

Proclamation 7717—National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, 2003

October 8, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Across our country, domestic violence traumatizes victims, endangers children, harms families, and threatens communities. According to the most recent report from the Department of Justice, there were almost 700,000 incidents of domestic violence in 2001. Approximately one-third of women who are murdered each year are killed by their current or former husband or partner. Children who are subjected to domestic violence too often grow up to inflict violence on others, creating a cycle of violence that must be stopped. During National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we renew our Nation's commitment to prevent and punish the perpetrators of this despicable crime and bring hope and healing to those affected by it.

In some communities across our country, law enforcement, medical, and legal services for domestic violence victims are fragmented, requiring victims to travel to several different places to receive the help and treatment they need. Comprehensive service centers for domestic violence victims and their dependents enable health and justice professionals to better serve those in need. My Administration supports efforts to provide a wide variety of victim services in one location, including medical care, counseling and social services, law enforcement and legal resources, faith-based services, employment assistance, and housing assistance.

Local nonprofit and faith-based programs and their volunteers also offer critical assistance and support to victims in need—help that may not otherwise be available. In August of this year, the dedicated advocates at the Federally supported National Domestic Violence Hotline answered their one millionth call for help. Volunteers who want to help victims in the local community can find more information at the USA Freedom

Corps Volunteer Network (located at www.usafreedomcorps.gov).

My Administration is fighting domestic violence and strengthening services for victims and their dependents by supporting local and private efforts and securing historic levels of funding for the Violence Against Women programs at the Department of Justice. In fiscal year 2002, we spent \$390 million to prevent domestic violence and help victims, which represented an approximately \$100 million increase in funding. Since then, we have continued to provide a similar level of funding, and cities and towns across America are using this money to strengthen their responses to the victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The Federal commitment to domestic violence has made it possible for women to seek relief from abuse and reclaim their dignity and their lives. Moreover, Federal prosecutions in cases involving violence against women increased by 35 percent in 2002.

Today is the first day of issue for the U.S. Postal Service Stop Family Violence postage stamp, which will raise money to support the national fight against domestic violence. On behalf of families and communities across America, I call on all citizens to help raise public awareness about how to prevent, recognize, and stop domestic violence. I applaud the commitment of all those who are helping to improve the lives of domestic violence survivors and their families. Working together, we can continue to find better solutions to this national problem.

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 2003 as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. I urge all Americans to help victims of domestic violence and to work together to address this tragic problem.

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

George W. Bush

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NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on October 14. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this proclamation.

Remarks at the Republican National Committee Presidential Gala

October 8, 2003

Thank you all for coming. Go ahead and be seated, unless you don't have seat. [*Laughter*] I'm honored you all are here. I appreciate your warm welcome. I thank you for your strong support and friendship. I thank you for your contributions. I thank you for your grassroots work. I thank you for your prayers. There's a lot of happy folks here tonight. There's some Cubs fans. There's some Red Sox fans, and there are some happy people from California.

I am so glad that Laura came with me tonight. As you know, she's back home from an official trip. She went to Russia to help them with literacy. She went to France. [*Laughter*] You may have seen the picture in the newspaper. [*Laughter*] Last time I was in France, I got a nice welcome but nothing like that. [*Laughter*] Laura is a great First Lady. I'm really proud of her.

I want to thank my friend Ed Gillespie for leading our great party. He could be doing a lot of other things. There's no doubt we picked the right man to lead us into this election year. I appreciate the fact that Cathy, his fine wife, is supporting Ed in this really important mission.

I not only want to thank Ed, I want to thank all of the RNC members who are here, all the county officials, all the grassroots activists. We're going to win in 2004. I appreciate your support. I appreciate the friendship of all those on the stage here tonight who helped set a record. It's important to be well funded as you go into a campaign, and you've made it possible.

I want to thank my friend Al Hoffman and his wife, Dawn, for their longtime friendship. I want to thank Ann Wagner, our party co-chairman. I want to thank the gala cochairmen, Brad Freeman and David Girard-

diCarlo and Carl Linder. I want to thank all those who worked hard to make this event go so successfully.

I appreciate Monsignor Marc Filacchione who is here, the chaplain from the New York City Fire Department. I want to thank Lieutenant Kim Royster from New York—from the New York City Police Department. I'm really thankful you brought your Governor with you, a great Governor in George Pataki.

I want to thank the Wright Touch Orchestra, Jonathan Yeaworth and Michael Israel, as well as Michael Feinstein for providing entertainment here tonight.

I know we've got Members of the United States Congress with us. I had a meeting right before I came here with Speaker Denny Hastert. He told me that he wasn't able to make it. He said he's heard me speak before. [*Laughter*] But he is a great Speaker. He is a great leader for the United States Congress.

I appreciate Tom DeLay and Roy Blunt and all the House Members who are here. I also know that Bill Frist, the Senate majority leader, is here as well. What a class act he is.

I've got two goals in '04. One is slightly selfish. [*Laughter*] And the other is to make sure that Denny Hastert remains the Speaker of the House and Bill Frist the leader of the Senate.

It is in our Nation's interest that Hastert remain the Speaker and Bill Frist the majority leader. These are strong leaders. They have led the Congress in a lot of important matters. We've achieved a lot of results together, results that are good for Republicans and Democrats and Independents, results that are good for all Americans.

You know, I wasn't sure what to expect when I became your President. I was certain there would be some challenges. I wasn't exactly sure what to expect, but I knew there was going to be some problems to solve. And therefore, I knew I needed to surround myself with really strong, competent, capable people. I've assembled a great administration of Americans from all walks of life who have put their country above self.

This country is blessed to have a great Vice President in Dick Cheney. I listen to a great national security team and a great domestic policy team. Some of my members—some