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WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 6991 of April 18, 1997

National Day of Prayer, 1997

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

America was born out of intense conflict as our forefathers fought the forces of oppression and tyranny. From our earliest history, Americans have always looked to God for strength and encouragement in those moments when darkness seemed to encroach from every side. Our people have always believed in the power of prayer and have called upon the name of the Lord through times of peace and war, hope and despair, prosperity and decline.

In his first inaugural address, during the rush of optimism that followed the Colonies' uplifting victory in the American Revolution, George Washington observed that "it would be peculiarly improper to omit, in this first official act my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe." Amid the bleak turmoil of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln conveyed similar sentiments by calling Americans to "a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land." Almost a century later, Harry Truman emphasized the need for God's help in making decisions: "when we are striving to strengthen the foundation of peace and security we stand in special need of divine support."

Indeed, the familiar phrase "In God we trust," which has been our national motto for more than 40 years and which first appeared on our coinage during the Civil War, is a fitting testimony to the prayers offered up by American women and men through the centuries. Today within our Nation's Capitol Building, a stained glass window depicts General Washington humbly kneeling and repeating the words of the 16th Psalm, "Preserve me, O God, for in Thee do I put my trust."

As we face the last years of the 20th century, let us uphold the tradition of observing a day in which every American, in his or her own way, may come before God seeking increased peace, guidance, and wisdom for the challenges ahead. Even as we continue to work toward hopeful solutions, may our national resolve be matched by a firm reliance on the Author of our lives—for truly it is in God that we trust.

The Congress, by Public Law 100-307, has called our citizens to reaffirm annually our dependence on Almighty God by recognizing a "National Day of Prayer."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 1, 1997, as a National Day of Prayer. As in previous years, let us once again celebrate this day in the tradition of our Founders by humbly asking for divine help in maintaining the courage, determination, faith, and vigilance so necessary to our continued advancement as a people. On this National Day

of Prayer, may all Americans come together to reaffirm our reliance upon our Creator, and, in the words of Franklin Roosevelt, to "pray to Him now for the vision to see our way clearly."

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eighteenth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 6992 of April 19, 1997

National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Giving life to another through an organ or tissue transplant is one of the most selfless human acts. The person choosing to become a donor usually receives no tangible thanks and gains no fame or glory from the gesture. And yet the decision to sign a donor card does give the donor a quiet, inner fulfillment in the knowledge that he or she may one day help save a life, bringing new joy to another person and their family. Often, for many Americans, this sense of fulfillment is sufficient thanks.

Today, more than 50,000 Americans are on the national transplant waiting list and about 2,000 more people need transplants every month. Unfortunately, even though this country has an adequate supply of individuals who qualify as organ donors, many people have still not chosen to become one. Patients in truly desperate circumstances are depending on their fellow Americans to choose to become organ and tissue donors.

Stunning advances in transplant research and technology have made miracles possible, but we must do our part to make the dreams of people awaiting transplants become reality. Many Americans are unaware of the national shortage of organ donors, and all of us must work together to spread the word.

Let us take advantage of our enormous power to save a life or to enrich the quality of life for those who otherwise face endless pain, torment, or death. I urge every American to respond to the urgent call for organ and tissue donors by signing a donor card immediately. Let us also reach out to educate our fellow Americans about the importance of organ and tissue donations. We must work with our religious communities and community organizations to spread this important message. The Federal Government has already established partnerships with the Union of Hebrew Congregations and the Congress of National Black Churches in an effort to educate congregations and clergy across our Nation through sermons, Sunday school programs, and community events. We should do more.

We should recognize that our greatest ambassadors for organ and tissue donation are donors, donor families and recipients. Their personal stories have motivated and inspired others, and we should take better ad-