

rights and lead governments to improve their relations with their neighbors and their own people. As we saw during the Kosovo conflict, and more recently with regard to East Timor, the perpetrators of ethnic cleansing and mass murder can find no refuge in the United Nations and no source of comfort in its charter. It is the institution the international community turns to in pursuit of solutions to armed conflict. It is the primary vehicle for broad international cooperation in addressing the needs of refugees and of the tens of millions of people around the world who remain mired in abject poverty. The United Nations and its affiliated agencies also provide a powerful voice for upholding and furthering the development of the rule of law and standards of international commerce—rules and standards that are crucial to global and economic stability and progress.

In acknowledging the far-reaching contributions of the United Nations to the international community, we must renew our commitment to work with our fellow U.N. members to advance international peace and prosperity and to champion human rights. In achieving these goals, the United Nations should make wise use of the international resources at its disposal; and the United States should meet its obligation to provide our share of these resources. By doing so, we can ensure that the United Nations will be an integral player in making the next millennium an era of unprecedented global peace, security, and prosperity.

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 24, 1999, as United Nations Day. I encourage all Americans to acquaint themselves with the activities and accomplishments of the United Nations and to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities furthering the goal of international cooperation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second day of October, 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 7245 of October 28, 1999

National Adoption Month, 1999

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

This month, as families across America look forward to the holiday season that is fast approaching, we remember with special concern the thousands of children in our Nation who are growing up without the unconditional love and security of a permanent home. Our Nation's foster care system plays an invaluable role in providing temporary safe and caring homes to children who need them, but permanent homes and families are vital to giving these children the stability and sustained love they need to reach their full potential.

My Administration has worked hard to promote adoption by assisting adoptive families and breaking down barriers to adoption. We have helped remove many economic barriers to adoption by providing tax credits to families adopting children, and the Family and Medical Leave Act that I signed into law in 1993 gives workers job-protected leave to care for their newly adopted children. The Adoption and Safe Families Act I signed in 1997 reformed our Nation's child welfare system, made clear that the health and safety of children must be the paramount concern of State child welfare services, and expedited permanent placement for children. It also ensured health coverage for children with special needs and created new financial incentives for States to increase adoption. We also took important steps to help ensure that the adoption process remains free from discrimination and delays on the basis of race, culture, and ethnicity. We are now working to break down geographic barriers to adoption by using the Internet to link children in foster care to possible adoptive families.

We have new evidence that our efforts are bearing fruit: the first significant increase in adoptions since the National Foster Care Program was created almost 20 years ago. A new report from the Department of Health and Human Services shows that from 1996 to 1998, the number of adoptions nationwide rose 29 percent—from 28,000 to 36,000—and should meet our national goal of 56,000 adoptions by the year 2002. In addition, the First Lady and I were pleased to announce this past September the first-ever bonus awards to States that have increased the number of adoptions from the public foster care system. We also announced additional grants to public and private organizations that remove barriers to adoption.

To follow through on this record of achievement, I have urged the Congress to safeguard the interests and well-being of young people who reach the age of 18 without being adopted or placed in a permanent home. Under the current system, Federal financial assistance for young people in foster care ends just as they are making the critical transition to independence. We must ensure that when these young people are old enough to leave the foster care system, they have the health care, life skills training, and educational opportunities they need to succeed personally and professionally.

As we observe National Adoption Month this year, we can take pride in our progress, but we know there is more work to be done. Let us take this opportunity to rededicate ourselves to meeting those challenges, and let us honor the many adoptive parents whose generosity and love have made such an extraordinary difference in the lives of thousands of our Nation's children.

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 November 1999 as National Adoption Month. I urge all Americans to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities to honor adoptive families and to participate in efforts to find permanent, loving homes for waiting children.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of October, 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 7246 of October 30, 1999**Child Mental Health Month, 1999**

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As a Nation, we have made much progress in ensuring the physical health of our young people. But we are only beginning to make similar strides in protecting their mental health. The symptoms of mental illness in children and adolescents too often go unrecognized and therefore untreated—a tragic failing that can lead to profound effects on their development. Even very young children can experience anxiety and depressive disorders that can have a long-term negative impact on their social interactions at home and at school.

Unfortunately, our attitudes regarding mental illness have compounded this problem. While we now know that more than one in five Americans experiences some form of mental illness each year, that many mental disorders are biological, and that they can be treated medically, too many people still believe that mental illness is a personal failure. Because of this widespread misconception, many parents are reluctant to acknowledge that their children need help, and many children who need help are afraid to ask for it.

During Child Mental Health Month, I encourage all parents, teachers, pediatricians, school nurses, other health care professionals, and concerned citizens across our country to learn more about children's mental health. By doing so, we can recognize more quickly the early warning signs of mental illnesses and disorders. We can detect depression before it deepens into serious illness, raise awareness of risk factors for suicide, and work to prevent more acts of youth violence.

We must do all we can to intervene in the lives of young people who are mentally or emotionally unstable before they cause harm to themselves or to others. I am pleased that some schools have responded to the recent youth violence tragedies by improving mental health services, expanding after-school and mentoring programs, and offering in-home counseling for vulnerable families. To ensure the success of these efforts, we must work to fight the stigma and dispel the myths that surround mental illness. By engaging in efforts that raise public awareness of our children's mental health, we can replace stigma with acceptance, ignorance with understanding, and fear with new hope for the future.

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 November 1999 as Child Mental Health Month. I call upon families, schools, communities, and governments to dedicate themselves to promoting the mental health and well-being of all our children.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of