

Government's 50 Greatest Endeavors

of the second half of the 20th century

Start here



Please rate each goal on the three scales.

The next few pages list 50 federal government goals of the last half of the 20th century. Please rate each goal on three scales:

Important In your opinion, how important was or is the problem addressed by the goal?

Difficult How difficult was or is the goal to achieve?

Successful How successful have the federal government's actions been in achieving the goal?

As you rate the goals, please keep the following in mind:

Goals, not examples Each goal is accompanied by several examples of relevant federal action. These were selected to illustrate the goals and are not intended to be exhaustive. Since this is a survey of goals, not legislation, some sets of examples reflect very different, or even conflicting, policy strategies and levels of success.

Please rate the overall importance, difficulty and success of each goal, not the examples.

Rating, not ranking When assessing the policy goals, rate them on their own merit. Please do not rank or compare the goals against one another.

We value your opinion You may be more familiar with some goals than others; nonetheless, we encourage you to rate all of them.

When you are finished, please fold the survey so the Business Reply address on the back page is visible, tape the document closed and drop it in the mail. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Princeton Survey Research Associates at 202.293.4710.

Reduce Workplace Discrimination

Action to prohibit employers from discriminating based on race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age or disability. e.g., Equal Pay Act 1963, Civil Rights Act 1964, Age Discrimination Act 1967, Americans with Disabilities Act 1990.

Not
Somewhat
Moderately
Very

1 2 3 4

Important 1 2 3 4

Difficult 1 2 3 4

Successful 1 2 3 4

Expand the Right to Vote

Action to guarantee the right to vote for all Americans over 18. e.g., Civil Rights Act 1964, 24th Amendment 1964, Voting Rights Act 1965, 26th Amendment 1971.

Important 1 2 3 4

Difficult 1 2 3 4

Successful 1 2 3 4

Promote Equal Access to Public Accommodations

Action to desegregate public facilities and require handicapped accessibility. e.g., Civil Rights Act 1964, Open Housing Act 1968, Americans with Disabilities Act 1990.

Important 1 2 3 4

Difficult 1 2 3 4

Successful 1 2 3 4

Enhance Consumer Protection

Action to create safety standards and raise awareness of potential hazards. e.g., Amendments to Food, Drug and Cosmetics Act 1962; Fair Packaging and Labeling Act 1966; Consumer Product Safety Act 1972.

Important 1 2 3 4

Difficult 1 2 3 4

Successful 1 2 3 4

Enhance Workplace Safety

Action to reduce workplace hazards. e.g., Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act 1969, Occupational Safety and Health Act 1970.

Important 1 2 3 4

Difficult 1 2 3 4

Successful 1 2 3 4



Important How important was or is the problem addressed?

Difficult How difficult was or is the goal to achieve?

Successful How successful has the federal government been in achieving the goal?

Please rate each goal on the three scales.

Reduce Crime Action to increase law enforcement officers, strengthen penalties, control guns and support prevention programs. e.g., Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act 1968, 1994; Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act 1993.

	Not	Somewhat	Moderately	Very
	1	2	3	4
Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Expand Job Training and Placement Action to create jobs and provide vocational training. e.g., Employment Act 1946, Small Business Act 1953, Economic Opportunity Act 1964, Comprehensive Employment and Training Act 1973, Job Training Partnership Act 1982.

	Not	Somewhat	Moderately	Very
	1	2	3	4
Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Increase Access to Post-Secondary Education Action to provide assistance for higher education through loans, grants and fellowships and to build and improve facilities. e.g., Higher Education Facilities Act 1963, Higher Education Act 1965.

	Not	Somewhat	Moderately	Very
	1	2	3	4
Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Reform Welfare Action to increase self-sufficiency among welfare recipients. e.g., Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act 1981, Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act 1996.

	Not	Somewhat	Moderately	Very
	1	2	3	4
Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Improve Elementary and Secondary Education Action to enhance education from preschool through high school. e.g., National Defense Education Act 1958, Elementary and Secondary Education Act 1965, Head Start 1967.

	Not	Somewhat	Moderately	Very
	1	2	3	4
Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Provide Assistance for the Working Poor Action to raise the income of the working poor through tax credits, assistance with expenses and a guaranteed minimum wage. e.g., Earned Income Tax Credit 1975, Family Support Act 1988, increases to the minimum wage.

	Not	Somewhat	Moderately	Very
	1	2	3	4
Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Promote Financial Security in Retirement Action to raise Social Security benefits, expand the number of recipients, ensure program's solvency, protect private pensions and encourage individual savings for retirement. e.g., Social Security expansions, Supplemental Security Income program 1972, Employment Retirement Income Security Act 1974.

