

organizations, businesses, and all military commanders to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

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

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7047 of November 1, 1997

National American Indian Heritage Month, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

American Indians and Alaska Natives have played a vital role in the life of our country, and their many contributions have enhanced the freedom, prosperity, and greatness of America today. In celebrating National American Indian Heritage Month, we reaffirm our country's commitment to remember those contributions and to honor the unique heritage of our continent's first inhabitants.

This special observance also reflects our continuing commitment to American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments as an integral part of the social, political, and economic fabric of the United States. The framers of our Constitution incorporated Indian nations into the political and legal framework of this country, forever joining the destiny of the tribal nations with that of the American people. By this action, our founders charged themselves and future generations with the moral obligation to guard the rights and fundamental liberties of our country's tribal peoples as zealously as we protect the rights of all Americans.

As we enter the next millennium, we have an exciting opportunity to open a new era of understanding, cooperation, and respect among all of America's people. We must work together to tear down the walls of separation and mistrust and build a strong foundation for the future. To accomplish this, we must strengthen tribal governments, improve the quality of education for American Indian and Alaska Native youth, build stable, diversified economies in tribal communities, create high-wage jobs, and ensure that all our citizens have the skills, education, and opportunities they need to reach their full potential.

The government-to-government relationship between the tribes and the United States embodies the fundamental American belief that people of widely varied and diverse cultural backgrounds can join together to build a great country. Such greatness can be sustained, however, only so long as we honor the ideals and principles upon which America is founded and abide by our commitments to all our people. In recognition of America's moral and legal obligations to American Indians and Alaska Natives, and in light of the special trust relationship between tribal governments and the Government of the United States, we celebrate National American Indian Heritage Month.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 1997 as National American Indian Heritage Month. I urge all Americans, as well as their elected representatives at the Federal, State, local, and tribal levels, to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

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

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7048 of November 3, 1997

National Adoption Month, 1997

By the President of the United States

A Proclamation

Most American children are blessed with loving, stable families. But, tragically, in our country today there are too many children whose parents are unwilling or unable to care for them. While foster care offers these children a safe and nurturing temporary haven in their time of greatest need, as many as 100,000 foster care kids will need permanent homes in the next few years. Many of these children have special needs and require the security and stability of an adoptive family to develop their full potential. Adoption allows these and other children to have the permanent homes they deserve, and it enables many dedicated adults to experience the joys and rewards of parenting.

My Administration is working hard to find ways to help encourage adoption. On December 14, 1996, I issued a Memorandum to the Secretaries of Health and Human Services, the Treasury, Labor, and Commerce and to the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, directing them to promote efforts to both increase the number of children who are adopted or permanently placed each year and to move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes. I also urged them to increase public awareness about the children waiting for permanent families and to encourage all Americans to consider the rewards of adoption.

I challenged the members of my Administration to work with States, communities, and civic leaders to create a plan for doubling the number of adoptions and permanent placements for children to 54,000 by the year 2002. And on February 14, 1997, the *Adoption 2002* report, outlining changes in policies and practices necessary to reach this goal, was released. Since then, we have been actively implementing the recommendations included in the report, and States are reviewing data and submitting numerical targets for adoption and guardianships to be completed by the year 2002. The Office of Personnel Management has published a guide for Federal workers interested in adopting, and the Department of Health and Human Services is preparing to make the first annual Adoption 2002 Excellence awards later this year. Finally,