

Proclamation 7526—Irish-American Heritage Month, 2002

March 2, 2002

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

America has been shaped by the principles of liberty and freedom, guided by the pursuit of justice, and enriched by the diversity of its people. Irish Americans have been an essential part of this development, greatly contributing to our Nation's progress and prosperity.

Our country's citizens come from diverse backgrounds and cultures, which has enabled us to realize the vision embodied in our first national motto: "E Pluribus Unum," meaning "Out of many, one." Our forbears discovered the value inherent in this ideal, building a Nation where all people can live free, be equal under the law, and find opportunity for success in our free-enterprise system. From all points on earth, people of different races, faiths, and ethnicities came to this land to become Americans and thus heirs and stewards of the Founders' vision. This convergence of cultures contributed to the rich fabric of our Nation, uniquely threading together many divergent ideas, tastes, and traditions. Today, we enjoy a society shaped by this history, one Nation under one flag. Our Nation's response to the terrible events of September 11 demonstrated vividly the reality of the unity and resolve of our diverse people.

Since our Nation's founding, millions of Irish have emigrated to this country to embrace the vibrant promise of new opportunity that America offers. Some came to America seeking the freedom to worship as they pleased. Others came in the wake of the devastating Irish potato famine of 1845–1849, which caused 1 million deaths in Ireland and led nearly 1.5 million Irish to emigrate. And the many successes of the Irish immigrants in America proved to be a continuing draw to their friends and family who remained in Ireland. The Irish brought with them a spirit of life and an ethic of work that helped to enliven our culture and enabled them to prosper in their new land.

George Washington's Continental Army had over 20 generals of Irish descent. Americans proudly claiming Irish heritage have held positions of national leadership, including Presidents George Washington, Andrew Jackson, John F. Kennedy, and Ronald Reagan and Supreme Court Justices William J. Brennan, Jr., and Sandra Day O'Connor. And numerous Irish Americans have enjoyed great success in the arts and entertainment field, including Buster Keaton, Stephen Foster, and F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Throughout our history, America has been greatly blessed by the innumerable contributions of Irish Americans. This month we celebrate these great people and the heritage of their beautiful ancestral homeland, Ireland.

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 March 2002 as Irish-American Heritage Month. I call upon all Americans to observe this month by learning about and commemorating the contributions of Irish Americans.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this second day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand two, 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., March 5, 2002]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 4, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on March 6.

Proclamation 7527—National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, 2002

March 2, 2002

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

This year, more than 148,000 people will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer, and more than 56,000 people will die from this

disease. Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related death in the United States, yet it is one of the most highly preventable forms of cancer. Early diagnosis is critical to survival. Research shows that 91 percent of patients with localized colorectal cancer survive for 5 years after diagnosis, yet only 37 percent of all diagnoses occur at this stage. The remaining 63 percent of cases are not discovered until the disease has spread throughout the body.

Because 75 percent of new cases occur in persons with no known risk factors, regular colorectal cancer screenings are crucial to prevention. Even for an individual without symptoms, screenings are extremely important. For those over 50 and for individuals with a family history of cancer, screenings should be scheduled on a regular basis. I am pleased to note that Medicare coverage for colonoscopies was expanded in 2001 to provide this screening to more beneficiaries, and many commercial health plans now cover this cost.

Many people avoid colorectal cancer screening due to fear or anxiety, however, it is important for all Americans to understand the importance of this routine procedure. During National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, I encourage all Americans to learn more about this disease, to assist prevention efforts, and to recognize the importance of colorectal screenings.

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 March 2002 as National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. I call upon all Americans to take appropriate measures to protect themselves and their loved ones from this disease.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this Second day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand two, 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., March 5, 2002]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 4, and it

was published in the *Federal Register* on March 6.

Proclamation 7528—Save Your Vision Week, 2002

March 2, 2002

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Healthy vision is a precious gift that allows us to enjoy the beauty of nature, the smile of a loved one, and the many wonders in the world around us. Unfortunately for 14 million Americans, eye problems can interfere with daily activities and inhibit the enjoyment of life.

Health officials have identified the most significant and preventable threats to vision. According to the Department of Health and Human Service's *Healthy People 2010* report, visual impairment represents one of our country's 10 most frequent causes of disability.

To help avoid or remedy vision problems, we must remain dedicated to the prevention of eye injuries, emphasize early detection of eye disease, work to research and develop new treatments and rehabilitation therapies, and promote vision health awareness. All Americans should take steps to ensure that eye health becomes a priority in our homes, businesses, and communities. We should commit to receiving regular dilated eye examinations; we should wear protective eyewear when necessary, both recreationally and on the job; and we must make every effort to ensure children age 5 and under receive vision screening.

The Congress, by joint resolution approved December 30, 1963, as amended (77 Stat. 629; 36 U.S.C. 138), has authorized and requested the President to proclaim the first week in March of each year as "Save Your Vision Week." During this year's observance, let us renew our commitment to fighting the causes of visual impairment and to supporting good eye health. I encourage all Americans to learn more about ways to prevent eye problems and to help others maintain the invaluable asset of eyesight.