

Board also sets the interest rate that banks pay to the government. The Board also supervises banks to make sure they are well run. Historians have called the Federal Reserve Act the most important piece of economic legislation passed before the 1930s.



Wilson Strengthens Antitrust Regulation Like Presidents before him, Wilson focused on trusts. Wilson agreed with Roosevelt that trusts were dangerous as long as they did not engage in unfair practices. In 1914, he persuaded Congress to create the **Federal Trade Commission (FTC)**. Members of the group were named by the President to monitor business practices that could lead to monopoly. The FTC was also charged with watching out for false advertising or dishonest labeling. Congress also passed the **Clayton Antitrust Act (1914)**, which strengthened earlier antitrust laws by spelling out those activities in which businesses could not engage.

These laws are still in effect today, protecting both businesses and consumers from abusive business activities. In recent years, the FTC has prosecuted companies that traded stocks dishonestly and fined companies that published false ads. The FTC also regulates buying on the Internet.

Workers' Rights Protected The Clayton Antitrust Act also ushered in a new era for workers by protecting labor unions from being attacked as trusts. Now, workers could organize more freely. Samuel Gompers of the American Federation of Labor praised the new law as the "Magna Carta of labor."

On the heels of these protections came the Workingman's Compensation Act, which gave wages to temporarily disabled civil service employees. That same year, Wilson pushed for the Adamson Act, which averted a nationwide railroad strike that would have stopped the movement of coal and food, leaving millions of Americans cold and hungry. Railroad union leaders demanded the eight-hour day, but railroad company leaders to the White House refused. Wilson worked with Congress to pass the Adamson Act, which limited railroad employees' workdays to eight hours.

However, Wilson did not always protect organized labor, as a tragic incident in 1913 showed. As the Ludlow Massacre showed, coal miners in Ludlow, Colorado, demanded safer conditions, higher wages, and the right to form a union. When the company refused, they walked out. Evicted from company housing and their families set up in a tent city.

Progressive Era Legislation and Constitutional Amendments

Legislation/Amendment	Effect
Sherman Antitrust Act (1890)	Outlawed monopolies and practices that restrained trade, such as price fixing
National Reclamation Act (1902)	Provided for federal irrigation projects by using money from the sale of public lands
Elkins Act (1903)	Imposed fines on railroads that gave special rates to favored shippers
Hepburn Act (1906)	Authorized the federal government to regulate railroad rates and set maximum prices for ferries, bridge tolls, and oil pipelines
Meat Inspection Act (1906)	Allowed the federal government to inspect meat sold across state lines and required inspection of meat-processing plants
Pure Food and Drug Act (1906)	Allowed federal inspection of food and medicine and banned the shipment and sale of impure food and the mislabeling of food and medicine
Sixteenth Amendment (1913)	Gave Congress the power to collect taxes on people's income
Seventeenth Amendment (1913)	Instituted the direct election of senators by the people of each state
Underwood Tariff Act (1913)	Lowered tariffs on imported goods and established a graduated income tax
Federal Reserve Act (1913)	Created the Federal Reserve Board to oversee banks and manage reserve funds
Federal Trade Commission Act (1914)	Established the Federal Trade Commission to monitor business practices, false advertising, and dishonest labeling
Clayton Antitrust Act (1914)	Strengthened the Sherman Antitrust Act by spelling out specific activities businesses could not do
Eighteenth Amendment (1919)	Banned the making, selling, and transporting of alcoholic beverages in the United States
Nineteenth Amendment (1920)	Gave women the right to vote in all elections