

erations of Americans will have the same opportunities to share the beauty and bounty of our forests as we enjoy today.

To recognize the importance of our forests in ensuring the long-term welfare of our Nation, the Congress, by Public Law 86-753 (36 U.S.C. 123), has designated the week beginning on the third Sunday in October of each year as "National Forest Products Week" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 17 through October 23, 1999, as National Forest Products Week. I call upon all Americans to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

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

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7242 of October 16, 1999

National Character Counts Week, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The character of our citizens has enriched every aspect of our national life and has set an example of civic responsibility for people around the world. The diligence and determination that are part of our Nation's work ethic have strengthened our economy, and the firm convictions of our spiritual leaders have helped guide our communities, fostering unity, compassion, and humility.

In this dynamic time of unparalleled opportunity and possibility, our children will encounter a variety of new challenges that will test the strength of their character and convictions. As the dawn of the new millennium fast approaches, we must work together—parents, public officials, educators, entertainers, and business and religious leaders—to impart to our youth the core values they need to be good citizens.

We know that parents play a critical role in imparting moral values to their children. But in today's complex and fast-paced society, when parents must spend longer hours at work and more families are headed by a single parent, parents have less time to spend with their children—an average decrease of 22 hours a week over the past 30 years, according to a report released this spring by my Council of Economic Advisers. We must seek innovative ways to address this problem and to promote stronger families, including greater flexibility in paid work hours, more affordable child care, and increased support for low-income families.

My Administration is committed to providing families with the tools they need to fulfill their responsibilities at home and at work. Our agenda includes tripling our investment in after-school programs through the 21st Century Community Learning Center program and a

historic initiative to make child care better, safer, and more affordable for working families. We are also working to expand the Family and Medical Leave Act to cover more workers and to allow leave for more parental activities, such as parent-teacher conferences and routine doctor visits.

While Americans are striving to seize the opportunities presented by this exciting new era, we must continue to preserve the fundamental ideals and ethics that have sustained our country for more than two centuries. By sustaining these shared values and passing them on to our children, we can realize our common hope for a more just and honorable society and a brighter future for the generations to come.

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 17 through October 23, 1999, as National Character Counts Week. I call upon the people of the United States, government officials, educators, religious, community, and business leaders, and the States to commemorate this week with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs.

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

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7243 of October 21, 1999

National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence, 1999

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

Events of the past year have dramatically demonstrated the continuing need for a National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence. In communities across our country, we saw young lives cut short by gunfire. We watched, horrified, as the same scene played out repeatedly in classrooms, school yards, and places of worship. Out of cities like Fort Worth, Texas; Conyers, Georgia; Granada Hills, California; and Littleton, Colorado, came the images that have become painfully familiar—racing ambulances, terrified children, grieving families. As a national community, we shared a sense of devastating loss too immediate to comprehend. Behind these headlines, every day in our Nation 12 young people die as a result of gun violence.

In response to this disturbing cycle, my Administration has taken comprehensive action against youth violence. Last October, we held the first-ever White House Conference on School Safety, where I launched a new initiative to increase the number of safety officers in schools and unveiled a new plan to help schools respond to violence. After the tragedy in Littleton, we held a Summit on Youth Violence at which we launched a national campaign to end youth violence.