

the noble tradition of our Constitution. Therefore, on this occasion I call upon all Americans to consider the wonderful blessings of their United States citizenship and to look upon our Constitution and celebrate the freedom and protection that it has always afforded us.

In commemoration of the signing of our Constitution and in recognition of the importance of informed, responsible citizenship, the Congress, by joint resolution of February 29, 1952 (36 U.S.C. 153), designated September 17 as "Citizenship Day," and by joint resolution of August 2, 1956 (36 U.S.C. 159), requested the President to proclaim the week beginning September 17 and ending September 23 of each year as "Constitution Week."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim September 17, 1996, as Citizenship Day and September 17 through September 23, 1996, as Constitution Week, and urge all Americans to join in observing these occasions with appropriate programs and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of September, 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 twenty-first.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 6918 of September 18, 1996

National POW/MIA Recognition Day, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Since our country's birth, Americans have responded to military threats against liberty and democracy, whether at home or in remote areas of the world. The young men and women of our Armed Forces understand the need to resist oppression, and they have willingly put themselves in harm's way around the globe to do so. Those young Americans who stand in the defense of freedom are our country's most precious natural resource.

It is particularly painful when these brave Americans are made Prisoners of War, or are classified as Missing in Action. They have earned our deep appreciation and respect for the great sacrifices they have made so that all of us can continue to enjoy the privileges of liberty. In keeping faith with them, we continue our concerted efforts to determine the fate of all those who are unaccounted for and to bring home the remains of those who have perished.

The grief for our prisoners of war and those missing in action is most intense, of course, among their families and loved ones at home, who wait—often for years, and sometimes in vain—for confirmation of their fate. These families display their own courage too, by their endurance in the face of deep anxiety. Their cause is our cause, and we pledge ourselves to them anew on this special day.

On September 20, 1996, the flag of the National League of Families of American Prisoners of War and Missing in Southeast Asia, a black-and-

white banner symbolizing all of America's missing, will be flown over the White House, the United States Capitol, the United States Departments of State, Defense, and Veterans Affairs, the Selective Service System headquarters, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, and national cemeteries across the country.

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 September 20, 1996, as National POW/MIA Recognition Day. I ask all Americans to join me in honoring former American POWs and those Americans still unaccounted for as a result of their service to our great Nation. I also encourage the American people to express their gratitude to the families of these missing Americans for their perseverance through the many years of waiting. Finally, I urge Federal, State, and local officials and private organizations to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eighteenth day of September, 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 twenty-first.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 6919 of September 18, 1996

National Hispanic Heritage Month, 1996

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

America draws strength from the extraordinary diversity of its people. Our national character is enhanced by citizens who maintain and honor cultural customs brought from other lands. Hispanics, who have long been part of this tradition, were the earliest European settlers of this great Nation, with the Spanish founding cities in Florida in the 1500's, and Mexicans establishing homesteads in the Southwest in the 1600's. Puerto Ricans became U.S. citizens in 1917, and other Latinos over the years, including Cubans and Central Americans, came to the United States in search of democracy, freedom, and a better way of life.

Hispanics, who are of all races, distinguish themselves as a community by fostering connections rooted in the Spanish language. Their diverse and vibrant culture includes elements originating in Spain, North America, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. Hispanics share deep family values, recognize their obligations to the less fortunate of our society, protect their children, cherish freedom, and fulfill their patriotic duty to defend their country.

Earlier this month, I awarded our Nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, to Dr. Antonia Pantoja. Dr. Pantoja has inspired generations of Latino youth to "dare to dream." Believing that hard work can overcome any obstacle, she went from factory worker to college professor and has dedicated her life to bringing educational and economic opportunities to the Puerto Rican community.