

Proclamation 7141—National Character Counts Week, 1998

October 16, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As Americans, we are a people full of hope, confident in our capacity to make life better for ourselves and others. We look forward to the promise of the future, and we have high goals for the 21st century: to remain the world's leading force for peace, freedom, prosperity, and security; to keep the American Dream alive for everyone willing to work for it; to come together across lines of race, religion, and other individual differences to become one America. But everything we hope to accomplish depends, as it always has, on the hearts and minds of the American people.

One of the greatest building blocks of character is citizen service. We must do more as individuals and as a society to encourage all Americans—especially our young people—to share their time, skills, enthusiasm, and energy with their communities. Whether we teach children to read, mentor young people, work at a food bank or homeless shelter, or care for people living with AIDS, citizen service calls forth the best from each of us. It builds a sense of community, compassion, acceptance of others, and a willingness to do the right thing—all hallmarks of character.

We can take great pride today in the numbers of energetic, idealistic Americans who are participating in service activities across our country and around the world. Almost 90,000 young men and women have served their communities through AmeriCorps during the past 4 years, tutoring students, mentoring children, building homes, fighting drug abuse. Through our America Reads initiative, Americans of all ages are volunteering their time to help children learn to read independently by the end of the third grade. Through Learn and Serve America, the Corporation for National and Community Service encourages America's schools to add service learning to their curricula so that all students—from kindergarten through graduate

school—can develop their character, skills, and self-confidence while making their own unique contributions to the life of their communities. In the National Senior Service Corps and the Peace Corps, in religious, school, community, and charitable organizations, Americans strengthen the character of our Nation by volunteering to improve the quality of life for their fellow human beings. During National Character Counts Week, let us reaffirm to our children that the future belongs to those who have the strength of character to live a life of service to others.

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 October 18 through October 24, 1998, as National Character Counts Week. I call upon the people of the United States, Government officials, educators, religious, community, and business leaders, and the States to commemorate this week with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of October, 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-third.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on October 20. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

October 17, 1998

Good morning. This week we reached an agreement on a balanced budget that invests in our people and our future. I'm proud of the results: 100,000 new teachers and funds for after-school programs for hundreds of thousands of children; new environmental protections and an advance in our clean water initiative to deal with the 40 percent of our lakes and rivers that aren't yet fit for