

**Proclamation 6995 of April 22, 1997****Law Day, U.S.A., 1997**

*By the President of the United States of America  
A Proclamation*

This is the 40th year that Americans have celebrated the first day of May as Law Day, a special time to reflect on our legal heritage. It is an opportunity for all Americans to pause and consider how the rule of law has contributed to the freedoms we enjoy, and to our greatness as a Nation.

The theme of this year's Law Day commemoration, "Celebrate Your Freedom," focuses on the one concept that most defines us as a Nation. It was freedom that we fought for when we created this country. It is freedom that still sets us apart from many of the world's nations. And it is freedom's lamp that still beckons the oppressed to America from all parts of the globe.

The quest to ensure our freedom is the essence of what it means to be an American, and the bulwark of our freedom is the law and the legal system. James Madison once observed that if men were angels, governments would not be necessary. Laws are the instruments by which the people, through their government, protect themselves from, and regulate their relations with, each other. At the same time, laws also serve to restrain the power of that government. Finding the proper balance between the conflicting interests and rights of individuals, corporations, and government has never been easy. But we rely on the rule of law itself to protect all that is most precious to us. Without it, other nations have descended into a state where force alone prevails and justice is a mere hope.

Thanks to the genius of our Founders and the Constitutional system they created, Americans have witnessed the steady march of progress toward an open, inclusive society. We vote in free, fair elections. We worship according to our own faith. We associate freely with whomever we choose. And we are able to express our disagreements with our government freely and openly. These rights, routinely accepted today, have been maintained only through years of testing and reinforcement in our Federal and State courts, which have continued to extend freedom and liberty across the land.

So when we celebrate our freedom, we also celebrate a system of law that makes freedom possible. For more than two centuries, we have prospered and endured because we have relied on that system of law. We must keep that system strong and vibrant in our national life.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, in accordance with Public Law 87-20 of April 7, 1961, do hereby proclaim May 1, 1997, as Law Day. I urge the people of the United States to use this occasion to consider anew how our laws protect our freedoms and contribute to our national well-being. I call upon members of the legal profession, civic associations, educators, librarians, public officials, and the media to promote the observance of this day with appropriate programs and activities. I also call upon public officials to display the flag of the United States on all government buildings throughout the day.

**Proc. 6996**

**Title 3—The President**

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

**Proclamation 6996 of May 1, 1997**

**Older Americans Month, 1997**

*By the President of the United States of America  
A Proclamation*

Each year we set aside the month of May as a special time to pay tribute to older Americans and to acknowledge their many contributions to our national life. For the better part of this century, through tough times and good times, these Americans have raised families, strengthened our economy, defended our Nation, and reaffirmed our deepest values. All of us who are heirs to their service and sacrifice owe them a profound debt of gratitude.

The theme of this year's observance, "Caregiving: Compassion in Action," reminds us of one of the most important ways in which we can repay that debt. Each day across America, some 22 million caregivers and volunteers dedicate themselves to improving the quality of life for older family members, friends, and neighbors. By providing personal care, housekeeping, transportation, and innumerable other services and assistance, these caregivers enable many older Americans to remain in their own homes and communities, maintaining a precious measure of dignity and independence.

As America's population of older Americans continues to grow in number, we will have an even greater need to call on the skills and compassion of caregivers. In keeping with the spirit of service that is sweeping across our Nation today, I ask that all Americans—every day, but especially during Older Americans Month—reach out to an older person in need, sharing time, talents, and attention with someone who has already shared so much with us. By putting our compassion in action to serve our older citizens, we can build a more promising future for all our people.

Older Americans deserve our respect and support for they have worked diligently in so many ways to enrich and preserve the way of life we all enjoy. Our senior citizens have woven the fabric of our Nation to exemplify the values and beliefs that have made our country great.

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 May 1997 as Older Americans Month. I call upon Government officials, businesses, communities, volunteers, educators, and all the people of the United States to honor our older Americans and acknowledge the important contributions made by their caregivers, this month and throughout the year.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of