	Not	Somewhat	Moderately	Very
	1	2	3	4
Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Expand Home Ownership Action to promote ownership through home loans and mortgages. e.g., Housing Act 1950, 1959; Tax Reform Act 1986.

	Not	Somewhat	Moderately	Very
	1	2	3	4
Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Increase the Supply of Low-Income Housing Action to develop new public housing and subsidize rents in private units. e.g., Housing Act 1949; Housing and Community Development Act 1965, 1974.

	Not	Somewhat	Moderately	Very
	1	2	3	4
Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Important How important was or is the problem addressed?

Difficult How difficult was or is the goal to achieve?

Successful How successful has the federal government been in achieving the goal?

Please rate each goal on the three scales.

Develop and Renew Impoverished Communities

Action to improve the quality of life in poor rural and urban areas. e.g., Appalachian Regional Development Act 1965, Demonstration Cities Act 1966.

		Not	Somewhat	Moderately	Very
		1	2	3	4
Important		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Reduce Hunger and Improve Nutrition

Action to provide food assistance to children and adults. e.g., National School Lunch Act 1946; Food Stamp Act 1964; Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) 1972.

		Not	Somewhat	Moderately	Very
		1	2	3	4
Important		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Increase Older Americans' Access to Health Care

Action to provide health insurance to older Americans. e.g., Medicare 1965, Catastrophic Health Insurance for the Aged 1988.

		1	2	3	4
Important		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Ensure Safe Food and Drinking Water

Action to establish and enforce food and water quality standards. e.g., Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act 1947; Wholesome Meat Act 1967; Safe Drinking Water Act 1974.

		1	2	3	4
Important		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Increase Low-Income Families' Access to Health Care

Action to provide health insurance to poor Americans. e.g., Medicaid 1965, Children's Health Insurance Program 1997.

		1	2	3	4
Important		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Improve Air Quality

Action to control air pollution and raise air quality standards. e.g., Clean Air Act 1963, Motor Vehicle Pollution Control Act 1965.

		1	2	3	4
Important		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Enhance the Nation's Health Care Infrastructure

Action to build medical treatment and research facilities. e.g., Hospital Survey and Construction Act 1946; Mental Retardation Facilities Construction Act 1963; Heart Disease, Cancer and Stroke amendments 1965.

		1	2	3	4
Important		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Improve Water Quality

Action to control water pollution and raise water quality standards. e.g., Water Pollution Control Act 1948, 1972; Water Quality Act 1965, 1987.

		1	2	3	4
Important		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Reduce Disease Action to prevent and treat disease through research, direct assistance and regulation. e.g., Polio Vaccine Act 1955, National Cancer Act 1971.

		1	2	3	4
Important		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Reduce Exposure to Hazardous Waste

Action to restore the environment and manage hazardous waste. e.g., Resource Conservation and Recovery Act 1976; Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (Superfund) 1980.

		1	2	3	4
Important		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Important How important was or is the problem addressed?

Difficult How difficult was or is the goal to achieve?

Successful How successful has the federal government been in achieving the goal?

Please rate each goal on the three scales.

Protect the Wilderness Action to safeguard land from commercial and recreational development. e.g., Wilderness Act 1964, Wild and Scenic Rivers Act 1968, Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act 1980.

		Not	Somewhat	Moderately	Very
		1	2	3	4
Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Protect Endangered Species Action to prevent loss of threatened species. e.g., Marine Mammal Protection Act 1972, Endangered Species Act 1973.

Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Ensure an Adequate Energy Supply Action to facilitate the development of domestic energy sources and promote conservation. e.g., Atomic Energy Act 1954, trans-Alaskan pipeline 1973, Energy Policy and Conservation Act 1975, Natural Gas Wellhead Decontrol Act 1989.

Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Stabilize Agricultural Prices Action to support crop prices, distribute surpluses and control production. e.g., Agriculture Act 1948, 1961; Agriculture Trade Development and Assistance Act 1954; Food Security Act 1985.

Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Control Immigration Action to set and enforce standards on immigration, temporary admission, naturalization and the removal of aliens. e.g., Immigration and Nationality Act (McCarran-Walter) 1952, Immigration and Nationality Act amendments 1965, Immigration Reform and Control Act 1986, Immigration Act 1990.

Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Rebuild Europe After World War II Action to support post-World War II economic recovery and political stability. e.g., Establishment of the International Monetary Fund under the Bretton-Woods Agreement Act 1945, Foreign Assistance Act 1948, North Atlantic Treaty 1949.

