

Today, people of Hispanic heritage are an increasingly important and growing segment of our Nation's population. Studies show that, in just a few years, Hispanics will form the largest minority group in the United States. In little more than a decade, Hispanic Americans will wield buying power of nearly \$1 trillion per year. And by the middle of the next century, if population trends continue, almost one-fourth of our population will be Spanish-speaking. The success of these citizens is vital to our continued national prosperity, and we must ensure that they are empowered with the tools and opportunities they need to thrive in the next century.

That is why my Administration has worked to widen the circle of economic opportunity, enforce our civil rights laws, invest in health and education, and promote racial reconciliation. We have launched a major initiative to mobilize the resources and expertise of the Federal Government, the private sector, and local communities to end racial and ethnic disparities in health conditions and health care. We established the first-ever Office of Minority Health Research and Alternative Medicine at the National Institutes of Health. We also have sought to expand our Hispanic Education Action Plan with an additional \$480 million for improving educational programs and institutions serving high concentrations of Hispanic students. We cannot seize the enormous opportunities of the 21st century if a large percentage of our children lack the skills and knowledge they need to reach their full potential.

In honor of the many contributions that Hispanic Americans have made and continue to make to our Nation and our culture, the Congress, by Public Law 100-402, has authorized and requested the President to issue annually a proclamation designating September 15 through October 15 as "National Hispanic Heritage Month."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim September 15 through October 15, 1999, as National Hispanic Heritage Month. I call upon government officials, educators, and the people of the United States to honor this observance with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs, and I encourage all Americans to rededicate themselves to the pursuit of equality.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7221 of September 15, 1999

National POW/MIA Recognition Day, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As we look back over this century that is swiftly drawing to a close, we recognize that the light of freedom still burns brightly in our world today because of the service and sacrifice of America's men and women in uni-

form. Through the devastation of two world wars and the brutality of numerous regional conflicts; on peacekeeping assignments and humanitarian missions; from the darkest days of the Cold War to the fall of the Berlin Wall, our Nation's service men and women have fought the forces of tyranny and won signal victories for liberty, human dignity, and the ideals of democracy. On every continent, on the seas, and in the air, gallant young Americans have paid for our future with their own, and many have preserved our freedom by sacrificing their own.

On National POW/MIA Recognition Day, we remember with profound gratitude those who suffered captivity and those whose fate remains unknown. Many American POWs were tortured at the hands of their captors; all experienced the ordeal of being held against their will and the anguish of indefinite separation from their families and their homeland.

Today we also honor the valiant families of our fellow citizens who remain missing—families who have had to suffer not only the absence of their loved ones, but also the uncertainty of their fate. As Americans, we remain unshakable in our resolve to achieve the fullest possible accounting of those missing and to strive to bring home the remains of those who have died. Only by doing so can we begin to acknowledge the debt we owe to these patriots and assuage the grief of the families they left behind for the sake of our Nation.

On September 17, 1999, the flag of the National League of Families of American Prisoners of War and Missing in Southeast Asia, a black and white banner symbolizing America's missing and our unwavering determination to account for them, will be flown over the White House, the U.S. Capitol, the Departments of State, Defense, and Veterans Affairs, the Selective Service System Headquarters, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, national cemeteries, and other locations across our country.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 17, 1999, as National POW/MIA Recognition Day. I ask all Americans to join me in honoring former American prisoners of war and those whose fate is still undetermined. I also encourage the American people to remember with compassion and concern the courageous families who persevere in their quest to know the fate of their missing loved ones. 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 fifteenth day of September in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7222 of September 16, 1999

Citizenship Day and Constitution Week, 1999

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

The Constitution is perhaps our Nation's most cherished document, the compass that has helped us chart America's course toward freedom, human dignity, and democracy for more than 200 years. Its text, born of the genius and idealism of our Founders and hammered out through hard effort and compromise by the delegates to the Constitutional Convention, established a system of government capable of responding to the pressures of social and political change. It created a sacred covenant that continues to bind all our citizens by a set of principles based on the ideals of equality, inclusion, and independence and by a delicate balance of powers, rights, and responsibilities among citizens and their State and Federal Governments. Today, sustained by the efforts and sacrifices of generations of Americans, the U.S. Constitution remains as strong and vibrant a charter of freedom as it was at the time of its signing 212 years ago.

The 20th century has witnessed a great wave of migration of men and women to our Nation from all parts of the globe, attracted by the freedom, justice, and rule of law guaranteed by our Constitution. As they assume the responsibilities of American citizenship, they infuse our political process with fresh perspectives and enthusiasm and prove to the world that a diverse people can live in peace and progress. Today we are a Nation with new hopes, new dreams, and new people, but we are united by a devotion to the same democratic ideals that have guided us for over 200 years.

As we reflect upon America's past, we recognize that our country is still in the act of becoming the "more perfect union" envisioned by our Founders. Every generation of Americans has struggled to live up to our Nation's promise, working to overcome forces of fear or ignorance or prejudice that would seek to deny the rights of others because of their gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or disability. The 21st century may bring new challenges to the rights and liberties of American citizens, but we can be confident that the Constitution will still light a clear and shining path of freedom and justice into the future.

During Citizenship Day and Constitution Week, let us recognize the great efforts not only of our leaders, but also of ordinary Americans who labor daily to uphold and strengthen the ideals embodied in our Constitution. Whether citizens by birth or choice, we share the blessings guaranteed to us by the Constitution and the responsibility of ensuring that those blessings are extended to all our people equally.

In commemoration of the signing of the Constitution and in recognition of the importance of active, responsible citizenship in preserving the Constitution's blessings for our Nation, 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 (U.S.C. 159), requested that the President proclaim the week beginning September 17 and ending September 23 of each year as "Constitution Week."