

Proclamation 6652 of March 2, 1994**Save Your Vision Week, 1994**

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Vision is a gift to be treasured. We often take our sight for granted and must be reminded that our eyes require adequate care and attention. At a time when new technologies are revolutionizing medicine, eye care continues to make dramatic progress. Many diseases or accidents that would have caused permanent blindness just a few decades ago can now be treated, with excellent prospects for full recovery. Eye care professionals learn more about proper eye care every year, discovering new ways to prevent disease and to minimize potential damage to our precious eyesight.

Despite our ever-increasing medical knowledge, however, thousands of Americans still suffer preventable vision loss each year. Proper eye care can significantly reduce the incidence of such needless tragedies, and I encourage all Americans to learn ways to minimize the risks of disease and injury to their eyes.

Having periodic eye examinations is an excellent way to invest in one's long-term health. Preventive eye care is always more efficient, more effective, and less expensive than dealing with an existing disease. A comprehensive eye examination allows an eye care professional the ability to identify a disease in its earliest stages and prescribe the treatment with the best chances for success.

Glaucoma, one of the leading causes of blindness in the United States, if diagnosed early, can be treated quite successfully. Though there are often no early warning symptoms of the disease, an eye care professional can detect the affliction during a regular examination and prescribe eye drops or other simple treatments to control the disease and save the patient's sight. I urge all people at high risk for glaucoma—African Americans over the age of 40 and everyone over the age of 60—to receive an eye examination through dilated pupils at least every two years.

People with diabetes are also at particularly high risk for preventable eye disorders. Such eye disease as diabetic retinopathy, which still blinds many people with diabetes in our Nation, can be stopped if it is diagnosed in time. By receiving an eye examination at least once a year, diabetics can do much to protect their vision.

Children, of course, should receive periodic eye examinations, starting when they are very young. Regular eye care at a tender age can identify otherwise hidden disorders, thus sparing the child a lifetime of visual impairment.

I encourage all Americans to take precautions to safeguard their vision throughout their lives. We must teach our children proper eye safety by example—wearing masks or goggles when we play in contact sports and using safety glasses when working with volatile chemicals or dangerous machinery.

To encourage everyone to make a concerted effort to protect the cherished gift of sight, the Congress, by a joint resolution approved Decem-

ber 30, 1963 (77 Stat. 629; 36 U.S.C. 169a), has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation designating the first week in March of each year as "Save Your Vision Week."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week beginning March 6, 1994, as Save Your Vision Week. I urge all Americans to participate in this observance by making eye care and eye safety a priority in their lives. I invite eye care professionals, members of the media, and all public and private organizations committed to the important goal of sight protection to join in activities that will make Americans more aware of the steps they can take to protect their vision.

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

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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American Red Cross Month, 1994

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

Over a century ago, Clara Barton founded the American Red Cross to provide hope, compassion, and care to victims of catastrophe and destruction. Today over 150 countries uphold the idea of neutral and impartial assistance to all people in times of great pain, disaster, or war. In 2,600 chapters across the United States, and on 200 U.S. military installations around the world, over 1.4 million American Red Cross volunteers and more than 23,000 paid staff work diligently to save lives and to assist those in crisis.

It is fitting that in this month, which celebrates the coming of spring and the rebirth of nature, we take the time to acknowledge the many outstanding accomplishments of the American Red Cross. As the Honorary Chairman of this praiseworthy organization, I am proud to commend everyone who is associated with its life-saving efforts. The dedicated members of this organization have enabled thousands of people who thought hope had abandoned them to experience new and bright beginnings. Since 1881 the American Red Cross has helped millions who have entered its doors seeking shelter, food, financial assistance, training, and most important, compassion.

The last 12 months will go down in history as a litany of disasters of every description, from the Midwest floods to the California fires and earthquakes to the winter storms that gripped a large part of the country. The American Red Cross rose to each challenge in its usual timely and efficient manner, restoring hope for so many in need. The Red Cross is in the business of responding to disasters, large and small, 365 days a year. It also provides blood to hospital patients, who otherwise might not survive.