

## Presidential Documents

Proclamation 6953 of November 11, 1996

### National Family Caregivers Week, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

#### A Proclamation

At this special time each year, we give thanks for our many blessings. Among those blessings are the quiet but heartfelt contributions made on a daily basis by our Nation's caregivers, particularly on behalf of the elderly in our society.

The true value of the role that caregivers play in the lives of America's families is immeasurable. Providing physical comfort and emotional reassurance, these strong and selfless people care for loved ones who can no longer care for themselves. The vast majority of caregivers are family members—often older relatives—and women provide most of the informal care that their families receive. Of the millions of people who provide informal care to older adults, over half are spouses or children. While many caregivers experience stress and frustration in fulfilling their caregiving responsibilities, and many sacrifice personal opportunities to care for a loved one, most regard the challenges of caregiving as a rewarding and satisfying experience.

By the year 2030, one in five Americans will be at least 65 years old, compared to one in eight today. In addition, the number of older Americans will double, from the present 34 million to about 69 million. At the same time that our population is aging, more older persons are suffering from chronic illnesses and face potentially disabling conditions. Moreover, individuals with lifelong disabilities are living longer and may require assistance in caring for themselves as they age. The overwhelming majority of older Americans would prefer to remain in their homes while growing older—even when no coordinated system of home- and community-based care is available. As a result, more Americans are becoming involved in caring for family members who want to age with dignity and respect.

This week, as we celebrate the contributions of caregivers to their families and communities, let us recognize the challenges these generous individuals must confront on a daily basis—challenges that include fulfilling multiple and often conflicting roles of caregiving for their aging relatives, caring for young children, and working outside their homes. Let us promote community programs and encourage workplace policies that help to lighten or share the burden of their caregiving responsibilities. And let us, as a Nation, recognize and commend the vital role they play in ensuring that older Americans age with grace, dignity, and a precious measure of independence.

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 24 through November 30, 1996, as National Family Caregivers Week. I call upon Government officials, businesses, communities, volunteers, educators, and all the people of the United States to acknowledge the contributions made by caregivers this week and throughout the year.

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

*William Clinton*

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