		Not	Somewhat	Moderately	Very
		1	2	3	4
Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Contain Communism Action to impede communism. e.g., Aid to Greece and Turkey 1947, North Atlantic Treaty 1949, Korean and Vietnam Wars.

Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Maintain Stability in the Persian Gulf Action to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait in the 1991 Gulf War.

Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Strengthen the National Defense Action to build and modernize the national defense. e.g., Authorization of tactical and strategic weapons systems, Department of Defense Reorganization Act 1958, Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act 1986.

Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Support Veterans' Readjustment and Training Action to assist veterans with their transition back to civilian life. e.g., Serviceman's Readjustment Act 1944, New GI Bill Continuation Act (Montgomery GI Bill) 1987.

Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Important How important was or is the problem addressed?

Difficult How difficult was or is the goal to achieve?

Successful How successful has the federal government been in achieving the goal?

Please rate each goal on the three scales.

Increase International Economic Development Action to provide aid for development. e.g., Establishment of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development under the Bretton-Woods Agreement Act 1945, Act for International Development 1950, Peace Corps 1961.

		Not	Somewhat	Moderately	Very	
		1	2	3	4	
Important	←	①	②	③	④	→
Difficult	←	①	②	③	④	→
Successful	←	①	②	③	④	→

Devolve Responsibility to the States Action to shift power from the federal government to the states. e.g., State and Local Fiscal Assistance Act (general revenue sharing) 1972, Unfunded Mandate Reform Act 1995, Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (welfare reform) 1996.

		Not	Somewhat	Moderately	Very	
		1	2	3	4	
Important	←	①	②	③	④	→
Difficult	←	①	②	③	④	→
Successful	←	①	②	③	④	→

Advance Human Rights and Provide Humanitarian Relief Action to improve social conditions abroad by protecting human rights and providing relief aid. e.g., United Nations charter 1945, Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act 1986, Kosovo intervention 1999.

		①	②	③	④	
Important	←	①	②	③	④	→
Difficult	←	①	②	③	④	→
Successful	←	①	②	③	④	→

Reduce the Federal Budget Deficit Action to balance the federal budget. e.g., Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act (Gramm-Rudman-Hollings) 1985, Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act 1990, Omnibus Budget Reconciliation 1993, Balanced Budget Act 1997.

		①	②	③	④	
Important	←	①	②	③	④	→
Difficult	←	①	②	③	④	→
Successful	←	①	②	③	④	→

Increase Arms Control and Disarmament Action to limit nuclear weapon development and use. e.g., Nuclear Test Ban Treaty 1963, Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty 1969, SALT/ABM Treaty 1972, Intermediate Range Nuclear Force Treaty 1988.

		①	②	③	④	
Important	←	①	②	③	④	→
Difficult	←	①	②	③	④	→
Successful	←	①	②	③	④	→

Increase the Stability of Financial Institutions and Markets Action to increase access to financial market information, assist ailing institutions and avert potential problems. e.g., Securities and Exchange Act 1975; Insider Trading and Securities Fraud Enforcement Act 1988; Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery and Enforcement Act 1989.

		①	②	③	④	
Important	←	①	②	③	④	→
Difficult	←	①	②	③	④	→
Successful	←	①	②	③	④	→

Increase Market Competition Action to deregulate industries including airlines, banks, utilities and telecommunications. e.g., Airline Deregulation Act 1978, Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (financial services overhaul) 1999.

		①	②	③	④	
Important	←	①	②	③	④	→
Difficult	←	①	②	③	④	→
Successful	←	①	②	③	④	→

Reform Taxes Action to lower tax rates. e.g., Revenue Act 1964, Economic Recovery Tax Act 1981.

		①	②	③	④	
Important	←	①	②	③	④	→
Difficult	←	①	②	③	④	→
Successful	←	①	②	③	④	→



Important How important was or is the problem addressed?

Difficult How difficult was or is the goal to achieve?

Successful How successful has the federal government been in achieving the goal?

Please rate each goal on the three scales.

Expand Foreign Markets for US Goods Action to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade. e.g., Bretton-Woods Agreement Act 1945, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1947, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Treaty 1961, North American Free Trade Agreement 1993.

		Not	Somewhat	Moderately	Very
		1	2	3	4
Important	=	①	②	③	④
Difficult	=	①	②	③	④
Successful	=	①	②	③	④

Make Government More Transparent to the Public Action to increase public access to government activity and reduce administrative abuse. e.g., Administrative Procedures Act 1946; Freedom of Information Act 1966, 1974; Government in the Sunshine Act 1976; Ethics in Government Act 1978; Inspector General Act 1978.

