

# Ronald reagan: life and career



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Ronald Reagan served as president throughout the entire duration of the 1980s. However, Reagan's early life, education, and initial involvement in politics plays an important role in his decision making and the party that he identified himself as. Ronald Reagan contributed a lot to the U. S., as well as welfare reform that occurred during the economic crisis of his presidential time era.

Being the 40th president of the United States, Reagan's policies continue to effect modern day society and the structure of the government. This paper goes through Reagan's time spent in government, the impacts he made, and how he became a prominent figure in presidential history.

Ronald Reagan, also known as the 40th president of the United States, is originally from Tampico, Illinois. Born in 1911, Reagan went to Eureka college located in Illinois, majoring in economics and sociology (Biography. com Staff, 2017). He was able to go to this college through an academic scholarship, and graduated in 1932 (Biography. com Staff, 2017). Reagan then proceeded to work in Iowa as a radio sports announcer, in which he later earned his nickname, The Great Communicator (Biography. com Staff, 2017). Ronald Reagan shortly began his career in film in 1937, when he signed a contract with Warner Bros that lasted for seven years (Biography. com Staff, 2017). Throughout his career, he appeared in more than 50 films, his most popular ones being Knute Rockne, All American, and Kings Row (Biography. com Staff, 2017). Reagan married Jane Wyman in 1940, and had one daughter, and one adopted son. The pair divorced in 1948, Ronald

remarried to Nancy Davis, and they had two children. He did serve during World War II for a short time, until he had been released due to his poor eye vision (Biography. com Staff, 2017).

Ronald Reagan always had some sort of interest in politics, he initially was a Democratic due to his parents. However, his ideals switched over to those of a conservative Republican during the 1960s. He became aware of the issue of Communism when he was the president of the Screen Actors Guild, thus, he views in politics began to shift. Reagan then began touring the country as a television host, branding himself as a spokesman for conservatism (Cannon, n. d.).

Reagan's family held a strong liking towards Franklin Delano Roosevelt during his presidency, Ronald particularly liked FDR because he provided work for his brother and father in his New Deal Programs (Cannon, n. d.). After World War II Reagan aligned his beliefs with those in the Democratic Party, being anti-communist liberals. Before he became president himself, Reagan was the Governor of California, and campaigned greatly for Nixon during the election (History. com Staff, 2009). During his early years as governor, he ordered a large tax increase in hopes to close the budget deficit, thus he opposed Nixon's plan to federalize welfare and establish a guaranteed annual income (Cannon, n. d.). Nixon's fail ultimately failed, and Reagan bestowed it upon himself to create his own welfare plan in California. His welfare plan was successful, in which the welfare caseload began to drop by 8, 000 each month, and by July of 1973 it was 800, 000 cases lower than the reform had originally predicted (Cannon, n. d.). Ronald Reagan's welfare plan in 1970 was seen as successful for state-based welfare experiments and <https://assignbuster.com/ronald-reagan-life-and-career/>

was culminated on the national level in 1996 (Cannon, n. d.). Government WorkIn the election of 1976, Reagan went up against Gerald Ford for the Republican Party position. Reagan was able to keep himself in the head of the media between 1976 and 1980 by writing in a newspaper column and giving daily radio addresses, while being able to remain publicly undeclared about his plans for his presidency in 1980 (History. com Staff, 2009). Reagan mainly focused on fixing the current efficiency of the economy during his presidency, in which he stated, In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problems; government is the problem (History. com Staff, 2009). President Reagan began to implement policies into government that reduced the federal government's reach into the daily lives and pocketbooks of Americans this included tax cuts to stimulate growth, also known as Reaganomics (Reaganomics, n. d.). Reaganomics advocated for the increase in military spendings, reductions towards specific social programs, and measures taken to deregulate business. Reagan reduced domestic spending by cutting the top marginal tax rate on individual income from 70% to 28%, and the corporate tax rate went from 48% to 34% (Reaganomics, n. d.). His presidency also included eliminating price controls that were placed on oil and natural gases, telephone and cable services to reduce economic regulation (Reaganomics, n. d.).

Also, Reagan supported a monetary policy that stabilized the U. S. dollar against foreign policies, in which tax revenues received increased from \$909 billion in 1988 from \$517 billion in 1980 (Reaganomics, n. d.). Plus, he was able to reduce inflation to 4%, and the unemployment rate to under 6% (Reaganomics, n. d.). Thus, Reagan worked a lot in the legislative branch of

government, and worked with Congress in order to create new tax policies. Reagan also took action for women involvement in government by appointing Sandra Day O'Connor to be the first woman to be apart of the U. S. Supreme Court (History. com Staff, 2009). When it came to foreign affairs, Reagan worked in the executive branch to create the Reagan Doctrine. The doctrine, taking place during the increased tension of the Cold War, America provided aid to anti-communist movements occurring in Africa, Asia, and South America (History. com Staff, 2009). In 1983, Reagan announced the Strategic Defense Initiative to help protect America from attacks by Soviet nuclear missiles by developing space-based weapons (History. com Staff, 2009).

On the account of foreign affairs, Reagan also sent 800 U. S. Marines to Lebanon as a part of an international peacekeeping force after Israel invaded the nation in June of 1982 (History. com Staff, 2009). Additionally, Reagan was able to form a relationship diplomatically with Mikhail Gorbachev, who was the leader of the Soviet Union in 1985 (History. com Staff, 2009). In November of 1984, Reagan won his reelection by a landslide against Walter Mondale, winning 49 out of the 50 states, the largest number ever won by a presidential candidate in American history (History. com Staff, 2009).

Ideology During his presidency, Reagan identified himself as a conservative Republican, even though he had grown up in a Democratic household. Reagan ultimately displayed idiosyncratic conservatism, combining a progressive optimism that could be confused for a utopian state of mind. He often quoted a line from Tom Paine that was one of the most radical figures

known today, We have it in our power to begin the world over again (Hayward, 2013).

Ronald Reagan never believed that human nature could be shaped perfectly through political, or even bureaucratic interventions (Hayward, 2013). He was often critical of elites and experts that are considered the trademark of a modern bureaucratic government (Hayward, 2013). Reagan's conservative beliefs ultimately shaped the way that he handled problems economically, including his decisions on tax reforms during the time of an economic crisis. Thus, he was the only governor who opposed a National Governors Association resolution in favor of Nixon's proposal, when Nixon planned to federalize welfare and establish a guaranteed annual income (Hayward, 2013). Furthermore, Reagan strongly had a disliking towards the idea that, a little intellectual elite in a far-distant capitol can plan our lives for us better than we can plan them ourselves (Hayward, 2013). Ronald Reagan was a definite conservative Republican who stuck to his beliefs, and implemented policies that best fit his own ideals.