

**Module 8: Politics**  
**Topic 1 Content: Government Influence on Public Policy**

**Introduction**



**Glover Mint:** Thank you for joining us for another episode of WUSG News. During today's program, we will be taking a look at some specific examples of how the national government can influence the public agenda and shape public policy. Take it away, Demi.

## Module 8: Politics

### Topic 1 Content: Government Influence on Public Policy

#### Government Influence on Public Policy

**Government Influence on Public Policy**

Please Make a Selection Below

ERA      ADA

ESEA

**Demi Tracy:** Thank you, Glover. To help illustrate the federal government's influence on public policy, we will examine three legislative acts: the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

## Module 8: Politics

### Topic 1 Content: Government Influence on Public Policy

#### The Equal Rights Amendment

## The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)



**Section 1.** Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

**Section 2.** The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

**Section 3.** This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

Next

**Demi Tracy:** The Nineteenth Amendment was ratified in 1920, securing universal women's suffrage. It was a major victory for women's rights, but true equality was still not achieved. Three years after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, women's rights activist Alice Paul wrote the Equal Rights Amendment. The Nineteenth Amendment granted women the right to vote, but it did not guarantee equal protection for all women. To fix this, The Equal Rights Amendment consists of three short sections, which read:

"Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

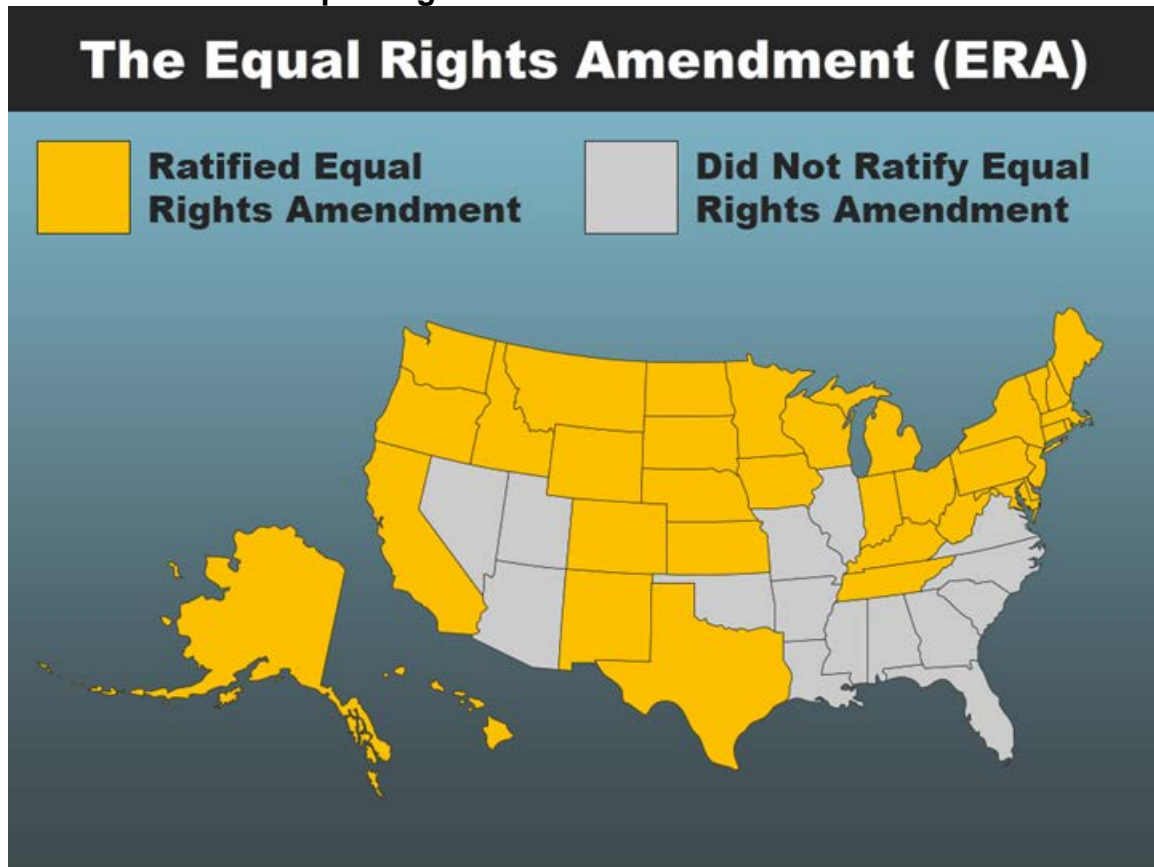
Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification."

## Module 8: Politics

### Topic 1 Content: Government Influence on Public Policy

#### Ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment



**Demi Tracy:** The Equal Rights Amendment was introduced during every session of Congress, from 1923 to 1972. In 1972, it passed in both houses and was slated to become the 27<sup>th</sup> Amendment. The approval of thirty-eight states was required to ratify the amendment, but only thirty-five states voted to do so. Efforts to add the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution continue, under the legal argument that the law that actually became the 27<sup>th</sup> Amendment was ratified 203 years after it was originally proposed in 1789; therefore, the states should be able to vote on the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment again. Discussing the importance of this Amendment, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said:

“If I could choose an amendment to add to the Constitution, it would be the Equal Rights Amendment. I think we have achieved that through legislation, but legislation can be repealed, it can be altered. So I would like my granddaughters, when they pick up the Constitution, to see that notion – that women and men are persons of equal stature – I’d like them to see that is a basic principle of our society.”

## Module 8: Politics

### Topic 1 Content: Government Influence on Public Policy

#### Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

## Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- Equal opportunity law for people with disabilities
- Based on the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Prohibited discrimination
- Required public buildings and transportation facilities to be accessible



President George H. W. Bush signs ADA into law

The photograph shows President George H. W. Bush seated at a table, signing a document. He is wearing a dark suit and glasses. To his right, Vice President Dan Quayle is seated, wearing a dark suit and a brown hat. Behind them, a woman in a dark jacket and patterned blouse stands with her hands clasped. To the left, another man in a light-colored suit is seated in a wheelchair. The background is an outdoor setting with a fountain and a crowd of people.

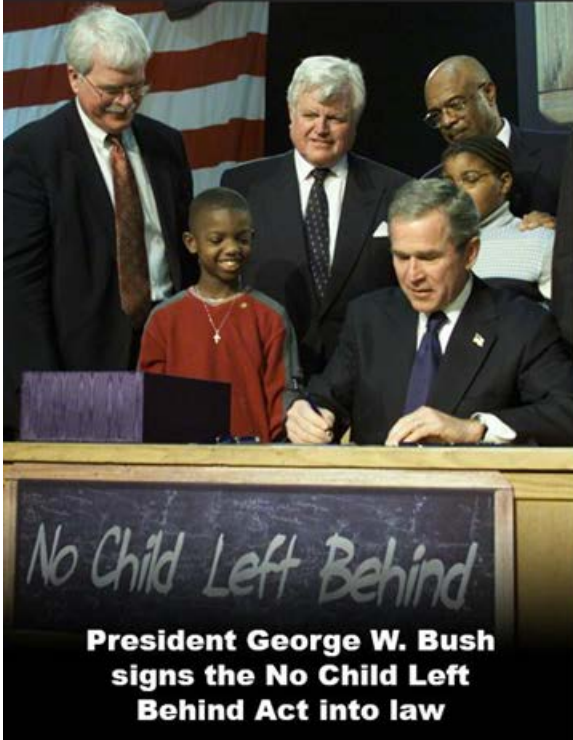
**Demi Tracy:** Americans living with disabilities constitute another group whose members have suffered from discrimination. The national government began passing legislation to combat this discrimination. For example, the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which protected people's right to fair housing, was expanded to include people with disabilities. A major step came in 1990, when President George H. W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This legislation was an equal opportunity law for people with disabilities, and was directly based on the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The ADA prohibited discrimination against people with disabilities, but it also required public buildings and transportation facilities to be accessible. Ramps and elevators are now a common feature in public buildings because of this legislation.

## Module 8: Politics

### Topic 1 Content: Government Influence on Public Policy

#### Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965

#### Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)



- Was created to help fund and provide equal opportunities for education
- The No Child Left Behind Act added Section 9524 to the ESEA
- Ensured no school was infringing on students' rights
- Required schools to certify in writing that there are no restrictions on a student's right to pray

Next

**Demi Tracy:** Supreme Court decisions have reasoned that publicly funded schools must remain neutral in matters of religion. This neutrality is the result of a balance between the establishment clause and the free exercise clause. Teachers and other school officials may not lead a classroom in prayer or read scripture to the class, but they may also not prohibit any student from praying. Students are also free to pray with fellow students, as long as teachers and school officials are not involved. To ensure that the rights of students were not being restricted, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was amended in 2001.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was created to help fund and provide equal opportunities for education. It was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson in 1965, as a part of his "War on Poverty" program. ESEA was amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, under the administration of President George W. Bush. The No Child Left Behind Act added Section 9524 to ESEA in an effort to ensure that no school was infringing on a student's right to practice his or her religion. In order for a local education agency to receive funding from ESEA, it was now required to certify in writing that it did not practice any policies that denied or prevented constitutionally protected prayer in public schools.

## Module 8: Politics

### Topic 1 Content: Government Influence on Public Policy

#### Ending of Episode



**Glover Mint:** Excellent job, Demi! That's it for us today. Thank you for tuning in. See you next time, America.