Johnson's death in a speech he gave the day after Johnson died, announcing the peace agreement to end the Vietnam War.<sup>[150]</sup>

“ On Inauguration Day (January 20, 1969), Johnson saw Nixon sworn in, then got on the plane to fly back to Texas. When the front door of the plane closed, Johnson pulled out a cigarette—his first cigarette he had smoked since his heart attack in 1955. One of his daughters pulled it out of his mouth and said, "Daddy, what are you doing? You're going to kill yourself." He took it back and said, "I've now raised you girls. I've now been President. *Now it's my time!*" From that point on, he went into a very self-destructive spiral. ”

—Historian [Michael Beschloss](#).<sup>[145]</sup>

Johnson was buried in his family cemetery (which, although it is part of the

Johnson was buried in his family cemetery (which, although it is part of the [Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park](#) in Stonewall, Texas, is still privately owned by the Johnson family, who have requested that the public not enter the cemetery), a few yards from the house in which he was born. Eulogies were given by [John Connally](#) and the Rev. [Billy Graham](#), the minister who officiated the burial rites. The state funeral, the last for a president until [Ronald Reagan](#)'s in 2004, was part of an unexpectedly busy week in Washington, as the [Military District of Washington](#) (MDW) dealt with their second major task in less than a week, beginning with [Nixon's second inauguration](#).<sup>[151]</sup> The inauguration had an impact on the state funeral in various ways, because Johnson died only two days after the inauguration.<sup>[2][151]</sup> The MDW and the [Armed Forces Inaugural Committee](#) canceled the remainder of the ceremonies surrounding the inauguration to allow for a full state funeral,<sup>[151]</sup> and many of the military men who participated in the inauguration took part in the funeral.<sup>[151]</sup> It also meant Johnson's casket traveled the entire length of the Capitol, entering through the Senate wing when taken into the rotunda to lie in state and exited through the House wing steps due to construction on the East Front steps.<sup>[2]</sup>



Johnson lying in state in the [United States Capitol rotunda](#)

## Legacy

The Manned Spacecraft Center in [Houston](#) was renamed the [Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center](#) in 1973,<sup>[152]</sup> and Texas created a legal state holiday to be observed on August 27 to mark Johnson's birthday.<sup>[153]</sup> It is known as [Lyndon Baines Johnson Day](#). The [Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove on the Potomac](#) was dedicated on September 27, 1974.



Lyndon B. Johnson with his family in the Yellow Oval Room, Christmas 1968

The [Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs](#) was named in his honor, as is the [Lyndon B. Johnson National Grassland](#).

Lyndon B. Johnson Middle School in [Melbourne, Florida](#), is his namesake.

[Interstate 635](#) in Dallas is named the Lyndon B. Johnson Freeway.

Lyndon Baines Johnson Tropical Medical Center is named after the 36th President who visited [American Samoa](#) on October 18, 1966. This marked the beginning of construction of the hospital located in the village of [Faga'alu, American Samoa](#). The facility was completed in 1968.

Runway 17R/35L at [Austin-Bergstrom International Airport](#) is known as the Lyndon B. Johnson Runway.

The student center at [Texas State University](#) is named after the former president and graduate.

Johnson was awarded the [Presidential Medal of Freedom](#) posthumously in 1980.<sup>[154]</sup>

A small village run by [FELDA](#) in [Negeri Sembilan](#) has been named [FELDA L.B. Johnson](#) to commemorate his visit to [Malaysia](#) in 1966.

On March 23, 2007, President [George W. Bush](#) signed legislation naming the [United States Department of Education](#) headquarters after President Johnson.<sup>[155]</sup>

2008 was the celebration of the Johnson Centennial featuring special programs, events, and parties across Texas and in Washington, D.C. Johnson would have been 100 years old on August 27, 2008.

### Major legislation signed

- 1963: [Clean Air Act of 1963](#)<sup>[156]</sup>
- 1963: [Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963](#)<sup>[157][158]</sup>
- 1963: [Vocational Education Act of 1963](#)<sup>[159]</sup>
- 1964: [Civil Rights Act of 1964](#)
- 1964: [Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964](#)

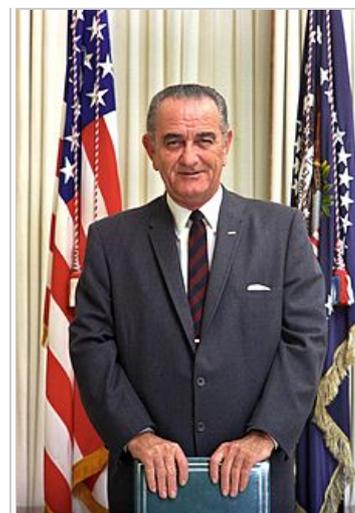


Entrance to the [Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove on the Potomac](#)



Johnson shakes hands with people, 1966.

- 1964: [Wilderness Act](#)
- 1964: [Nurse Training Act of 1964](#)<sup>[160]</sup>
- 1964: [Food Stamp Act of 1964](#)
- 1964: [Economic Opportunity Act](#)
- 1964: [Housing Act of 1964](#)<sup>[161]</sup>
- 1965: [Higher Education Act of 1965](#)
- 1965: [Older Americans Act](#)
- 1965: [Coinage Act of 1965](#)
- 1965: [Social Security Act of 1965](#)
- 1965: [Voting Rights Act](#)
- 1965: [Immigration and Nationality Services Act of 1965](#)
- 1966: [Animal Welfare Act of 1966](#)
- 1966: [Freedom of Information Act \(FOIA\)](#)
- 1967: [Age Discrimination in Employment Act](#)<sup>[162]</sup>
- 1967: [Public Broadcasting Act of 1967](#)
- 1968: [Architectural Barriers Act of 1968](#)
- 1968: [Bilingual Education Act](#)
- 1968: [Civil Rights Act of 1968](#)
- 1968: [Gun Control Act of 1968](#)



LBJ smiles in the Oval Office in 1969, a few days before Richard Nixon's Inauguration.

## See also

- [Electoral history of Lyndon B. Johnson](#)
- [History of the United States \(1945–1964\)](#)
- [History of the United States \(1964–1980\)](#)
- [Holocaust Museum Houston](#)
- [List of facilities named after Lyndon Johnson](#)
- [List of Presidents of the United States](#)
- [Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs](#)
- [Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum](#) on the campus of the University of Texas in Austin
- [Popular cultural legacy of Lyndon B. Johnson](#)
- [U.S. Presidents on U.S. postage stamps](#)



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