

**Proclamation 7131 of October 2, 1998****Fire Prevention Week, 1998**

*By the President of the United States of America*

*A Proclamation*

Fire claims more than 4,000 American lives each year, a tragic loss of life that we can and must prevent. Nearly 80 percent of these deaths occur in the home, where smoke and poisonous gases often kill people long before flames can reach them.

Underestimating fire's deadly speed has cost many Americans their lives. Smoke alarms are one of the most effective safety tools available to ensure sufficient escape time, and research shows that by installing and maintaining working smoke alarms, we can reduce the risk of fire-related death by nearly 50 percent. Another important safety measure is a home fire escape plan, which enables everyone in the household to exit quickly during a fire emergency.

As sponsor of Fire Prevention Week for more than 70 years, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has selected "Fire Drills—The Great Escape!" as the theme for this year's Fire Prevention Week. Together with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the NFPA reminds us to take responsibility for our personal safety and practice our home escape plans. On Wednesday, October 7, 1998, fire departments across America will coordinate home fire drills in support of National Fire Prevention Week. Community fire departments will signal the start of the "Great Escape Fire Drill" by sounding their stations' fire alarms at 6:00 p.m.

As we focus on fire safety this week, let us also pay tribute to the courage and commitment of our Nation's fire and emergency services personnel. These dedicated men and women devote themselves, day in and day out, to protecting our lives and property from the ravages of fire. All America watched in awe this summer as thousands of firefighters from across the Nation battled the wildfires that raged through Florida for so many weeks. Leaving their own homes and families, these heroes put their lives on the line as street by street, house by house, they worked to save the homes of their fellow Americans. It is fitting that on Sunday, October 4, 1998, at the 17th annual National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service in Emmitsburg, Maryland, our Nation will honor once again the valiant men and women across our country whose commitment to protecting our families and communities from fire cost them their lives.

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 October 4 through October 10, 1998, as Fire Prevention Week. I encourage people of the United States to take an active role in fire prevention not only this week, but also throughout the year. I also call upon every citizen to pay tribute to the members of our fire and emergency services who have lost their lives or been injured in service to their communities, and to those men and women who carry on their noble tradition.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this second day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight,

and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

**Proclamation 7132 of October 5, 1998**

### **Child Health Day, 1998**

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

As caring parents and citizens, we must do all we can to ensure that our children, our Nation's greatest resource, lead safe and healthy lives. Today, thanks to scientific breakthroughs and increased public awareness, we have the ability to prevent many of the childhood illnesses and disorders of the past. We have raised immunization rates to an all-time high, ensured that prescription drugs will be adequately tested for children, conducted research to help protect children from environmental health risks, and established protections so that mothers can stay in hospitals with their newborns until they and their doctors decide they are ready to leave. Although we can be heartened by these important achievements, we must do more if we are to overcome the many health challenges our children still face.

Recent studies show that children without health insurance are more likely to be sick as newborns, less likely to be immunized, and less likely to receive treatment for recurring illnesses. One of the great accomplishments of my Administration has been the creation of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which I called for in my 1997 State of the Union and signed into law just a year ago. CHIP provides \$24 billion to help States offer affordable health insurance to children in eligible working families—the single largest investment in children's health since the passage of Medicaid in 1965. CHIP will provide health care coverage, including prescription drugs, and vision, hearing, and mental health services, to as many as 5 million uninsured children; and in its first year, nearly four out of five States already are participating in CHIP. We are also working hard to identify and enroll in Medicaid the more than 4 million children who are currently eligible to receive health care through that program but are not enrolled. The challenge before us now is to realize the promise of CHIP and Medicaid by reaching out to families to inform them of their options for health care coverage.

Due to recent breakthroughs in medical knowledge, we know that the decisions we make even before our children are born can have a significant impact on their future health. That is why we are committed to fighting, among other afflictions, the tragic consequences of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. In this country, thousands of infants are born each year suffering from the physical and mental effects of this disorder. Because its effects are devastating, causing permanent damage, the simplest and best measure that expectant mothers can take for the safety of their babies is to abstain from drinking alcohol throughout their pregnancies.