AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on November 2.

Proclamation 7145—National Adoption Month, 1998

October 29, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Every child deserves a safe and loving family. But each year, thousands of American children grow up without such families, lacking the stability and sense of permanency they need to thrive. More than 100,000 such children—orphaned, abandoned, abused, or unable to remain at home for other serious reasons—will need homes in the next few years. Although foster care provides a good supportive temporary environment for these children, adoption can provide them with the sustained love and care of permanent families and can give adults the chance to open their hearts and homes to a child they will cherish.

My Administration has worked hard both to improve the experience of children awaiting adoption and to increase their chances of adoption. Last November, I signed into law the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, which made sweeping changes in our Nation's child welfare system. This legislation underscores the importance of safety and permanency for children awaiting adoption and focuses on the urgency of finding adoptive families. In addition to achieving passage of this landmark legislation, we have made adoption easier by barring discrimination by race or ethnicity, by providing a tax credit for newly adoptive parents, and by ensuring that adoptive parents are covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act.

We must strengthen such efforts if we are to meet our national goal of doubling the number of adoptions by the year 2002. In addition, while adoption in America has increased in recent years, more than 25,000 young Americans each year reach the age of 18 and leave the child welfare system without permanent homes or families. This statistic tells us that we still have much to do. We must not only secure the placement of young children in families, but also move aggressively to place in permanent families our older children, as well. I have directed the Federal Government to work with State and local governments to continue identifying and removing the barriers that prevent young people from moving from our child welfare system into adoptive families.

Working together—policymakers, government officials, family welfare agencies, religious and community organizations, and families—we can make a difference in the lives of thousands of children. My Administration will continue to support efforts to recruit and strengthen adoptive families and to shorten the time it takes to move children from foster care to permanent homes; to reduce the backlogs in our Nation's juvenile and family court systems; and to promote strong, supportive adoption programs that meet the needs of every child.

During National Adoption Month, let us recommit ourselves to the goal of finding a safe, permanent, and loving home for every child in need. Let us also honor the many caring families across our Nation who have opened their arms and their hearts to a child through adoption. By making such a profound and loving commitment to our Nation's most vulnerable children, they are also making a lasting investment in America's future.

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 November 1998 as National Adoption Month. I urge all Americans to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities to honor adoptive families and to participate in efforts to find permanent, loving homes for waiting children.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth 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

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., November 2, 1998]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on November 3.

Remarks at a Reception Honoring Representative Peter Deutsch in Palm Beach

October 29, 1998

Thank you very much, Doctor. Thank you for your remarks—and Peter and Lori, and your families and your extended family here. Let me say at the outset that I had two thoughts when Peter was speaking—one sort of craven thought. I thought I wish I had taped that, and the next time I really need a tough vote for him I will play it back. [*Laughter*] My more noble thought was—[*laughter*]—was that, I was sitting there looking at Peter and thinking about the times we spent together, the times Lori used to go jogging with me before I hurt my leg. Now I use it as an excuse not to be humiliated. [*Laughter*] And I was thinking about the times we spent together, and I was thinking how fortunate our country is that people like him will do the work that he does. And we are very fortunate.

You know, this has been a pretty good 6 years for the economy, and if Peter Deutsch hadn't been in Congress, he would have made a lot of money in this economy. [*Laughter*] He would have done well in this economy. And our country is blessed by that.

Let me just be very brief here. Today I came to Florida with Hillary to see the space shuttle and to see a man who has been a very good personal friend of mine and of my wife's, John Glenn, go into space at the age of 77. It was a thrilling experience. I'm sure all of you who either saw it from a distance or saw it on television felt the same way. And a lot of people came up to me and said, "Gosh, you look tired." And that's because I still haven't recovered from what I was doing last week at this time, which was finally announcing the end of 9 days of talks on the Middle East peace process, which culminated in a 30-something hour marathon. I was up 39 hours in a row, and I didn't even do that in college. [*Laughter*] I didn't know I had it in me at my old age and in my declining years. But anyway, I made it.

I say that because those two events, this space shuttle with John Glenn on it and that peace process, embody so much of what I've tried to do as President and so much about what I think is best in our country, the idea of giving everybody an opportunity to go as far as his or her dreams will carry them, the idea of being adventurous in all—and daring to change, and being willing to take a risk and always thinking about the future.

One of you who went through the line and had your picture taken with me tonight quoted back my 1992 campaign theme: Don't stop thinking about tomorrow. That's what that space program is all about. And then the peace process embodied not only the peace we would like to bring to the world but the peace we would like to bring to our own country—how strongly and earnestly we wish to reach across all the lines that divide us here to make one America and then to bring that spirit of reconciliation to the rest of the world in freedom, in democracy.

And when I became President I really set out to create a country for the 21st century where everyone who would work for it could have opportunity, where we would be one community across all our diversity, and where we would still be the world's leading force for peace and freedom and prosperity, not just for ourselves but for others as well.

None of the things that I have done that required any act from Congress would have been possible without people like Peter. And when things go well, the President gets the credit. But very often there are so many others whose work is utterly indispensable. And I think you should know that.

If we hadn't passed that economic plan in 1993, we wouldn't be here celebrating this today. If we hadn't passed the crime bill to give 100,000 police to our streets and to finally take on the Brady bill issues and the assault weapons ban, we wouldn't be here celebrating the lowest crime rate in a generation today. So there are lots of things that he and others deserve credit for.

In this last budget negotiation the reason we got, in a hostile Congress, the reason we got 100,000 teachers and after-school programs for kids in trouble and a big increase in our clean water plan and continued support to clean up the Florida Everglades and