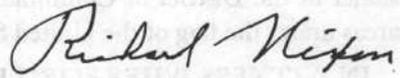


important national priority which warrants their attention and productive efforts. I request that appropriate Federal, State, and local officials cooperate in observing that week.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifteenth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred ninety-fifth.



PROCLAMATION 4048

Senior Citizens Month, 1971

April 20, 1971

*By the President of the United States of America*

A Proclamation

From its beginnings, the American Nation has been dedicated to the constant pursuit of better tomorrows. Yet, for many of our 20 million older Americans the "tomorrows" that arrive with their later years have not been better. Rather than days of reward, happiness, and opportunity, they have too often been days of disappointment, loneliness, and anxiety. It is imperative that this situation be changed.

Some of the problems of older Americans have their roots in economic causes. For example, the incidence of poverty is more than twice as great among older Americans as among those under 65. This is especially tragic because many of these people did not become poor until they reached their later years. Moreover, the economic gap between the age groups has been accompanied in recent years by a growing sense of social and psychological separation, so that too often our older citizens are regarded as an unwanted generation.

The generation of Americans over 65 have lived through a particularly challenging time in world history. The fact that our country has come through the first two-thirds of the twentieth century as a strong and growing Nation is the direct result of their devotion and their resourcefulness. We owe them a great deal—not only for what they have done in the past but also for what they are continuing to do today. Perhaps the greatest error which younger Americans make in dealing with the elderly is to underestimate the energy and skill which they can still contribute to their country.

During the last year, several hundred thousand older people wrote to officials of the Federal Government and told us in their own words—

some sad, some hopeful—about what they need and what they desire. We learned once again that what they seek most of all is a continuing role in shaping the destiny of their society. We must find new ways for helping them play such a role—an undertaking which will require a basic change in the attitudes of many Americans who are not yet elderly.

As a part of our effort to achieve such changes, our Nation each year observes the month of May as Senior Citizens Month. This is a time when we make a special effort to thank our older citizens for all they have contributed to America's progress. It is also a time for asking with special force whether they are now sharing in that progress as fully as they deserve and desire and for renewing our efforts to help them live proud and fulfilling lives.

Senior Citizens Month, 1971, will be a particularly important time for such endeavors, for this is the year of the White House Conference on Aging. The Governor of every State has issued a call for a State Conference on Aging to be held during May. From these State conferences will come policy recommendations which will be submitted to the White House Conference in Washington next November.

I know that the work of these State conferences during Senior Citizens Month—like the work of the White House Conference next autumn—will be undertaken with a high sense of discipline, commitment, and imagination. The Nation owes no less to those who have given so much to its development.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RICHARD NIXON, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate May, 1971, as Senior Citizens Month. The theme for this month will be Toward a National Policy on Aging.

I am deeply grateful to the Governors for their concern and participation in this observance. I urge officials of government at all levels—national, State, and local—and of voluntary organizations and private groups to give special attention to the problems of older Americans during this period.

I also call upon individual citizens of all ages to take full advantage of this opportunity to share in designing a better future—for those who are now numbered among our older citizens and for all who will be among that number someday.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twentieth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred ninety-fifth.

