



Forum för talare

April 2001

Bill Clinton

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A political man

Biography excerpts:

"Bill Clinton is a very complex individual who has often been described by friends and foes as the smartest, most natural politician they have ever met. Aside from the moral questions involving the Monica Lewinsky fiasco, Bill Clinton is smart, charming and clever beyond compare.

Don't let the Southern charm fool you; behind it lies a very careful, intelligent man that plans his every move in the way an architect plans a building."



” I ask that all Americans demonstrate in their personal and public lives... the high ethical standards that are essential to good character and to the continued success of our Nation.

Bill Clinton



Bill Clinton (forts.)

Clinton, Bill (1946-), 42nd president of the United States (1993-2001) and the second president to be impeached. Clinton, who was 46 when he took office, was the first president born after World War II (1939-1945) and the third youngest person to become president, after Theodore Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy. After a difficult campaign, Clinton defeated incumbent president George H.W. Bush and independent candidate H. Ross Perot in the November 1992 election. In 1996 he was elected to a second term, defeating the Republican candidate Robert Dole and Perot, who ran as the candidate of the Reform Party.

A moderate Democrat and longtime governor of Arkansas, Clinton was the first Democrat in 12 years to hold the presidency, and the first Democrat since Franklin D. Roosevelt to be elected to a second term. He promised to change not only the direction the country had taken under the two previous Republican presidents, but also the policies of his own Democratic Party. Clinton's first presidential election victory came in part because Americans were gravely concerned about the nation's economy, which had been depressed for much of George Bush's presidency.

**Träffa Clinton i Stockholm
den 15:e maj. Läs mer på
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Clinton's presidency was marked by unusually bitter strife with Republicans in Congress. It was also dogged by investigations of his administration, of his years as governor of Arkansas, and of his personal life. In his second term, Clinton became the second president to be impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives. The Senate, however, defeated the impeachment articles and did not remove him from office. During most of Clinton's presidency, the country enjoyed high growth and prosperity, and the government ended many years of deficit spending.

Childhood

Clinton was born on August 19, 1946, as William Jefferson Blythe IV in Hope, Arkansas. He never knew his father, William Jefferson Blythe III, a traveling salesman who died in a car accident several months before Bill was born.

Bill Clinton (forts.)

When Bill was four years old, his mother married Roger Clinton, later the owner of a car dealership in Hope.. Life at home for Bill and his mother was not always easy. Roger was an alcoholic and a gambler, often losing the family's money, including Virginia's earnings as an anesthetist.

Early Schooling

Clinton attended a Roman Catholic school for two years in Hot Springs before attending public schools. He was a popular student and maintained top grades. He held several student offices, played the tenor saxophone, and was a member of the all-state band. In 1963, after his junior year in high school, Clinton was elected as one of two delegates from Arkansas to Boys Nationa government study program for young people sponsored by the American Legion, a veterans organization in Washington, D.C. There he debated for civil rights legislation and met President Kennedy at a ceremony in the White House Rose Garden.

College

Clinton graduated from high school in 1964 and enrolled at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., where he majored in international affairs. He was elected president of his class during both his freshman and sophomore years. As a junior and senior he earned school expenses by working as an intern for the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, which was chaired by Senator Fulbright, an Arkansas Democrat. Clinton greatly admired Fulbright, who was a leading critic of United States involvement in the Vietnam War (1959-1975). Clinton was also deeply moved by black Americans' fight for equality in the 1960s. In April 1968, a few weeks before Clinton graduated, the assassination of civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr , set off rioting in several American cities, including Washington. Clinton volunteered to work with the Red Cross and took clothing and food to people whose homes had been burned.

During his senior year, Clinton won a Rhodes Scholarship to the University of Oxford in England, and he spent two years in Oxford's graduate program after graduating from Georgetown.

Law School

In 1970 Clinton enrolled at Yale University Law School, where he studied for a law degree. He paid his way with a scholarship and by working two or three jobs at the same time. At Yale he met fellow law student Hillary Diane Rodham from the Chicago area. They began dating and in 1972

Bill Clinton (forts.)

Clinton and Rodham worked in Texas for the presidential campaign of Democrat George McGovern of South Dakota. Clinton worked as a campaign coordinator for McGovern in Texas and Arkansas, and Rodham helped organize a voter-registration drive for the Democratic National Committee.

Clinton graduated from law school in 1973 and went to Fayetteville, Arkansas, to teach at the University of Arkansas Law School. Rodham worked with a congressional team investigating Watergate, a political scandal that involved members of the administration of President Richard M. Nixon. She joined Clinton on the law school faculty in 1974, and they were married on October 11, 1975. Their daughter, Chelsea Victoria Clinton, was born on February 27, 1980.

Early Public Career

Clinton had worked on a number of political campaigns in the late 1960s, including those of several Arkansas Democratic politicians and a U.S. Senate candidate from Connecticut. In 1974, midway in his first year of teaching at the University of Arkansas, Clinton entered his first political race, campaigning for a seat in the United States House of Representatives. The incumbent Republican congressman, John Paul Hammerschmidt, was a popular candidate and considered unbeatable. Clinton defeated three candidates for the Democratic Party nomination and ran an energetic campaign against Hammerschmidt. Hammerschmidt won with 52 percent of the votes, although it was the closest election of his 26 years in Congress.

