

children with disabilities, members of minority groups, and children with siblings who must be adopted by the same family.

Early on in the Administration, I was pleased to propose legislation designed to encourage "special needs" adoption. Since that time, the Federal Government has continued to play a leading role in overcoming legal, financial, and attitudinal barriers to adoption. This week we salute the many dedicated men and women across America who make adoption work: concerned parents, social services professionals and counselors, State officials, attorneys, members of the clergy, and others. Recognizing that adoption is a tremendous act of courage and generosity under any circumstances, we salute especially each of the brave women who, when faced with a crisis pregnancy, chooses life for her unborn child and offers that child a chance to grow up in a stable, loving home.

As an unselfish, life-affirming, and lifelong commitment, adoption is rooted in the virtues that define and strengthen a family and that, in turn, enrich the lives of individuals and the communities in which they live. This week, let us acknowledge the importance of stable, loving families to children and to our Nation, and let us renew our support for adoption.

The Congress, by Public Law 102-174, has designated the week of November 22 through November 28, 1992, as "National Adoption Week" and has requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week of November 22 through November 28, 1992, as National Adoption Week. I urge all Americans to observe this week with appropriate programs and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of November, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and seventeenth.

GEORGE BUSH

Proclamation 6508 of November 20, 1992

Thanksgiving Day, 1992

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

At no time of year are Americans more mindful of our heritage as one Nation under God than at Thanksgiving—a day when people of every race, creed, and walk of life join in celebrating the many blessings that we have received as individuals and as a Nation. Thanksgiving is among the happiest of days because it fills our hearts with appreciation for the things that matter most: the goodness of our Creator, the love of family and friends, and, of course, the gift of life itself. In addition to giving thanks for our individual blessings, we Americans also join on this occasion in celebrating our shared legacy of freedom.

Since the earliest days of our Republic, Americans have been deeply aware of our indebtedness to the Almighty and our obligations as a people He has blessed. Even in the course of long, difficult journeys to these shores, our ancestors gratefully acknowledged the sustaining power of God—and the faithfulness they owed in return. Recognizing their quest for freedom as an enterprise no less historic than the ancient Israelites' exodus from Egypt, John Winthrop reminded his fellow pilgrims in 1630:

Now if the Lord shall please to hear us, and bring us in peace to the place that we desire, then hath He ratified this covenant and sealed our commission, [and] will expect a strict performance of the articles contained in it . . . to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with our God.

By remaining grateful for, and faithful to, that divine commission, America has become a model of freedom and justice to the world—as our pilgrim ancestors envisioned, a shining “city upon a hill.”

Ever grateful for our freedom and security, we Americans have worked to share these blessings with others, and today we rejoice in the fact that the seeds of democratic thought sown on these shores more than 300 years ago continue to blossom around the globe. Yet, even as we give thanks for the demise of imperial communism and for the current harvest of liberty throughout the world, like our ancestors we also recall our duties as stewards of this great and blessed land. As General Dwight Eisenhower said during World War II:

The winning of freedom is not to be compared to the winning of a game, with the victory recorded forever in history. Freedom has its life in the hearts, the actions, the spirits of men, and so it must be daily earned and refreshed—else like a flower cut from its life-giving roots, it will wither and die.

The liberty that we enjoy today is clearly rooted in our Nation's Judeo-Christian moral heritage and in the timeless values that have united Americans of all religions and all walks of life: love of God and family, personal responsibility and virtue, respect for the law, and concern for others. If the American Experiment is to continue to bear fruit in generations to come, we must cultivate those values in our children and teach them, by word and example, the difference between liberty and license, between the grateful exercise of freedom and the misuse of our precious rights.

This Thanksgiving, as we reflect on our Nation's heritage and give thanks to God for our many blessings, let us renew the solemn commitment that John Winthrop and his fellow pilgrims made more than 300 years ago. At a time when so many of the world's peoples look to America's example, let us stand for a liberty “to that only which is good, just, and honest.” Mindful, too, that “he that gives to the poor lends to the Lord,” let us reach out with generosity to persons in need—strangers who are hungry and homeless, neighbors who are sick or lonely, and loved ones who are eager for our time, attention, and encouragement.

I am both confident and grateful that—in the future, as in the past—this Thanksgiving tradition will continue to bind us in appreciation of life's greatest blessings: our families and friends, our rich heritage of freedom, and, most of all, the unchanging wisdom and presence of Almighty God.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Thursday, November 26, 1992, as a National Day of Thanksgiving. I urge all Americans to gather in their homes and in places of worship on that day to offer thanks to the Almighty for the many blessings that He has granted us as individuals and as a Nation. May we always strive to remain worthy of them.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twentieth day of November, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and seventeenth.

GEORGE BUSH

Proclamation 6509 of November 20, 1992

National Education First Week, 1992

By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation

Three years ago, beginning with our historic Education Summit with the Nation's Governors, we launched America 2000—an ambitious campaign to achieve excellence in our schools. Today more than 2,000 cities and towns throughout the United States and territories proudly count themselves as America 2000 communities, thanks to the shared commitment of parents, teachers, students, local public officials, and concerned business leaders. Recognizing the importance of education, not only as a treasure in itself, but also as the key to advancement for individuals and nations, these Americans are working to meet high standards in the classroom and to make their homes and neighborhoods places where learning can happen. As a result of this outpouring of support for our America 2000 strategy, we have begun to chart promising gains—7 years before our target date.

Since we launched America 2000, concerned individuals from all walks of life have responded enthusiastically to the challenge of building a new generation of American schools. Last year, when private sector leaders formed the New American Schools Development Corporation and announced a nationwide competition for the best school designs imaginable, nearly 700 teams submitted proposals. The Administration also pursued, and this July I was pleased to sign, the Higher Education Amendments of 1992, which will promote lifelong learning and achievement by expanding eligibility for student loans, by improving the accountability of student loan programs, and by providing for an alternative certification program through which States can devise ways to enlist the knowledge, experience, and skills of qualified men and women who want to teach yet lack traditional teaching degrees. In keeping with America 2000 and with our calls for increased competition and accountability in our Nation's schools, at least 10 States