

tions would fail, and the mission of the Red Cross would go unfulfilled. Whether helping military families stay connected with service members around the world, teaching CPR and first aid, or supporting other members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, volunteers are critical to the success of each and every Red Cross endeavor. These individuals epitomize the generosity and community spirit of the American people.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America and Honorary Chairman of the American Red Cross, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States do hereby proclaim March 2009 as American Red Cross Month. I encourage all Americans to support this organization's noble humanitarian mission.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-third.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8347 of February 27, 2009

National Consumer Protection Week, 2009

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

Consumer education helps every American who enters the marketplace. When making a purchase, consumers should know their rights and should learn about goods and services before they buy. This knowledge allows consumers to make sound decisions and protects families and individuals from fraud and abuse. Consumer vigilance also prevents problems before they arise. During National Consumer Protection Week, we highlight consumer education efforts to help Americans make wise decisions. Federal, State, and local agencies; private sector organizations; and consumer advocacy groups band together to encourage Americans to learn about the protections the law affords and to take full advantage of the resources available for consumers of every age.

This year's theme for National Consumer Protection Week, "Nuts & Bolts: Tools for Today's Economy," focuses on the basic information consumers need as they face the opportunities and pitfalls of the marketplace. Every day, consumers make tough choices about saving, investing, and spending their hard-earned money. Whether selecting a mortgage payment plan, seeking a credit report, or buying a car, staying well-informed and vigilant can help citizens make prudent choices. A few days, hours, or even minutes of preparatory research can ultimately save time and money.

As part of National Consumer Protection Week, the Federal Trade Commission has organized a coalition of public- and private-sector organizations to provide practical tips on a wide range of topics. These tips are available at www.consumer.gov/ncpw. The website also in-

cludes information on home foreclosure, identity theft, and protecting businesses. Working together, consumers, businesses, and Government can strengthen our robust free market for the benefit of all Americans.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, 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 March 1 through March 7, 2009, as National Consumer Protection Week. I call upon Government officials, industry leaders, and advocates across the Nation to provide our citizens with information about consumer rights, and I encourage all Americans to take a proactive role in strengthening our economy.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-third.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8348 of February 27, 2009

Save Your Vision Week, 2009

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

Blindness and visual impairment affect millions of Americans. Early diagnosis and timely treatment are critical to minimize vision loss from eye diseases as well as vision loss that is correctable with eye glasses or contact lenses. During Save Your Vision Week, I encourage all Americans to take action to protect their vision.

Unfortunately, most people have limited knowledge of blinding eye disorders. In a 2005 study by the National Eye Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health, only eight percent of respondents knew that glaucoma, a condition that can damage the optic nerve and cause vision loss and blindness, strikes without early warning. Similarly, only 11 percent knew that diabetic eye disease also begins as a silent vision threat.

Several demographic groups are at higher risk for visual impairment, including teenagers, diabetics, Hispanics, African Americans, and the economically disadvantaged. Older Americans are more susceptible to eye conditions such as age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and glaucoma. Children need regular vision screenings because vision disorders left untreated during childhood can lead to permanent visual impairment during adulthood.

Still, eye disease knows no bounds, and every American should take steps to protect his or her eyesight. Doctors recommend seeking routine eye examinations, maintaining a healthy diet, wearing sunglasses to protect the eyes from damaging ultraviolet rays, and using protective eyewear in hazardous environments. The National Eye Institute's website, www.nei.nih.gov, provides resources for learning more about common vision conditions and information on finding an eye health