

Proclamation 7085—National Volunteer Week, 1998

April 21, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Volunteers enrich our lives every day with their generosity and compassion. In recent months, we have witnessed the extraordinary response of America's volunteers to the plight of those who have suffered from the severe weather plaguing much of our country. In communities devastated by mud slides, ice storms, flash floods, or tornadoes, volunteers have opened their hearts and homes to offer shelter, hot meals, building materials, and—most important—the hope and support that people desperately need to begin putting their lives back together. This spirit of citizen service has deep and strong roots in America's past, and by nurturing this spirit we can help to ensure a better future for our Nation.

Just one year ago, at the Presidents' Summit for America's Future in Philadelphia, I called on all Americans to dedicate their volunteer efforts to the well-being of our children and to make the social and educational development of our youngest citizens a national priority. Thousands of individuals and organizations across America pledged their support for this effort; and today, we can be proud that more than 93 million Americans are regularly volunteering to help hundreds of thousands of children in need, serving as leaders, mentors, tutors, and companions. Through their hard work and generous response, this growing army of volunteers is making our streets safer, our schools better, our children healthier, and our future brighter.

We must not only preserve this remarkable spirit of citizen service, but also expand it. By emulating our Nation's many unsung heroes—from the 12-year-old in California who distributed dolls to disadvantaged children, to the businessman in New York who created one of our country's first school-to-work pro-

grams—we must strive together to build a society free from crime, poverty, illiteracy, and hopelessness. And by making citizen service the shared experience of all Americans, we can build a sense of common responsibility for our future.

This week and throughout the year, let us salute all those who devote their time and talents to the betterment of our communities and the well-being of our children. Let us honor the work of the thousands of voluntary, civic, religious, school, and neighborhood groups across our Nation who do so much to serve their fellow Americans and improve the quality of life for us all. Let us also recognize and support the efforts of the Corporation for National Service and its programs—AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and the National Senior Service Corps—as well as all the organizations, communities, and individuals who have responded to the Presidents' Summit call to action and are following through on the work begun there.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, 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 19 through April 25, 1998, as National Volunteer Week. I call upon all Americans to observe this week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities to express appreciation to the countless volunteers among us for their commitment to service and to encourage the spirit of volunteerism in our families and communities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on April 23.

Memorandum on Streamlining the Granting of Waivers

April 21, 1998

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Streamlining the Granting of Waivers

Five years ago, the Vice President asked you to create reinvention laboratories in your departments and agencies and to streamline the granting of waivers of internal agency rules within them so the laboratories could more effectively promote innovation. These waivers—delegations of authority to deviate from existing internal agency policies and procedures—are often sought by front-line employees who are trying to make their operations work better, cost less, and get results that Americans care about. The Vice President and I emphasized such measures in the Blair House Papers last year, when we encouraged you to delegate more power to front-line employees to unlock the enormous potential of the Federal workforce.

Your departments and agencies have responded, and Federal employees have used waivers to facilitate innovation and provide excellent customer service. For example, the Coast Guard marine safety programs have increased managerial flexibility for field commanders to waive unnecessary requirements that had previously accounted for over one-half million work hours annually. The Department of Agriculture's Animal Plant Health Inspection Service's Tort Claims Adjudication Team used a waiver to reduce the processing time for tort claims of less than \$2,500 from 51 days to 8.

Based on these experiences, I am directing you, where you determine that it is appropriate, to adopt some of the best practices developed by agencies. These best practices include the following characteristics:

1. Waiver requests are acted upon within 30 days or less. After 30 days, the originating entity within the agency can assume approval and implement the requested waiver.
2. Those officials having authority to grant or change internal agency rules can approve waiver requests, but only

the head of an agency can deny a waiver request.

3. Officials who have the authority to grant waivers are encouraged to identify potential waiver opportunities and extend waivers to their own agencies.

The Vice President's team at the National Partnership for Reinventing Government (NPR) is ready to assist you in developing a waiver process based upon lessons learned and best practices from agencies that have experience with waivers. Some of you already have this type of waiver process in place for reinvention laboratories. I direct you to take every opportunity to extend this process throughout your agency.

You should report to the Vice President on actions taken to implement this memorandum by July 1, 1998.

This memorandum does not apply to waiver requests by grant program recipients nor does it apply to the granting of waivers to statutory requirements or practices required by law. It applies to those internal agency rules not codified in the Code of Federal Regulations.

William J. Clinton

Remarks on Earth Day in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia

April 22, 1998

Thank you very much. Thank you for the welcome. I want to especially welcome all the young children and not-so-young children and all of you who feel childlike, even though you're not anymore, to this wonderful American celebration of Earth Day.

I thank the Vice President for his steadfast, constant, and brilliant leadership to preserve our environment for future generations. I thank Congressman Bob Wise, who has been a good friend and an adviser and represents you so well. I want to thank our National Park superintendent, Bob Stanton. You know, I was sitting with Bob, and I said, "You know something, you've got the best job in the whole Federal Government." And he said, "I know, and they're foolish enough to pay me to do it every day." [*Laughter*]

Mayor Stowell, thank you. Pam Underhill, thank you for your work at the Appalachian