

Proclamation 4678 of August 29, 1979

## White Cane Safety Day, 1979

By the President of the United States of America

### A Proclamation

Most of us take it for granted that we can walk unaided through a crowded store or street. We give little thought to our freedom to come and go as we please, yet there are over six million Americans whose vision is so impaired that every corner is a place of danger.

For many of these people, help comes in the form of a white cane. This eight-ounce, long white stick is as useful as it is simple. For a blind person, it is a kind of beacon. In the hands of someone trained in its skillful use, the white cane becomes an extension of the body, providing assurance that the path ahead is clear.

Upon encountering someone using a white cane, those of us who are fortunate enough to see well should slow our pace for a moment to notice if the person seems to need assistance. Offering an arm to a blind person crossing the street or guiding him or her around a barrier requires only a few moments. Indeed, just yielding the right of way to a blind person can make the difference between a pleasant and safe excursion or a frustrating and possibly hazardous one. Motorists, cyclists, and joggers should be especially alert to the person with a white cane.

To heighten public awareness of the importance of the white cane to the independence and safety of blind and visually handicapped Americans, the Congress, by a joint resolution approved October 6, 1964 (78 Stat. 1003; 36 U.S.C. 169d) has authorized the President to proclaim October 15 of each year as White Cane Safety Day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JIMMY CARTER, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 15, 1979, as White Cane Safety Day.

On this occasion, I urge all Americans to consider the needs and accomplishments of those who successfully overcome the difficulties imposed by visual disability and blindness. Such individuals merit recognition and respect for the special efforts they must make to function independently in a world where the ability to see is taken for granted.

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

JIMMY CARTER