Clinton's close race with Hammerschmidt earned him statewide attention and helped him in his campaign for attorney general in 1976. He defeated two Democrats for the nomination and had no Republican opposition. Clinton took public office for the first time in January 1977. As attorney general, he fought rate increases by public utilities and opposed the construction of a large coal-burning power plant. He promoted tougher laws to protect the environment and consumers.

When Arkansas governor David Pryor ran for the U.S. Senate in 1978, Clinton ran for governor. He promised to improve the state's schools and highways and to improve economic conditions so that more jobs would be created. At that time, the average income of people in Arkansas ranked 49th among the 50 states. Clinton won easily, receiving 60 percent of the votes against four opponents in the Democratic primary election and 63 percent against the Republican candidate,

Bill Clinton (forts.)

Lynn Lowe, in the general election. When he took office in January 1979 at age 32, he was one of the youngest governors in the nation's history.

The Presidency

Clinton had prepared to run for president in 1988, but he backed out at the last minute, saying that the campaign and the position would be too hard on his family, especially his eight year old daughter. He was then asked to give the nominating speech - a key role at the Democratic National Convention - for Massachusetts governor Michael Dukakis.

On October 3, 1991 Clinton announced in Little Rock that he would run for president in the 1992 election.

During the presidential campaign, Clinton ran against George Bush and Ross Perot, who ran as an independent candidate. The three candidates participated in the three nationally televised debates. Clinton blamed Bush for the downturn in the economy and accused him of not caring about working people. In return, Bush said Clinton would raise taxes if he became president and that Clinton lacked foreign policy experience. Perot focused on the country's deficit spending and promised to balance the budget by raising taxes and reducing government spending.

Clinton won the election with 43 percent of the popular vote compared with 37 percent for Bush and 19 percent for Perot. On January 20, 1993 Clinton was sworn in as the president.

In 1996 Clinton ran for reelection against Republican senator Robert Dole and Ross Perot, who ran as the candidate for the newly formed Reform Party.

In November 1996 Clinton defeated Dole with 49 percent of the popular vote, compared with Dole's 41 percent. Perot was not as successful as he had been in 1992; he won only 8 percent of the vote.

Trade Issues during the Presidency

Clinton successfully lobbied for the passage of sweeping trade legislation that lowered the barriers to trade with other nations. He broke with many of his supporters, including labor unions, over free-trade legislation. Many feared that cutting tariffs (taxes on exports or imports) and import rules would cost American jobs because people would buy products made with cheaper labor from other countries. Clinton said the country would be helped, not harmed. The first fight was

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over the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which would gradually reduce tariffs and create a free-trading block of the North American countries—the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Opponents, led by H. Ross Perot, said it would drive American companies to Mexico, where they could produce goods with cheap labor and ship them back to the United States. Clinton persuaded Democrats to join most Republicans in voting for the measure. The treaty was voted on in the House of Representatives in November 1993, and passed, 234 to 200.

Clinton also met with leaders of the Pacific Rim nations to discuss lowering trade barriers. In November 1993 he hosted a summit meeting in Seattle, Washington, attended by the leaders of 12 Pacific Rim nations. Clinton's negotiators also participated in the final round of negotiations to work out a comprehensive world trade agreement, called the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Similar negotiations had been going on for seven years under three presidents. After the general election in 1994, Clinton summoned Congress to a rare lame-duck session to ratify the treaty. Congress approved GATT by votes of 76-24 in the Senate and 288-146 in the House of Representatives. Two weeks before the GATT vote, he orchestrated an agreement with the Pacific Rim nations meeting in Indonesia to gradually remove trade barriers and open their markets. As part of the GATT agreement, a new international trade body, the World Trade Organization (WTO), replaced GATT in 1995. The WTO covered a wider range of trade than GATT, and it had stronger powers to enforce trade agreements.

During his second term, Clinton had a notable defeat regarding trade legislation. In November 1997 Congress postponed voting on a bill to restore a presidential trade authority that had lapsed in 1994. The bill would have restored presidential authority to negotiate trade agreements that Congress cannot change, but can only approve or reject. This feature is known as "fast-track" negotiating because it streamlines the treaty process. Clinton was unable to generate sufficient support for the legislation, even among members of the Democratic Party, and the bill was defeated.

Clinton also faced a trade setback in December 1999, when the WTO met in Seattle, Washington, to initiate a new round of trade negotiations. Clinton hoped new agreements on such issues as agriculture and intellectual property could be introduced at the meeting, but the talks failed. Anti-WTO protesters in the streets of Seattle disrupted the meetings,

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and the international delegates inside the meetings could not reach a consensus. Among other contentious issues, delegates from smaller, poorer countries resisted Clinton's efforts to discuss labor and environmental standards.

That same year, Clinton signed a landmark trade agreement with China, after more than a decade of often-stalled negotiations. The agreement would lower many trade barriers between the countries, easing access to the Chinese market for U.S. products such as automobiles, banking services, and motion pictures. Under the pact, the United States would also support China's membership in the WTO. However, the agreement could not take effect until China was accepted into the WTO and was granted permanent "normal trade relations" status by the U.S. Congress. Many lawmakers resisted granting this status to China, citing concerns about human rights in China and the potential impact of Chinese imports on U.S. industries. Despite these concerns, Congress passed the bill normalizing trade relations with China in September 2000, and in October Clinton signed the bill. Its passage was considered a success for the Clinton administration.

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