

commitment to religious freedom, respect for diversity, and belief in democracy have enriched our society and helped make America a better place for all. During this historic time, we are particularly grateful for the many Jewish Americans who serve in our military. Their efforts help advance the cause of freedom and provide hope for people around the world.

As we observe Jewish Heritage Week, we remember the proud legacy and determination of the Jewish people and their strong dedication to faith, family, and service.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, 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 April 25 through May 2, 2004, as Jewish Heritage Week. I call upon all Americans to observe this week with appropriate programs and activities that highlight and honor the contributions Jewish Americans have made to our Nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-third day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Proclamation 7776 of April 30, 2004

Older Americans Month, 2004

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

More than 47 million Americans are 60 years old or older. During Older Americans Month, we honor our senior citizens for enriching and strengthening our Nation, and we pledge to continue working to enhance their quality of life.

This year's theme, "Aging Well, Living Well," reflects the many ways that older Americans contribute to our national character. Many are working beyond traditional retirement age, while others volunteer their time serving worthy causes. Through the Senior Corps program of the USA Freedom Corps, more than half a million older Americans donated time to their communities last year, and many others are volunteering through the Peace Corps and other programs.

My Administration is committed to helping our senior citizens lead better, healthier, and longer lives. Late last year, I was proud to sign into law the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003. This historic legislation represents the greatest improvement in senior health care since President Lyndon Johnson signed the Social Security Act Amendments that created Medicare in 1965. It gives seniors access to affordable prescription drug coverage, provides for preventive screenings to diagnose and treat health conditions early, and updates the Medicare system to let seniors choose coverage that best meets their needs. These changes are vital to ensuring that seniors can obtain the health care and prescription drugs they deserve.

Older Americans help others to understand the past, and they teach timeless lessons of courage, endurance, and love. Through their legacy of patriotism, service, and responsibility, America's seniors also unite families and communities and serve as role models for younger generations.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, 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 May 2004 as Older Americans Month. I commend older Americans for the contributions they make to our communities. I further commend Federal officials, State, and local governments, tribal organizations, service and health care providers, caregivers, volunteers, and all those who work on behalf of our senior citizens. I encourage all Americans to honor their elders and publicly reaffirm our Nation's commitment to older Americans during this month and throughout the year.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Proclamation 7777 of April 30, 2004

National Charter Schools Week, 2004

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

America looks to its schools to give all students the skills they need to realize their dreams and reach their potential. Charter schools help fulfill this mission. During National Charter Schools Week, we celebrate the successes of these institutions.

Charter schools are an important part of our effort to improve the public school system and offer broader educational options to every family. Like other public schools, charter schools are open to all students. Because they are subject to fewer State and district regulations than other public schools, charter schools offer teachers and administrators more freedom in tailoring programs to meet specific student and community needs. In exchange for this freedom, they must meet stricter accountability standards.

Now in their second decade, the demand for charter schools is growing among families from all backgrounds. During this school year, our Nation's charter schools will educate nearly 700,000 students. Many families choose charter schools because of the innovative curriculum and focus on academic achievement, and because these schools can be a promising alternative to a low-performing neighborhood school.

Charter schools are an important part of the No Child Left Behind Act. They provide parents with more choices for their children's education. The greater autonomy of charter schools allows them to employ innovative educational practices. Studies have shown that many charter schools improve academic achievement for their students and that parents of students in charter schools are satisfied with their children's schools.