

migration of our population from farm to city during the first half of this century. In the last decade this migration came to a halt and to some extent was reversed. From 1970-1973, the growth rate for rural areas actually exceeded the growth rate for metropolitan areas, thus compounding the problem.

The Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare has designated 1,400 counties and regions as critical health manpower shortage areas where there are too few doctors, dentists, nurses and other health professionals to properly serve the population. Most of these are in rural areas.

Let me affirm, in our Nation's Bicentennial year—which celebrates to such a great extent the positive values of our rural heritage—that we shall make a major commitment to the improvement of health care in our rural communities.

I call upon all our people, rural and urban alike, to support the goal of improving the quality of rural life through better health.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GERALD R. FORD, President of the United States of America, to draw attention to these facts and to encourage solutions to the health problems of rural America, do hereby designate the week beginning April 4, 1976, as National Rural Health Week.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this second day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and seventy-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundredth.

GERALD R. FORD

Proclamation 4426

April 5, 1976

### Older Americans Month, 1976

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### A Proclamation

Among our Nation's most precious natural resources are the collective wisdom, experience and abilities of our older citizens.

In recent years we have become more aware of the important contributions older Americans have made in the past and in the tremendous potential they hold for the future. We are increasing our efforts to ensure that they have the opportunity for independent living through security of income, maintenance of health and continued useful involvement in the life of our Nation.

America's older citizens have earned the gratitude and respect of our society, as well as our recognition of their worth and dignity. In this spirit, the Federal Council on Aging has prepared the Bicentennial Charter for Older Americans expressing their rights and obligations.

The job market and the area of volunteer services provide some of the best opportunities to draw on the strengths and talents of older Americans. Unfortunately, older, and even middle-aged workers, are too often the victims of myth and prejudice

regarding their capabilities. Our society needs the know-how, experience, judgment and eagerness to serve that these citizens bring to the job.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GERALD R. FORD, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate the month of May, 1976, as Older Americans Month.

I urge all State and Area Agencies on Aging and other private and public organizations that are related to the field of aging to observe this month by arranging public forums where the Bicentennial Charter for Older Americans will be discussed and recommendations developed for implementation.

I urge all organizations concerned with employment to observe this month with ceremonies and programs designed to increase employment opportunities for older workers.

I urge all organizations engaged in the delivery of services to persons in need to observe this month by increased emphasis on efforts to recruit, train and place older volunteers.

And I urge all Americans to observe this month by focusing on the achievements of older persons and supporting programs to make the last days of life the best days for increasing numbers of our older Americans.

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

GERALD R. FORD

EDITORIAL NOTE: The President's remarks of Apr. 5, 1976, on signing Proclamation 4426, are printed in the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents (vol. 12, p. 575).

Proclamation 4427

•

April 8, 1976

### World Trade Week, 1976

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### A Proclamation

When our Nation's founders met two hundred years ago in Philadelphia to declare our independence, they categorized in unambiguous terms the reasons that compelled them to embark upon such a momentous and irrevocable course. "Cutting off our Trade with all Parts of the World" was high on the list of grievances.

The patriots who declared independence in 1776 set the United States on the path to leadership in the interdependent world of 1976. Their action enabled us, over a period of two centuries, to construct a firm foundation of commercial alliances with nations around the globe. Last year our two-way trade with other nations amounted to \$204 billion, with a record trade surplus of more than \$11 billion.

America's performance in the world marketplace is a true measure of the quality of American products, the extent of American ingenuity, and the dedication of American labor and industry to international commerce. Trade has been indispensable to our economic growth, to the greater well-being of our citizens, and to peaceful