

# The Great Society

## BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you read about President Kennedy’s domestic programs.

In this section, you will read about Lyndon Johnson’s bold plan to reshape America.

## AS YOU READ

Use this diagram to take notes about President Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society programs.

**Lyndon Baines Johnson** 36th president of the United States

**Economic Opportunity Act** Act that created numerous antipoverty measures

**Great Society** Name given to Johnson’s domestic agenda

**Medicare and Medicaid** Health benefits for the elderly and poor

**Immigration Act of 1965** Established new immigration system that allowed more immigrants into the U.S.

**Warren Court** The Supreme Court under Chief Justice Earl Warren

**reapportionment** The way in which states redraw their election districts

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
<i>Economic Opportunity Act</i>	<i>Created antipoverty programs</i>

## LBJ’s Path to Power; Johnson’s Domestic Agenda (pages 686–688)

### How did Johnson wage a “war” on poverty?

**Lyndon Baines Johnson**, a Texan, was Senate majority leader in 1960. Johnson was a skilled law-maker. He demonstrated a great ability to negotiate and reach agreements. During the 1960 presidential campaign, Kennedy’s advisers thought that Johnson would make the perfect running mate. They believed that Johnson’s connections in Congress and his Southern background would help

Kennedy’s presidential chances. Kennedy asked Johnson to be his vice-presidential candidate. Johnson agreed. He helped Kennedy win important states in the South.

Upon Kennedy’s death, Johnson became president. Under President Johnson’s leadership, Congress passed two bills that President Kennedy had proposed. One was a tax cut to help stimulate the economy. The other was the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Johnson then launched his own program—a “war on poverty.” He worked with Congress to pass the **Economic Opportunity Act**. This law created youth programs, antipoverty measures, loans for

small businesses, and job training. The law created the Job Corps youth training program and the VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) program.

Johnson ran for president in 1964. He easily defeated his Republican opponent, Barry Goldwater.

1. Name two programs created by the Economic Opportunity Act.
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## Building the Great Society; Reforms of the Warren Court

(pages 689–692)

### *How did the Great Society and the Warren Court change America?*

President Johnson had a grand vision for America. He called it the **Great Society**. Throughout his term, Johnson introduced legislation to help him create his Great Society. Among other things, these laws:

- provided federal aid for schools to purchase textbooks and library materials;
- created **Medicare and Medicaid** to ensure health care for the aged and poor;
- funded the building of public housing units and created the cabinet-level Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD);
- lifted restrictions on immigration through the **Immigration Act of 1965**—which opened the door for many non-European immigrants to settle in the United States;
- required efforts to ensure clean water, through the Water Quality Act of 1965;
- offered increased protection to consumers, through the Wholesome Meat Act of 1967;
- established safety standards for automobiles and tires.

The wave of liberal reform that characterized the Great Society also affected the Supreme Court. Chief Justice Earl Warren took an active role in *promoting* more liberal policies. The **Warren Court** ruled school *segregation* unconstitutional. The court also banned prayer in public schools and strengthened the right of free speech.

The Warren Court also changed the area of congressional **reapportionment**. This is the way in which states redraw their election districts. The Court ruled that election districts within each state had to have roughly the same number of people in them. Because so many people lived in the cities, the court's ruling led to the creation of many new urban districts. As a result, political power shifted from the countryside to the cities.

The Warren Court strengthened the rights of people accused of crimes. The Court ruled police had to read suspects their rights before questioning them. These rights are known as Miranda rights.

2. Name one result of the Great Society and one result of the Warren Court.
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## Impact of the Great Society

(page 693)

### *How successful was the Great Society?*

The Great Society and the Warren Court changed America. People disagree on whether these changes left the nation better or worse off than before. On one hand, Johnson's antipoverty measures helped reduce the suffering of many people. However, many of Johnson's proposals did not achieve their stated goals. Most people agree on one point: No president since World War II increased the power and reach of federal government more than Lyndon Johnson.

Eventually, some Americans began to question the increased size of the federal government. They also wondered about the effectiveness of Johnson's programs. Across the country, people became *disillusioned* with the Great Society. This led to the rise of a new group of Republican leaders.

3. How did the Great Society affect the size of the federal government?
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