call upon Federal, State, and local government officials to display the flag of the United States and to encourage and take part in patriotic activities throughout our country. I invite the business community, churches, schools, unions, civic and fraternal organizations, and the media to support this national observance with suitable commemorative expressions and programs.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-third day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twelfth.

RONALD REAGAN

Proclamation 5708 of September 24, 1987

National Historically Black Colleges Week, 1987

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Setting aside a week in recognition of our country's historically Black colleges and universities is most appropriate because they are truly valuable national resources. During more than a century and a quarter they have educated hundreds of thousands of Americans who have gone on to contribute substantially to our Nation in every walk of life. Their alumni have included some of our most outstanding leaders and scholars.

This year, commemoration of the role of historically Black colleges and universities falls during our Nation's observance of the Bicentennial of the Constitution. That cherished document is the guarantor of liberty, union, and self-government for all Americans. Thanks to it we remain a strong people united in the richness of our diversity. We can all be proud of the role of historically Black colleges and universities in strengthening our country. Keeping these fine institutions a vital force in American education is a worthy national goal.

To acknowledge the accomplishments of historically Black colleges and universities and the appropriateness of focusing national attention on their contributions, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 22, has designated the week of September 21 through September 27, 1987, as "National Historically Black Colleges Week" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this commemoration.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week of September 21 through September 27, 1987, as National Historically Black Colleges Week. I urge all Americans to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities to express our respect and appreciation for the outstanding academic and social accomplishments of our Nation's historically Black institutions of higher learning.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 24th day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-seven, and
of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twelfth.

RONALD REAGAN

Editorial note: For the President's remarks of Sept. 24, 1987, on signing Proclamation 5708, see the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents (vol. 23, p. 1063).

Proclamation 5709 of September 29, 1987

AIDS Awareness and Prevention Month, 1987

By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and the disease AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) into which it can develop are a severe public health problem in the United States and elsewhere. HIV destroys the immune system and attacks the central nervous system, leading to devastating physical consequences and then to death. Because the virus has a long incubation period and the progress of the disease varies sharply from individual to individual, people can unwittingly carry and spread it for years.

AIDS afflicts thousands of Americans, and an unknown number are infected with HIV without showing any symptoms. The deadly virus is most commonly spread through sexual contact with an infected person, especially through homosexual practices; through intravenous drug use with contaminated needles; and through other transmissions of infected blood. Our country's huge and vital public health task of AIDS prevention and treatment is underway. Massive public and private efforts have already led to definite advances in research and treatment. Our understanding of AIDS remains incomplete, however, and much remains to be done before any vaccine or cure is found.

A Presidential Commission is studying the public health dangers of the HIV epidemic, including the medical, legal, ethical, social, and economic impact, and will issue a report next year, focusing on Federal, State, and local measures to protect the public from contracting the virus, to help find a cure for AIDS, and to care for those already afflicted.

Both medicine and morality teach the same lesson about prevention of AIDS. The Surgeon General has told all Americans that the best way to prevent AIDS is to abstain from sexual activity until adulthood and then to restrict sex to a monogamous, faithful relationship. This advice and the advice to say no to drugs can, of course, prevent the spread of most AIDS cases. Millions already follow this wise and timeless counsel, and our Nation is the poorer for the lost contributions of those who, in rejecting it, have suffered great pain, sorrow, and even death.

Education is crucial for awareness and prevention of AIDS. Parents have the primary responsibility to help children see the beauty, goodness, and