Decisions and Limits

Federal action and its outcomes during the Obama administration

USH.C.9.2 "Analyze the significant events during the Barack Obama administration. Describe the economic philosophy of the Tea Party movement and how its ideas currently influence political party systems..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB As you read, underline the goal of each policy or action and circle a challenge or limit it faced. Number two places where an outcome changed over time.

Goals, Opposition, and Outcomes

1. During the Great Recession, President Barack Obama backed federal spending to stabilize the economy. The Tea Party movement, which grew in 2009, argued for lower taxes, less federal spending, and a smaller federal government. Its activists pushed Republican candidates toward those priorities, an influence that remains visible in party debates over taxes and budgets. In 2010, Obama signed the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which aimed to expand insurance through marketplaces, subsidies, and Medicaid and to protect people with preexisting conditions. Opponents challenged its cost and federal role. The Supreme Court later ruled that states could choose whether to expand Medicaid.

2. Obama also faced wars he had inherited. In Afghanistan, he sent about 30,000 additional troops in 2009 to fight the Taliban and strengthen Afghan forces, then began drawing down U.S. troops. The main U.S. combat mission ended in 2014, but American troops stayed to train and advise Afghan forces. In Iraq, U.S. troops left in 2011 under an agreement reached before Obama took office. In 2014, some returned to help Iraqi forces fight the Islamic State group. These choices show a tension: leaders sought to reduce direct U.S. combat while responding to threats that had not disappeared.

3. In 2012, Obama's administration established DACA for eligible immigrants brought to the United States as children. It offered temporary protection from deportation and work permits, not citizenship; legal challenges left recipients uncertain. The Dakota Access Pipeline prompted another conflict. Near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, tribal members and allies protested a crossing beneath Lake Oahe. They feared an oil spill could threaten drinking water and construction could damage cultural sites. In 2016, the federal government paused approval of the crossing, but approval followed in 2017 and oil began flowing. The protests drew national attention to tribal sovereignty and consultation.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Tea Party's economic ideas shape debates within the Republican Party?

2. What did the ACA aim to change, and how did opposition or a court ruling limit one part of that plan?

3. Compare Obama's management of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. What made reducing U.S. military involvement difficult?

4. How did the outcomes of DACA and the Dakota Access Pipeline protests differ from the goals of their supporters?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Which two Obama-era policies or protest movements best show the limits of federal action? Write a brief claim, use one passage detail about each, and explain a similarity or difference in their outcomes.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.9.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

As you read, underline the goal of each policy or action and circle a challenge or limit it faced. Number two places where an outcome changed over time. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Tea Party's economic ideas shape debates within the Republican Party?	**Its calls for lower taxes, less federal spending, and smaller government pushed Republican candidates toward those priorities and still shape party debates over taxes and budgets.**
2	What did the ACA aim to change, and how did opposition or a court ruling limit one part of that plan?	**The ACA aimed to expand insurance and protect people with preexisting conditions. Opponents challenged its cost and federal role, and the Supreme Court let states choose whether to expand Medicaid.**
3	Compare Obama's management of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. What made reducing U.S. military involvement difficult?	**Obama increased troops in Afghanistan before drawing them down, while troops left Iraq in 2011 but some returned in 2014. Continuing threats from the Taliban and the Islamic State group complicated efforts to reduce involvement.**
4	How did the outcomes of DACA and the Dakota Access Pipeline protests differ from the goals of their supporters?	**DACA protected eligible immigrants from deportation temporarily and allowed work permits, but did not offer citizenship and faced legal challenges. Pipeline protesters won a pause, but the crossing was later approved and oil began flowing despite concerns about water and cultural sites.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The ACA and the Dakota Access Pipeline protests both show that a federal decision does not settle every dispute. The ACA expanded access to insurance, but the Supreme Court made Medicaid expansion a choice for each state, limiting one route to coverage. Protesters won a pause in approval of the pipeline crossing in 2016, but the crossing was approved in 2017 and oil began flowing. Unlike the ACA's continuing state-by-state choice, the pipeline decision reversed a temporary federal pause.

Accept other supported comparisons in Part 3. Look for accurate evidence about both choices and an explanation of how their outcomes show a limit on federal action.