

Day on all buildings, grounds, and naval vessels throughout the United States and in all areas under its jurisdiction and control. I also request the people of the United States to display the flag at half-staff from their homes for the customary forenoon period.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-seventh day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fifth.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8684 of May 31, 2011

African-American Music Appreciation Month, 2011

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The music of our Nation has always spoken to the condition of our people and reflected the diversity of our Union. African-American musicians, composers, singers, and songwriters have made enormous contributions to our culture by capturing the hardships and aspirations of a community and reminding us of our shared values. During African-American Music Appreciation Month, we honor the rich musical traditions of African-American musicians and their gifts to our country and our world.

From the cadenced hums of spirituals to the melodies of rhythm and blues, African-American music has been used to communicate, to challenge, to praise, and to uplift in times of both despair and triumph. The rhythmic chords embedded in spirituals have long expressed a deep faith in the power of prayer, and brought hope to slaves toiling in fields. The soulfulness of jazz and storytelling in the blues inspired a cultural renaissance, while the potent words of gospel gave strength to a generation that rose above the din of hatred to move our country toward justice and equality for all.

Today, African-American musicians continue to create new musical genres and transform the scope of traditional musical formats. The artistic depth of soul, rock and roll, and hip-hop not only bring together people across our Nation, but also energize and shape the creativity of artists around the world. The contributions of African-American composers and musicians to symphony, opera, choral music, and musical theater continue to reach new audiences and encourage listeners to celebrate fresh interpretations of these and other genres. In cherished songs passed down through generations and innovative musical fusions crafted today, African-American music continues to transcend time, place, and circumstance to provide a source of pride and inspiration for all who hear its harmonies. This month, we celebrate the legacy of African-American music and its enduring power to bring life to the narrative of our Nation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 2011 as African-American Music Appreciation Month. I call upon public of-

ficials, educators, and all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate activities and programs that raise awareness and foster appreciation of music which is composed, arranged, or performed by African Americans.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirty-first day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fifth.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8685 of May 31, 2011

**Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month,
2011**

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

The story of America's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community is the story of our fathers and sons, our mothers and daughters, and our friends and neighbors who continue the task of making our country a more perfect Union. It is a story about the struggle to realize the great American promise that all people can live with dignity and fairness under the law. Each June, we commemorate the courageous individuals who have fought to achieve this promise for LGBT Americans, and we rededicate ourselves to the pursuit of equal rights for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Since taking office, my Administration has made significant progress towards achieving equality for LGBT Americans. Last December, I was proud to sign the repeal of the discriminatory "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. With this repeal, gay and lesbian Americans will be able to serve openly in our Armed Forces for the first time in our Nation's history. Our national security will be strengthened and the heroic contributions these Americans make to our military, and have made throughout our history, will be fully recognized.

My Administration has also taken steps to eliminate discrimination against LGBT Americans in Federal housing programs and to give LGBT Americans the right to visit their loved ones in the hospital. We have made clear through executive branch nondiscrimination policies that discrimination on the basis of gender identity in the Federal workplace will not be tolerated. I have continued to nominate and appoint highly qualified, openly LGBT individuals to executive branch and judicial positions. Because we recognize that LGBT rights are human rights, my Administration stands with advocates of equality around the world in leading the fight against pernicious laws targeting LGBT persons and malicious attempts to exclude LGBT organizations from full participation in the international system. We led a global campaign to ensure "sexual orientation" was included in the United Nations resolution on extrajudicial execution—the only United Nations resolution that specifically mentions LGBT people—to send the unequivocal message that no matter where it occurs, state-sanctioned killing of gays and lesbians is indefensible. No one should be harmed because of who they