



FRANCES PERKINS (DECEASED)

SECRETARY OF LABOR (1933-1945)

ACHIEVEMENT: Frances Perkins played a key role in the development of the Social Security Act of 1935, which created the federal-state unemployment insurance program.

Prior to serving as Secretary of Labor, Ms. Perkins served as a member of the New York State Industrial Commission under Governors Al Smith and Franklin D. Roosevelt. While serving on the Commission, Ms. Perkins led efforts to improve workplace safety, expand factory investigations, and reduce the workweek for women to 48 hours. Ms. Perkins was also a champion of minimum wage and unemployment insurance laws.

In 1933, President Roosevelt appointed Perkins to serve as his Secretary of Labor, a position she held for 12 years. During her tenure as Secretary of Labor, she helped draft and advocate for several of President Roosevelt's New Deal programs. In June 1934, President Roosevelt formed the Committee on Economic Security (CES) and named Secretary Perkins to serve as its chairwoman.

As chair of the CES, Secretary Perkins worked on the reports and hearings that ultimately resulted in the CES recommending the creation of a comprehensive federal social insurance program. The work of the CES led to the enactment of the Social Security Act of 1935, which created the unemployment insurance program.