

## Proclamation 7230 of September 30, 1999

**National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, 1999**

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

Most families provide a nurturing web of relationships where children learn to love and respect others and themselves and absorb the values that will shape them as adults and citizens. But for millions of Americans, family life has become a battlefield where women, children, and sometimes the elderly become casualties. The tragedy of domestic violence touches all our lives by weakening families, leaving emotional scars as devastating as physical ones, and creating a destructive cycle of violence where those who were abused as children may become abusers themselves.

My Administration has taken important steps to reduce domestic violence by creating a system that punishes offenders and provides victims with the information and assistance they need to escape destructive family environments. The cornerstone of this effort has been the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which was part of the historic Crime Bill I signed into law in 1994. This landmark legislation combined tough new penalties for offenders with funding for much-needed shelters, counseling services, public education, and research to help the victims of violence.

We also have established a toll-free National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-SAFE) where staff responds to as many as 10,000 calls each month; worked to raise awareness in the workplace and among health care providers about domestic violence; and more than tripled resources for programs to combat violence against women. To build on the success of the VAWA and the Crime Bill, in May of this year I unveiled my proposal for additional legislation—the 21st Century Crime Bill—that will reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act and toughen penalties for those who commit violent crimes in the presence of children.

We have increased funding for State maternal and child health programs that include child protection and family preservation services. We have worked with the Congress to pass legislation that strengthens law enforcement, enhances child predator tracking and protection mechanisms, and supports child abuse prevention efforts in State and local jurisdictions. And, at the end of last year, we launched the Children Exposed to Violence Initiative (CEVI), designed in part to reform Federal and State laws to provide swift and certain punishment for those who commit child abuse and neglect. CEVI will also strengthen local programs in hopes of reducing the number of children who are exposed to violence or become victims of violence themselves; it will also encourage alliances that include government as a partner with schools, communities, parents, and other family members in an effort to prevent child abuse.

We can take heart in our progress and at the outpouring of concern and compassion we see for the victims of domestic violence. Whether members of the law enforcement community, health care professionals, educators, religious and community leaders, policymakers, or concerned private citizens, Americans have united in the crusade against domestic violence. With increased awareness, strengthened prevention, and communities

united in common cause, we are making the reduction of domestic violence a reality and the dream of ending it one day a possibility.

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 1999 as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. I call upon government officials, law enforcement agencies, health professionals, educators, community leaders, and the American people to join together to end the domestic violence that threatens so many of our people.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth 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 7231 of October 1, 1999**

#### **Fire Prevention Week, 1999**

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

Of the many disasters that affect our communities in a given year, fire is one that Americans can actually prevent; and, through early warning and appropriate response, we can minimize the havoc fire wreaks when it does occur. In 1998, U.S. fire departments responded to nearly 1.8 million fires, with three-quarters of them occurring in residences. Fire cost our Nation some \$8.6 billion in property loss last year, and it took a staggering human toll: more than 4,000 civilians died, and 91 firefighters lost their lives in the line of duty.

The place where Americans feel safest—at home—is the very place where we are at greatest risk from fire. Eighty percent of all U.S. fire deaths occur at home. If Americans knew more about fire prevention and better understood how to react quickly and sensibly when fire breaks out, we could greatly reduce such deaths.

Because knowledge of simple fire safety precautions is so vital to saving lives, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) launched a 3-year initiative to teach the importance of planning and practicing how to escape from fire. In partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, through its United States Fire Administration, and our Nation's fire services, NFPA has again selected, "Fire Drills: The Great Escape!" as the theme of this year's Fire Prevention Week.

Fire spreads quickly, making a fast response essential to survival. I urge every family to develop a home fire escape plan and to practice it at least twice a year. The elements of a good plan include installing working smoke alarms on every level of the home, establishing two ways out of each room, and establishing a meeting place outside the home.

Each of us can take these simple steps to plan and practice our own "great escape" from fire and significantly improve our chance of survival if fire