

ability of citizens to exercise their fundamental freedoms of association, expression, and peaceful assembly is increasingly constricted in a number of participating states. Actions based on hate and prejudice remain prevalent in too many states and are too often still reflected in national policy. These attitudes will continue to obstruct democracy's success until we root them out from both our institutions and our hearts. The United States strongly condemns the heinous terrorist attacks in Ankara, as well as the bombing of the Russian plane in Egypt. And in the wake of the tragic terrorist attacks in Paris, we recommit to our fight against terrorism and violent extremism while reaffirming our adherence to our common ideals with the French people and with any free society, similar to those delineated in the Helsinki Final Act: *liberté, égalité, and fraternité*.

The Helsinki Final Act inspires our vision for democracy, human rights, and human dignity. It inspires a vision for open economies and shared prosperity, and a world in which states resolve disputes peacefully and work together to build and maintain trust. It is a framework that, if its commitments are upheld, can enable us to move beyond division and prejudice and toward a more democratic, prosperous, and peaceful OSCE region. Let us resolve to stand with victims of oppression and with all who yearn to exercise their human rights. Together, we can faithfully implement our shared Helsinki commitments and help forge an ever better future for all.

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 3, 2015, as Helsinki Human Rights Day. I call upon all the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities reflecting our steadfast dedication to human rights and democratic values. I also call upon the governments and peoples of all other signatory states to renew their commitment to comply with the principles established and consecrated in the Helsinki Final Act.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this second day of December, in the year of our Lord two thousand fifteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fortieth.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 9376 of December 2, 2015

International Day of Persons With Disabilities, 2015

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

The United States has long been a leading voice for the rights of persons with disabilities, and we join the international community in expressing our support for them in all they do and in recognizing them as the valuable members of society that they are. This year, as we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)—landmark legislation that helps ensure the places that make up our shared national life truly belong to everyone—we also recognize that protecting the

rights of those with disabilities is not just an American ideal, but a cornerstone of our work to ensure human rights around the globe. On International Day of Persons with Disabilities, we rededicate ourselves to building a fairer and more accessible world and to upholding the fundamental dignity and respect of all people.

A quarter-century ago, our Nation marked a milestone in the long march toward achieving equal opportunity for all with the passage of the ADA. A result of quiet persistence and perseverance coupled with passionate and vocal advocacy, this Act showed the world our full commitment to the rights of people with disabilities, and in these past 25 years, we have built on the foundation of equality laid by this law. The Affordable Care Act also guarantees people with disabilities a basic but fundamental protection—that they can no longer be denied access to health insurance due to a pre-existing condition. Additionally, my Administration has supported increasing funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) grants, which would boost our efforts to provide every child living with a disability with a quality public education. And this year, the White House hosted a series of events commemorating IDEA's 40th anniversary to highlight the importance of inclusion and of recognizing the talents of all Americans in every aspect of society.

Each day, our founding values of equality and opportunity guide our work to forge a bright future for people with disabilities. Serving to protect these ideals are our brave men and women in uniform who give of themselves for us all, and when they return home with wounds of war, seen or unseen, it is our sacred obligation to ensure they can take full advantage of the freedoms they fought so hard to defend. That is why my Administration has worked to provide our country's veterans who have disabilities with access to timely, quality health care and the tools needed to convert their military skills into careers in civilian life.

As we continue working to expand the promise of America to all our people, we must remember that the fight for disability rights should not stop at our Nation's shores. The United States continues to uphold our global commitment to the international disability community. During my first year in office, the United States signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, an international declaration, now signed by 160 countries, that recognizes the inherent worth of people with disabilities and urges equal protection and benefits before the law. I am disappointed that the Senate blocked ratification of the Convention, and I continue to call on these elected leaders, all of whom represent Americans with disabilities, to provide their advice and consent to ratification. A pillar of American leadership is our profound respect for the human dignity of all people, and it is imperative that we reach for a day when all of the more than 1 billion people of the world who live with a disability can enjoy the same rights afforded to those living here at home.

Our pursuit of equal rights for those with disabilities is not over. Today, we stand on the shoulders of generations who fought for better laws, demanded better treatment, and who, by being good, decent people and hard workers, proved to the world that having a disability should not force individuals into the margins of society. On this day, let us honor the efforts of those who agitated for the respect and dignity of all by picking up the inextinguishable torch of equality and carrying it forward into a future that

Proc. 9377

Title 3—The President

recognizes the incredible talents and skills of people with disabilities. Together, we can secure a tomorrow in which all people know no limits but the scope of their dreams.

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 3, 2015, as International Day of Persons with Disabilities. I call on all Americans to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this second day of December, in the year of our Lord two thousand fifteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fortieth.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 9377 of December 3, 2015

**Honoring the Victims of the Attack in San Bernardino,
California**

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

As a mark of respect for the victims of gun violence perpetrated on December 2, 2015, in San Bernardino, California, 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 through December 7, 2015. 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.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this third day of December, in the year of our Lord two thousand fifteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fortieth.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 9378 of December 4, 2015

150th Anniversary of the 13th Amendment

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

On December 6, 1865, a coalition comprising three-quarters of our Nation's States ratified the 13th Amendment to our Constitution, abolishing slavery