

Proc. 6887

Title 3—The President

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

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 6887 of April 19, 1996

Jewish Heritage Week, 1996

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

The Jewish experience in America has been a mutually rewarding one for this country and for the Jewish people. Jewish Americans have made great contributions in such fields as the arts and sciences, business, government, law and medicine, enriching America's heritage with the resonant tradition of an ancient people. And America, for its part, has been a land of opportunity for its Jewish citizens.

In many ways, the Jewish experience is unique, freighted with the anguish of frequent persecution, but ennobled by an unyielding spirit that has always found a way to turn darkness into light. In the crucible of sorrow, the Jewish people have reaffirmed, time and again, the basic human values of faith, community, justice, and hope.

On the tolerant soil of American democracy, the Jewish people have flourished. We will be forever grateful for the remarkable contributions of our Jewish citizens, and it is fitting that we set aside a week to give thanks for their inestimable gifts and to honor the traditions of their remarkable religion and heritage.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, 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 April 21 through April 28, 1996, as Jewish Heritage Week. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

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

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 6888 of April 19, 1996

National Crime Victims' Rights Week, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

On April 19, 1995, millions of Americans witnessed the chaos and anguish wrought by a single bomb blast in Oklahoma City that took 168 lives and injured scores of others. For days afterwards, our Nation joined the survivors in a grim vigil as somber work crews entered the wreckage again and again to locate victims.

That bomb blast in Oklahoma City was a devastating reminder that too many Americans have become victims of crime. Although violent crime has decreased every year for the last 3 years, 83 percent of our citizens 12 years of age and above will experience violent or attempted violent crime in their lifetimes. And worse, 52 percent will be victimized more than once. Added to these grim statistics is the reality that violent crime is increasingly a problem of our youth. For 12- to 19-year-olds, the chance of being assaulted, robbed, or raped is two to three times higher than for adults, and perpetrators of crime are both younger and more violent. In 1994, for example, about 33 percent of all violent crimes were committed by those under 21 years of age.

There is another, more positive, dimension to the aftermath of crime: the multitude of dedicated professionals and volunteers who support and assist crime victims. They are emergency medical technicians and firefighters, law enforcement officers and rescue teams, victim assistance providers and shelter workers. At the darkest of moments, these selfless men and women renew our Nation's faith in humanity, and their advocacy embodies the time-honored American traditions of compassion and service. They constitute a community of caring whose healing work helps victims to become survivors. As a Nation, we owe these generous individuals our deepest gratitude for making our communities better and safer places in which to live and work.

While 1995 brought tragedy, it also brought the implementation of one of the most comprehensive crime laws ever enacted. The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 furthered the rights of victims in the Federal justice system and targeted resources for criminal justice improvements. The Crime Act's provisions include truth-in-sentencing provisions that ensure longer sentences for violent offenders and allocution rights for victims that give them the right to speak in court before the imposition of a sentence. The Crime Act also provides hundreds of communities around the Nation with increased law enforcement personnel, and its Violence Against Women Act is the first comprehensive Federal effort to combat violence against women.

The Crime Act is just one landmark in a crime victims' movement that has spanned 20 years and brought many hard-won reforms. A victims' bill of rights—once a novel idea—is now a reality in virtually every State. Victim assistance programs, which were few in the 1960s, now number in the thousands. Every State has a compensation program to help reimburse victims for mental health, medical, and other expenses resulting from the crimes committed against them. And in 1995, the Crime Victims Fund in