

**Proclamation 7134 of October 7, 1998****National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence, 1998**

*By the President of the United States of America*

*A Proclamation*

During the past 18 months, Americans have been stunned by gun violence among our youth, including the tragic incidents of students shooting their classmates and teachers in Jonesboro, Arkansas; Pearl, Mississippi; Paducah, Kentucky; Edinboro, Pennsylvania; and Springfield, Oregon. In communities across the country, some young people are trying to resolve their conflicts and problems by taking a gun into their schools or onto the streets—guns that, although they are generally illegal for children to possess, are still too easy to get.

While recent data indicate that the overwhelming majority of American schools are safe and that the rate of youth violence is beginning to decline, we must not relax our efforts to protect our children from such violence. Since the beginning of my Administration, we have worked hard to make our schools and communities safe places for children to learn and grow. We have put more community police in our neighborhoods, encouraged the use of curfews, school uniforms, and tough truancy policies, and proposed funding for after-school programs that provide children and young people with wholesome activities that keep them interested, engaged, and off the streets. We instituted a policy of zero tolerance for guns in schools that is now the law in all 50 States. We have issued a guidebook to help teachers, principals, and parents recognize the early warning signs of troubled students and intervene before despair or anger gives way to violence. Later this month, I will host the first-ever White House Conference on School Safety to focus on the causes and prevention of youth violence and to share effective strategies that we can put into practice nationwide. Through these and many other measures, we have strived to protect America's youth from being either the perpetrators or the victims of gun violence.

While government can and must be an active partner in the effort to prevent youth violence, the real key to ending the killing is in the hands of young Americans themselves. Every young person must assume personal responsibility for avoiding violent confrontation, have the strength of character to walk away from a dispute before it turns deadly, and have the courage and common sense to refuse to participate in gang activities, to use drugs, or to carry or use a gun.

As part of our nationwide observance of National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence, I urge students across America to voluntarily sign a "Student Pledge Against Gun Violence" as an acknowledgment of these responsibilities. This pledge is a solemn promise by young people never to bring a gun to school, never to use a gun to settle a dispute, and to discourage their friends from using guns. By keeping this promise and giving one another the chance to grow to healthy, productive adulthood, young Americans will be taking an enormous step toward a stronger, safer future for themselves and our Nation.

**Proc. 7135**

**Title 3—The President**

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 October 8, 1998, as a National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence. On this day, I call upon all Americans to commit themselves anew to helping our young people avoid violence, to setting a good example, and to restoring our schools and neighborhoods as safe havens for learning and recreation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of October, 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-third.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

**Proclamation 7135 of October 8, 1998**

**Leif Erikson Day, 1998**

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

Almost a thousand years ago, the great Norse explorer Leif Erikson first set foot on the North American continent. In commemorating Leif Erikson Day each year, we honor the pioneering spirit of this son of Iceland and grandson of Norway. We recall the daring of the Viking seafarers, who saw the ocean not as a boundary but as a gateway to another world, and we pay tribute to the courage of their descendants who, centuries later would brave their own ocean journeys to find a new life in America.

This thirst for adventure has remained a fundamental trait of the American character since our earliest days as a Nation. But men and women of the Nordic countries brought other important strengths to their adopted land as well: resourcefulness, self-reliance, determination, a willingness to work hard, a love of freedom, and a belief in human dignity.

Leif Erikson's arrival in North America brought not only the explorer's passion to our country, but also laid the foundations of the friendship the United States enjoys today with the Nordic countries. Building on the values we share, our nations have made a powerful commitment to protect and expand political, religious, and economic freedom to peoples around the world. Staunch allies in times of peace and war, the United States and the countries of Scandinavia look forward to the year 2000 when we will commemorate together the 1000th anniversary of Leif Erikson's historic voyage to our continent and celebrate the important and lasting contributions the sons and daughters of Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland have made to the history and heritage of our Nation.

In honor of Leif Erikson, the Congress, by joint resolution approved on September 2, 1964 (Public Law 88-566), has authorized and requested the President to proclaim October 9 of each year as "Leif Erikson Day."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 9, 1998, as Leif Erikson Day.