		Not	Somewhat	Moderately	Very
		1	2	3	4
Important	=	①	②	③	④
Difficult	=	①	②	③	④
Successful	=	①	②	③	④

Strengthen the Nation's Highway System Action to build, improve and maintain the interstate highway system. e.g., Federal Aid to Highway Act 1956, Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act 1991.

Important	=	①	②	③	④
Difficult	=	①	②	③	④
Successful	=	①	②	③	④

Improve Government Performance Action to enhance government efficiency. e.g., Civil Service Reform Act 1978, Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act 1982, Chief Financial Officers Act 1990, Government Performance and Results Acts 1993, Federal Acquisitions Streamlining Act 1994.

Important	=	①	②	③	④
Difficult	=	①	②	③	④
Successful	=	①	②	③	④

Improve Mass Transportation Action to develop improved urban mass transportation and railway systems. e.g., Urban Mass Transportation Act 1964, Rail Passenger Service Act 1970.

Important	=	①	②	③	④
Difficult	=	①	②	③	④
Successful	=	①	②	③	④

Promote Scientific and Technological Research Action to support basic research and to develop new technologies, such as the Internet. e.g., National Science Foundation Act 1950, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency 1958, Communications Satellite Act 1962.

Important	=	①	②	③	④
Difficult	=	①	②	③	④
Successful	=	①	②	③	④

Strengthen the Nation's Airways System Action to create and maintain the air traffic control system and promote the safety and development of the air industry. e.g., Federal Airport Act 1946, Airport and Airways Development Act 1970.

Important	=	①	②	③	④
Difficult	=	①	②	③	④
Successful	=	①	②	③	④

Promote Space Exploration Action to develop the technology for a lunar landing and further space exploration. e.g., National Aeronautics and Space Administration Act 1958, Apollo mission funding 1962, funds for a manned space station 1984.

Important	=	①	②	③	④
Difficult	=	①	②	③	④
Successful	=	①	②	③	④

Please tell us about yourself

Gender

- Male Female

What is your age?

- 18-29 30-39 40-49
 50-59 60-69 70 and older

Which best describes your ethnic background?

- White
 Black or African-American
 Hispanic or Latino
 Asian
 Native American
 Other

In politics today, which best describes you?

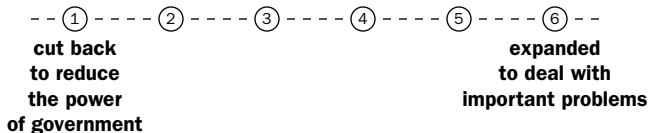
- Republican Independent, lean Republican
 Democrat Independent, lean Democrat
 Independent, do not lean

In politics today, which best describes you?

- Very conservative
 Conservative
 Moderate
 Liberal
 Very liberal

Where do you fit on the following scale?

Generally speaking, government programs should be ...



Which best describes your current work?

- Tenured university or college professor
 Tenure track professor
 Non-tenure track university or college instructor
 Employed outside academe
 Other

Thank you for participating. Please fold the survey so the Business Reply address on the back page is visible, tape the document closed and drop it in the mail.

Look for the results on the Brookings Institution website, www.brookings.edu, after January 2001.

The 50 goals included in this survey were selected through a winnowing process designed to group major foreign and domestic federal actions into broad public policy goals that can be said to have earned the federal government's greatest effort.

This winnowing began with a careful reading of the *Congressional Quarterly Almanacs* from 1945 to 1998. The *Almanacs* were searched for public law, Constitutional amendments, Executive Orders and treaty ratifications that set an important precedent or significantly expanded a previous program. For 1999, the *Congressional Quarterly Weekly* editions were searched, as an *Almanac* was not yet available.

The resulting list was validated against and augmented with the list of important congressional enactments included in David R. Mayhew's *Divided We Govern* (published in 1991, with Mayhew's updates through 1998). Mayhew's list was culled from year-end legislative summaries in major newspapers and retrospective analyses in books by policy specialists.

Finally, the more than 500 federal actions identified were grouped by their main public policy goal, yielding 67 major policy goals that have earned significant federal attention over the past 50 years. Some of the goals reflect a relatively small number of major initiatives such as Medicare, while others reflect an accumulation of initiatives over the years. This list was further winnowed to the top 50 efforts presented in this booklet.



**Government's 50
Greatest Endavors**
of the second half of the 20th century

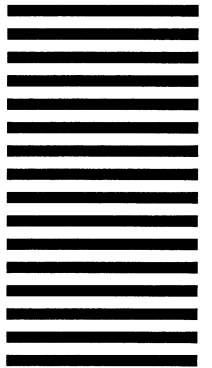
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