

would not let him rest until victory was won. As we work to meet the challenges of our time—from fixing our schools so every child gets a world-class education to ensuring all Americans have access to strong and secure economic opportunity—let us draw strength from Dr. King’s stirring affirmation that “Everybody can be great because everybody can serve.” In his memory, let us continue climbing toward that Promised Land, one more fair and more just for all people.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim January 16, 2012, as the Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday. I encourage all Americans to observe this day with appropriate civic, community, and service projects in honor of Dr. King, and to visit [www.MLKDay.gov](http://www.MLKDay.gov) to find Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Service projects across our country.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirteenth day of January, in the year of our Lord two thousand twelve, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-sixth.

BARACK OBAMA

**Proclamation 8774 of January 13, 2012**

**Religious Freedom Day, 2012**

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

For nearly four centuries, men and women have immigrated to America’s shores in pursuit of religious freedom. Hailing from diverse backgrounds and faiths, countless settlers have shared a simple aspiration—to practice their beliefs free from prejudice and persecution. In 1786, the Virginia General Assembly took a bold step toward preserving this fundamental liberty by passing the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, which brought to life the ideal of religious tolerance from the texts of the Enlightenment in the laws of state. On Religious Freedom Day, we celebrate this historic milestone, reflect upon the Statute’s declaration that “Almighty God hath created the mind free,” and reaffirm that the American people will remain forever unshackled in matters of faith.

Drafted by Thomas Jefferson, the Virginia Statute formed the basis for the First Amendment, which has preserved religious freedom for both believers and non-believers for over 220 years. As our Nation has grown, so too has its diversity of faiths, cultures, and traditions; today, individuals of rich and varied beliefs call America home and seek to follow their consciences in peace. Our long history of religious tolerance and pluralism has strengthened our country, helped create a vibrant civil society, and remained true to the principles enshrined in our founding documents.

Our Nation is committed to religious liberty not only for all Americans, but also for individuals around the world. Internationally, we bear witness to those who live in fear of violence and discrimination because of their beliefs. My Administration continues to stand with all who are denied the

ability to choose, express, or live their faith freely, and we remain dedicated to protecting this universal human right and the vital role it plays in ensuring peace and stability for all nations.

Today, as we reflect on the many ways religious freedom enriches our country and our lives, let us lend our voice to all people striving to exercise their innate right to a free mind.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim January 16, 2012, as Religious Freedom Day. I call on all Americans to commemorate this day with events and activities that teach us about this critical foundation of our Nation's liberty, and show us how we can protect it for future generations at home and around the world.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirteenth day of January, in the year of our Lord two thousand twelve, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-sixth.

BARACK OBAMA

#### **Proclamation 8775 of January 31, 2012**

#### **American Heart Month, 2012**

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

Every year, heart disease takes the lives of over half a million Americans, and it remains the leading cause of death in the United States. This devastating epidemic leaves no one untouched; its victims are fathers and daughters, grandparents and siblings, cherished friends and community members across our country. This month, we remember the steps each of us can take to reduce the risk of heart disease and recommit to better heart health for all Americans.

While genetic or hereditary factors play a part in many instances of cardiovascular disease, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, physical inactivity, obesity, tobacco use, and alcohol abuse are major risk factors that can be prevented or controlled. To take action against heart disease, I encourage all Americans to make balanced and nutritious meal choices, maintain a healthy weight, and get active. Avoiding tobacco, moderating alcohol consumption, and working with a health care provider can also help prevent or treat conditions that can lead to heart disease. Additional resources on how to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease are available at: [www.CDC.gov/HeartDisease](http://www.CDC.gov/HeartDisease).

To help win the fight against heart disease, my Administration is working to ensure individuals and communities have the tools they need to make real gains in this critical effort. Last September, we launched the Million Hearts initiative, which is coordinating programs across Federal agencies and forging new public-private partnerships to prevent one million heart attacks and strokes over the next 5 years. Resources on how to join the initiative are available at: [MillionHearts.HHS.gov](http://MillionHearts.HHS.gov). To secure our children's