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# Presidential Documents

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Title 3—

Proclamation 6954 of November 11, 1996

The President

Thanksgiving Day, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

## A Proclamation

America's oldest tradition, Thanksgiving is also a reaffirmation of our most deeply held values; a public recognition that, in the words of Thomas Jefferson, "God who gave us life gave us liberty." In gratitude for God's gift of freedom and "for all the great and various favors which he hath been pleased to confer upon us," George Washington made Thanksgiving his first proclamation for the new Nation, and it is one we are privileged to renew each year.

Much has changed for America in the two centuries since that first Thanksgiving proclamation. Generations of hardworking men and women have cultivated our soil and worked the land, and today America's bounty helps feed the world. The promise of freedom that sustained our founders through the hardships of the Revolution and the first challenging days of nationhood has become a reality for millions of immigrants who left their homelands for a new life on these shores. And the light of that freedom now shines brightly in many nations that once lived in the shadows of tyranny and oppression.

But across the years, we still share an unbroken bond with the men and women who first proclaimed Thanksgiving in our land. Americans today still cherish the fresh air of freedom, in which we can raise our families and worship God as we choose without fear of persecution. We still rejoice in this great land and in the civil and religious liberty it offers to all. And we still—and always—raise our voices in prayer to God, thanking Him in humility for the countless blessings He has bestowed on our Nation and our people.

Let us now, this Thanksgiving Day, reawaken ourselves and our neighbors and our communities to the genius of our founders in daring to build the world's first constitutional democracy on the foundation of trust and thanks to God. Out of our right and proper rejoicing on Thanksgiving Day, let us give our own thanks to God and reaffirm our love of family, neighbor, and community. Each of us can be an instrument of blessing to those we touch this Thanksgiving Day—and every day of the year.

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 Thursday, November 28, 1996, as a National Day of Thanksgiving. I encourage all the people of the United States to assemble in their homes, places of worship, or community centers to share the spirit of goodwill and prayer; to express heartfelt gratitude for the blessings of life; and to reach out in friendship to our brothers and sisters in the larger family of mankind.

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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