

anniversary of that historic act, we celebrate the rights the Declaration recognized and recommit to strengthening them in the 21st century.

The United States was built on the promise that freedom and fairness are not endowed only to some—they are the birthright of all. Ordinary Americans have fought to fully realize that vision for more than two centuries, courageously forging a democracy that empowers each of us equally and affords every citizen due process under the law. Just as we have cultivated these rights here at home, so have we worked to promote them abroad. Societies across the globe are reaching toward a future where leaders are fairly and duly elected; where everyone can get an education and make a good living; where women and girls are free from violence, as well as free to pursue the same opportunities as men and boys; and where the voice of the people rings clear and true. As they do, the United States stands with them, ready to uphold the basic decency and human rights that underlie everything we have achieved and all our progress yet to come.

Men and women everywhere long for the freedom to determine their destiny, the dignity that comes with work, the comfort that comes with faith, and the justice that exists when governments serve their people. These dreams are common to people all around the world, and the values they represent are universal. This week, we rededicate ourselves to fortifying civil rights in America, while reaffirming that all people around the world should live free from the threat of extrajudicial killing, torture, oppression, and discrimination. And we renew our promise that the United States will be a partner to any nation, large or small, that will contribute to a world that is more peaceful and more prosperous, more just and more free.

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 December 10, 2012, as Human Rights Day and the week beginning December 10, 2012, as Human Rights Week. I call upon the people of the United States to mark these observances with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

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

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8916 of December 14, 2012

Bill of Rights Day, 2012

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

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt recognized the 150th anniversary of our Nation's Bill of Rights, he called it the "great American charter of personal liberty and human dignity." He understood that the freedoms it protects—among them speech, worship, assembly, and due process—are freedoms that reinforce one another. They form the bedrock of the American promise, and we cannot fully realize one without realizing them all. Today,

as we work to reinforce human rights at home and around the globe, we reaffirm our belief that government of the people, by the people, and for the people inspires the stability and individual opportunity that serve as a basis for peace in our world.

In adopting the 10 Constitutional Amendments that make up the Bill of Rights, the Framers sought to balance the power and security of a new Federal Government with a guarantee of our most basic civil liberties. They acted on a conviction that rings as true today as it did two centuries ago: Unlocking a nation's potential depends on empowering all its people. The Framers also called upon posterity to carry on their work—to keep our country moving forward and bring us ever closer to a more perfect Union.

Generations of patriots have taken up that challenge. They have been defenders who stood watch at freedom's frontier, marchers who broke down barriers to full equality, dreamers who pushed America from what it was toward what it ought to be. Now it falls to us to build on their work. On Bill of Rights Day, we celebrate the liberties secured by our forebears, pay tribute to all who have fought to protect and expand our civil rights, and rededicate ourselves to driving a new century of American progress.

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 December 15, 2012, as Bill of Rights Day. I call upon the people of the United States to mark these observances with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

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

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8917 of December 14, 2012

**Honoring the Victims of the Tragedy in Newtown,
Connecticut**

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

As a mark of respect for the victims of the senseless acts of violence perpetrated on December 14, 2012, in Newtown, Connecticut, by the authority vested in me as President of the United States by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, I hereby order that the flag of the United States shall be flown at half-staff at the White House and upon all public buildings and grounds, at all military posts and naval stations, and on all naval vessels of the Federal Government in the District of Columbia and throughout the United States and its Territories and possessions until sunset, December 18, 2012. I also direct that the flag shall be flown at half-staff for the same length of time at all United States embassies, legations, consular offices, and other facilities abroad, including all military facilities and naval vessels and stations.