

## Three Presidents of the Progressive Era

### ◆ Theodore Roosevelt – Republican – 1901-1909

- ◆ Becomes president after assassination of President William McKinley (1901)
  - ◆ Career civil servant and part-time soldier
    - ◆ Elected Gov. of New York (1898)
      - ◆ Reform minded – angered Repub. leaders
        - ◆ Party bosses wanted to get rid of him – got him nominated for Vice Prez.
          - ◆ Supposed to be a powerless position – safe to have him there
            - ◆ **Oops! McKinley dies and the job is TR's!**
- ◆ Roosevelt a high energy man – very active
  - ◆ Rancher, outdoorsman, historian, politician – popular!



### ◆ TR considered his duty to serve the people

#### ◆ A strong, progressive-minded leader

- ◆ TR said that his admin. would afford all groups (biz, labor, farmers, consumers, etc.) a “square deal”
  - ◆ Believed govt. should (a) assure honesty & fairness in govt. & biz and (b) give greater econ. opportunity to individuals.
- ◆ Won election of 1904
  - ◆ Opposed radicals from left and right
    - ◆ TR represented middle-class progressives who wanted moderate reform
  - ◆ Believed in govt. power to regulate big biz
    - ◆ Remembered as a “trust buster”
  - ◆ Advocate of conservation of natural resources
  - ◆ Protector of consumers
    - ◆ Pure Food and Drug Act (1906)
    - ◆ Meat Inspection Act (1906)
- ◆ William Howard Taft – Republican – 1909-1913
  - ◆ Ran on the promise of continuing TR's reforms

- ◆ Lacked TR's ability to arouse public support for programs
  - ◆ Unwilling to battle with Congress over issues
    - ◆ More conservative than progressive
    - ◆ Talents better suited for his later job – Chief Justice of the Supreme Court
    - ◆ Taft's support of the conservative right over the progressive right drove a wedge between him & TR
      - ◆ TR would run against him as a 3<sup>rd</sup> party candidate in 1912
  - ◆ Though more conservative than TR – initiated 2X more anti-trust suits
  - ◆ During his admin. Congress proposed 16<sup>th</sup> (income tax) and 17<sup>th</sup> (direct election of senators) Amendments to the Const.
  - ◆ Congress increased the powers of the Interstate Commerce Comm.
    - ◆ An agency formed to control the railroads
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- ◆ Woodrow Wilson – Democrat (1913-1921)
    - ◆ Progressive former governor of NJ
      - ◆ Intellectual & high moral character
      - ◆ An eloquent speaker who won public support for programs
    - ◆ A strong President who used the powers of the office to the fullest to win passage of legislation
      - ◆ Considered to be one of the top Presidents
    - ◆ Progressive program called “New Freedom”
      - ◆ Distrusted either political extreme
      - ◆ Sought to preserve and strengthen democratic, capitalistic society through progressive reform
        - ◆ These include lower tariffs, improved banking system, stronger regulation of biz, and protection of unions & workers
    - ◆ Progressivism came to an end during his administration
      - ◆ Partially because he became ill & was no longer a strong leader
        - ◆ Last progressive measures – 18<sup>th</sup> (prohibition) & 19<sup>th</sup> (women's suffrage) Amendments

