

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:39 p.m. in a ballroom of the Holiday Inn Capitol adjacent to the Federal Emergency Management Agency headquarters.

Proclamation 7476—Child Health Day, 2001

October 1, 2001

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Many of us fondly remember the joys and challenges of childhood and appreciate the endless sacrifices that our families made to love, protect, and encourage us as we grew into adulthood. On Child Health Day, we take time as parents and concerned citizens to assess the health and well-being of our children and to reaffirm our commitment to nurture and care for them in the best way possible.

To secure the strength and continued growth of our great Nation, we must work to provide all of our children with the opportunities and tools they must have to succeed. From quality health care and safe living environments to emotional support and timely encouragement, our children need and deserve our utmost attention.

In light of the tragic terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, we must redouble our efforts to ensure that our children feel safe. We must listen carefully to them and help them express and work through feelings of fear, confusion, and sorrow. And, most importantly, we must let them know that they are loved. Children who feel loved and supported can better reach their full potential and achieve their dreams.

As parents, teachers, and neighbors, we must be aware of, and work to prevent, the physical, emotional, and psychological threats that potentially endanger our children. Parents must be vigilant in ensuring that their children are immunized against preventable diseases. They should check their homes for cleaning products, gases, and other hazards, including lead-based paint, radon, carbon monoxide, and allergens that may cause chronic illnesses, respiratory disorders, and sometimes death. Children

should be taught to be wary of strangers who approach them and to seek the help of someone they trust when faced with uncomfortable situations. We also must use innovative teaching methods to encourage our children to develop positive habits such as regular exercise, good nutrition, abstinence from drugs, alcohol, and inappropriate sexual behavior, and good personal hygiene.

Our steadfast commitment to the health and welfare of our children is especially important for those who have special health care needs. Children who suffer from chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, and emotional conditions require specialized services in their communities. I encourage parents and caretakers to recognize these health problems, to obtain specialized care as necessary, and to monitor their children's conditions closely in order to give them every advantage toward leading a successful, fulfilling life.

My Administration is strongly committed to supporting families and children in need and to improving our education system so that no child is left behind. Let us work together as individuals, families, communities, and Americans to ensure that the health of our children always remains a national priority. The Congress, by a joint resolution approved May 18, 1928, as amended (U.S.C. 105), has called for the designation of the first Monday in October as "Child Health Day" and has requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this day.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Monday, October 1, 2001, as Child Health Day. On this day, and on every day throughout the year, I call upon families, schools, child health professionals, communities, and governments to dedicate themselves to fostering the healthy development and well-being of all our children—especially those with special health care needs.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-sixth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., October 3, 2001]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on October 4.

Proclamation 7475—National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, 2001

October 1, 2001

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The social blight of domestic violence has continued to burden America into the 21st Century. Our homes should be places of safety and comfort. Tragically, domestic violence can and does turn many homes into places of torment. The grim facts speak for themselves: almost one-third of American women murdered each year are killed by their current or former partners, usually a husband. Approximately 1 million women annually report being stalked. And many children suffer or witness abuse in their homes, which can sadly spawn legacies of violence in families across America.

Domestic violence spills over into schools and places of work; and it affects people from every walk of life. Though abuse may occur in the seclusion of a private residence, its effects scar the face of our Nation.

In the United States, we have strict laws intended to hold domestic abusers accountable for their vile conduct by bringing them to justice, but laws alone are not enough. A comprehensive, coordinated approach must shape our strategy to reduce domestic violence. Accordingly, the Federal Government is partnering with States, local communities, and other entities to implement tough and effective mechanisms to respond to reports of domestic violence.

These efforts include specialized units in police departments, and prosecutors offices that work with local victims' advocates to make the criminal justice system more responsive to victims and more retributive to their abusers. Jurisdictions throughout the country now provide legal assistance to ensure that when victims try to escape abuse,

they can obtain legal help from attorneys who understand the dynamics of domestic violence. Law enforcement officers, prosecutors, court personnel, and service providers are working to improve their responses to the often hidden victims of elder abuse and violence against women with disabilities. Moreover, thousands of communities now have shelters and emergency services for abused women and their children.

As a Nation, we must prioritize addressing the problem of domestic violence in our communities every day of the year. National Domestic Violence Awareness Month provides us with a special opportunity to emphasize that domestic violence is a crime, to warn abusers that they will be prosecuted, and to offer victims more aid and support. We can and must radically reduce and work to eliminate this scourge from our land. To succeed, this effort must be echoed by officials from every segment of the criminal justice system, Federal, State, and local. Community leaders, health care professionals, teachers, employers, friends, and neighbors all will play an important role in eradicating domestic violence.

As we observe National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, I call on all Americans to commit to preventing domestic violence and to assist those who suffer from it. These collective efforts will contribute to peace in our homes, schools, places of work, and communities and will help ensure the future safety of countless children and adults.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, 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 2001, as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. I urge all Americans to learn more about this terrible problem and to take positive action in protecting communities and families from its devastating effects.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-sixth.

George W. Bush