

Proclamation 7068 of February 26, 1998**Save Your Vision Week, 1998**

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The ability to see is a great treasure; but, as with any precious possession, it is vulnerable to loss—through injury, age, or disease. Men and women whose jobs require them to work with chemicals or machinery are at increased risk of eye injury. Macular degeneration takes a dramatic toll on the vision of people aged 60 and over, causing severe visual impairment and even blindness in its victims. Diseases such as glaucoma, cataract, and diabetic retinopathy can silently steal the vision of their victims without pain or other early symptoms to signal the need for immediate medical attention.

The greatest defense we have in protecting our eyesight is early detection and treatment. While many Americans receive regular physical examinations to ensure their overall fitness, they often ignore the health of their eyes. Yet, by the time many patients realize their eyesight is deteriorating, it is often too late to restore vision already lost. Even though they may not be experiencing vision problems, Americans should make a dilated eye examination part of their preventive health care routine. A dilated eye exam can reveal early signs of eye disease and make it possible to treat the affliction and preserve vision.

Good eye care is not solely for those who know they are at high risk for eye disease—it is for everyone. Certain types of eye disease tend to develop primarily in children, while others manifest themselves most often in working-age adults or older men and women. By taking good care of our eyes, we can take the important steps to maintain our quality of life and ensure the full enjoyment of all that our world has to offer.

To remind Americans of the importance of protecting their eyesight, the Congress, by joint resolution approved December 30, 1963 (77 Stat. 629; 36 U.S.C. 169a), has authorized and requested the President to proclaim the first week in March of each year as “Save Your Vision Week.”

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 1 through March 7, 1998, as Save Your Vision Week. I urge all Americans to participate by making eye care and eye safety an important part of their lives and to ensure that dilated eye examinations are included in their regular health maintenance programs. I invite eye care professionals, the media, and all public and private organizations dedicated to preserving eyesight to join in activities that will raise awareness of the measures we can take to protect and sustain our vision.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-sixth day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7069 of February 27, 1998**American Red Cross Month, 1998**

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Americans share a long tradition of compassion for others and lending aid to those in need. Since our earliest days as a Nation, we have been able to bear the heartbreak of family tragedy, personal hardship, or natural disaster because of the help of caring friends and neighbors. For 117 years, the American Red Cross has been the staunchest of friends and neighbors to millions of people both here at home and around the world, adding its own vital contributions to our history of service.

The American Red Cross brings both comfort and practical assistance to the victims of more than 65,000 disasters each year, from hurricanes and tornadoes affecting thousands of people to a house fire involving a single family. Members of the Red Cross also work on the front lines of armed conflicts and disasters across the globe to relieve suffering and restore human dignity and self-sufficiency. At the same time, they serve alongside our men and women in uniform wherever they are deployed, relaying urgent family messages and providing a precious link with home. And through its Holocaust and War Victims Tracing and Information Center, the Red Cross has helped thousands of families in their search for information about the fate of loved ones from whom they were separated during the Holocaust.

Few of us have remained untouched by the work of the Red Cross. The Red Cross collects, tests, and distributes six million units of donated blood each year, nearly half the Nation's supply. More than 1,300 Red Cross chapters in communities across America teach health and safety courses to 12 million people each year, providing them with knowledge regarding CPR, first aid, water safety, and HIV/AIDS that can—and does—save lives.

The Red Cross has become a simple yet powerful symbol that transcends language and conveys a universally understood message of hope. This symbol draws its strength from the dedication of the more than 1.3 million volunteers who help disaster victims, assist at blood drives, teach health classes, and respond to urgent community needs. I commend the generous spirit of all those who carry out the important work of the American Red Cross, and I encourage all Americans to support their efforts—whether by giving blood, donating funds to help disaster victims, or becoming Red Cross volunteers themselves. In doing so, we will ensure that the American Red Cross will continue its tradition of compassionate service in the 21st century and beyond.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America and Honorary Chairman of the American Red Cross, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 1998 as American Red Cross Month. I urge all the people of the United States to support Red Cross chapters nationwide, and I challenge each of you to become active participants in advancing the noble mission of the Red Cross.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight,