

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and ninth.

RONALD REAGAN

Proclamation 5251 of October 5, 1984

National Spina Bifida Month, 1984

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

Spina bifida is among the most common birth defects. Between one and two of every 1,000 babies in the United States are born with this problem. Infants with spina bifida may have incompletely developed spinal cords and suffer varying degrees of muscle paralysis and spine and limb deformities. Most develop hydrocephalus—a potentially dangerous buildup of fluid and pressure within the brain.

Thirty years ago the majority of children with spina bifida died. Today, thanks to Federal and private programs of biomedical research, medical and surgical management of spina bifida has advanced to the point that nearly all children survive. But some of these survivors face various potential problems, including lack of mobility, incontinence, and learning difficulties. Once again, research has provided answers: early surgical closure of spinal defects to reduce the development of infection and hydrocephalus; improved neurosurgical techniques for relieving pressure on the brain; better antibiotics for treating life-threatening infections; lighter braces to aid in mobility; and new techniques to control bladder function.

Further improvements may be expected to result from research supported by the Federal government's National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke and the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development. Voluntary agencies including the Spina Bifida Association of America, the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation, and the National Easter Seal Society are also involved.

For the many investigators supported by these organizations, the greatest challenge is to find the cause of this crippling birth defect and develop ways to prevent it. Scientists working toward these goals are studying the formation of the spinal cord and factors that might influence its abnormal development.

In order to focus attention on the needs of spina bifida children for long-term care and on the emotional and financial difficulties faced by their parents, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 275, has designated October 1984 as "National Spina Bifida Month" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of the month.

Ante, p. 1606.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 1984 as National Spina Bifida Month, and I call upon all government agencies, health organizations, and the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and ninth.

RONALD REAGAN

Proclamation 5252 of October 9, 1984

National Down's Syndrome Month, 1984

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

In the past decade, the United States has entered a new era of hope for its developmentally disabled citizens. This new age of enlightened understanding recognizes that developmentally disabled persons have a great potential for achieving and overcoming handicaps. Down's syndrome, a condition once thought to be without hope of positive change, is one of the best symbols of this changing attitude.

Progress is evident on several fronts. Research has uncovered the genetic basis for the condition and points the way to its ultimate prevention. Advances in medical treatment can minimize defects associated with the condition and have extended the life-span of those who have it. School doors have been unlocked to Down's syndrome children, and special education classes within mainstream school programs have been developed. Vocational training in preparation for gainful employment and independent living has become available.

These advances have not occurred by chance. They are the result of the collective effort of concerned physicians, scientific investigators, teachers and other professionals, parent groups such as the National Down's Syndrome Congress, and government. But the task remains unfinished. Public awareness and acceptance of the capabilities of persons who have Down's syndrome can greatly facilitate their being welcomed in all communities.

Ante, p. 1683.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 254, has designated October 1984 as "National Down's Syndrome Month" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this month.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 1984 as National Down's Syndrome Month, and I urge all Americans to join me in encouraging renewed efforts on behalf of the health and well-being of individuals with Down's syndrome. I invite all concerned citizens, agencies, and organizations to unite during October in support of appropriate observances and activities that will assist individuals with Down's syndrome and their families to a fuller and more rewarding life.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and ninth.

RONALD REAGAN