

children, comforting seniors, and reaching out to veterans. They are providing critical support to schools, shelters, hospitals, and nursing homes, through faith-based and community organizations, at home and abroad. Volunteers change lives and strengthen our Nation and our world.

My Administration is committed to supporting and supplementing the crucial efforts that Americans make to volunteer. The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, which I signed into law today, will help millions of Americans of all ages to volunteer and to direct that service towards meeting our most pressing challenges. It truly will usher in a new era of service.

This landmark law recruits an army of 250,000 per year to engage in intensive service, and it focuses that work on today's challenges, including clean energy, education, health, veterans care, and economic opportunity. It creates new service opportunities for seniors, baby boomers, and young adults, and improves service learning in our schools.

The law also creates a Social Innovation Fund. This fund looks for new ideas in communities and leverages private, nonprofit, and faith-based support to invest in local innovation. The fund also allows us to test the impact of new ideas and expand successful programs to scale.

Volunteering provides the opportunity to join and better a community. Every American who volunteers can become an integral part of a school, a hospital, or a neighborhood. Those who give of their time also join our Nation's proud history of service and help preserve this tradition for generations ahead. During National Volunteer Week, we express heartfelt thanks to all who have worked hard in this effort, and we urge more Americans to reach out and meet the manifold unmet needs of fellow 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 the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 19–25, 2009 as National Volunteer Week. I call upon all Americans to join ongoing volunteer service efforts, and to create new ones.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of April, 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 8364 of April 22, 2009**

**Earth Day, 2009**

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

The story of the United States is inextricably tied to our vital natural resources. As we enter a new era filled with challenges and promise, we must protect our land, wildlife, water and air—the resources that

have fueled our growth and prosperity as a Nation and enriched our lives. Doing this not only fulfills a sacred obligation to our children and grandchildren, but also provides an opportunity to stimulate economic growth.

To achieve these ends, no issue deserves more immediate attention than global warming. Scientists have already observed alarming shifts in the natural world, including thawing permafrost, melting glaciers, and rising sea levels.

Climate change presents a serious test for humankind, but it also provides an opportunity for great innovation and adaptation. The United States has risen to such challenges before, and Earth Day inspires us to transcend differences among nations so we may lead the world in protecting our planet from this global threat.

Americans across the country are working hard to help limit the pollutants that cause climate change and reduce their impact on the environment, but we must do more. Individuals and organizations can plant trees, use energy efficient lightbulbs, drive fuel efficient cars, hold clean-up drives, and teach young people about environmental preservation. Small changes in our daily lives can have a big impact on our environment. Individuals can walk, bike, and use public transportation; buy products with less packaging; and recycle and reuse paper, plastic, glass, and aluminum more often. American families can also save money by choosing energy efficient products, turning lights off, unplugging appliances, and cutting back on heating and air conditioning.

Government and business alike must also take serious and sustained action to protect our valuable natural inheritance. Through investments in scientific research and development, and the vigorous pursuit of alternative and renewable energy, we can create millions of green jobs that allow us to reduce greenhouse gases and excel in a competitive global economy. My Administration is committed to increasing fuel economy standards and putting more Plug-In Hybrid cars on the road, weatherizing millions of homes, and catalyzing private efforts to build a clean energy future. My Administration is also working to achieve a comprehensive energy and climate policy, one that will lessen our dependence on foreign oil, make the U.S. the global leader in clean energy technology, and prevent the worst impacts of climate change.

President Theodore Roosevelt emphasized our obligation to future Americans, saying, “of all the questions which can come before this nation, short of the actual preservation of its existence in a great war, there is none which compares in importance with the great central task of leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us.” Heeding President Roosevelt’s call, and carrying forward his spirit of determination, we must commit ourselves to protecting our environment and ensuring the health of our planet so we may share the magnificent blessings of our Earth with our grandchildren.

We do this not only to acknowledge the environment’s central role in the development of our Nation but also to recognize the strong ecological interdependence among nations. History has shown that as we sow, so too shall we reap. Let us rededicate ourselves to a world that provides bountiful harvests for us all not just today, but for many generations to come.

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 April 22, 2009, as Earth Day. I encourage all citizens to help protect our environment and contribute to a healthy, sustainable world.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second day of April, 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 8365 of April 24, 2009**

**National Crime Victims' Rights Week, 2009**

*By the President of the United States of America*

*A Proclamation*

From violence in our neighborhoods to credit card fraud on the Internet, Americans fall victim to countless crimes every day. Our Nation has no higher responsibility than protecting the safety of our families. During National Crime Victims' Rights Week, we honor crime victims by pledging to fight crime wherever it exists.

This commitment begins by supporting the men and women working every day to reduce crime and assist crime victims. Often placing themselves in harm's way and sacrificing personal interests, these individuals are the backbone of the extensive efforts to protect Americans from crime. They have demonstrated a commitment to serve others, and their dedication is vital to implementing a successful strategy for crime reduction and victim assistance.

Crime victims have benefited from the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (Public Law 98-473), one of the most significant achievements in crime victim assistance. This law created an innovative method for using fines and penalties from Federal criminals to fund services for victims. This Crime Victims Fund has already helped millions of victims across the country access basic assistance and financial compensation. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the bill's bipartisan passage.

An effective approach to fighting crime must include programs that make sense and work. To that end, my Administration is building on past achievements to address the range of crimes that Americans may encounter. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which I signed in February, helps State and local law enforcement personnel perform critical work by providing \$2 billion through the Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Program.

A smart crime reduction strategy must also incorporate outreach to those who have paid their debt to society and have become responsible and contributing members of their communities. Prisoner reentry programs have been tested and proven effective. Through a number of supportive services, including substance abuse and mental health counseling, prison-to-work incentives, job training, and transitional assistance, reentry programs help reduce crime recidivism and keep fam-