

since 1997, VOCA funding has supported the development of Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) programs and multi-disciplinary Sexual Assault Response Teams (SART). The Violence Against Women Act of 2005 (VAWA, Public Law 109–162) authorized the Sexual Assault Services Program, the first Federal funding dedicated exclusively to sexual assault services. The Program includes funding for culturally specific programs that serve victims who face unique cultural and linguistic barriers.

In addition to helping victims, offenders must be held accountable for their crimes. Sexual assault forensic examinations and trained examiners can ensure that victims are treated with requisite sensitivity and that critical evidence is collected to facilitate a successful prosecution. To this end, VAWA mandates that all States that accept Federal grants to combat violence against women ensure that sexual assault victims receive forensic examinations free of charge, even if the victim chooses not to report the crime to the police.

To make continued progress, my Administration supports efforts to help Americans better understand this issue. Working together, we can reduce the incidence of sexual assault and help all who have experienced this heinous crime.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, 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 2009, as National Sexual Assault Awareness Month. I urge all Americans to respond to sexual assault by creating policies at work and school, by engaging in discussions with family and friends, and by making the prevention of sexual assault a priority in their communities.

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

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8360 of April 9, 2009

National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day, 2009

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

American prisoners of war exemplify the courage and sacrifice that define our men and women in uniform. These brave warriors have paid a massive share of the costs of freedom, and our Nation will be forever in their debt. Today we honor all prisoners of war by recognizing the tremendous sacrifices made and the hardships endured by those who fight for our freedom.

American prisoners of war have experienced extreme conditions across the world and many have made the ultimate sacrifice. Sixty-seven years ago, in the midst of World War II, nearly 12,000 Americans and 76,000 Filipinos were captured while defending positions on the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines. As prisoners of war, they endured the Bataan Death March,

suffering starvation, torture, and unspeakable conditions. Thousands were randomly executed and many perished on this journey. During the Korean War, more than 1,600 Americans died under grave conditions at the Pyok Tong camp. In Vietnam's Hoa Lo Prison—the infamous Hanoi Hilton—Americans endured torture and other forms of inhumane treatment.

There are countless tales of the bravery of American prisoners of war—of the burdens borne, of the acts of heroism. These individuals have made great sacrifices and have demonstrated an enduring faith in themselves and in the United States. Their commitment calls out to all Americans to live up to our Nation's highest ideals and to serve our fellow citizens with equal selflessness and honor. We will never forget their sacrifices. Their spirit of service will inspire the American people for generations to come.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 9, 2009, as National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day, and I urge all Americans to observe this day of remembrance with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

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

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8361 of April 14, 2009

Pan American Day and Pan American Week, 2009

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

A common heritage, an interconnected world, and shared goals and values unite the Pan American community. As a proud member of this group of countries, the United States celebrates Pan American Day and Pan American Week and commits to working with our partners in the Organization of American States to advance a common future.

The Pan American community is highly interwoven, and the peoples of the Americas must work together to build the future we seek. When one country faces economic, security, or health challenges, its neighbors share in this hardship. Together, the Pan American community can build strong partnerships to surmount common concerns and further mutual success.

The broad scope of shared goals includes economic growth and equality, increased security, strong democratic governance, and clean energy. Robust, bottom-up economic growth benefits all citizens and all nations, and remains a central goal of the Pan American community. Together, the countries of the Americas can prioritize and enact policies that ensure a shared and equitable economic prosperity. This economic future is possible only if we protect the safety of citizens and the security of our countries. Whether reducing street crime and gang violence, decreasing the narcotics trade, or preventing acts of terrorism, every country has a stake in regional security.