

# Presidential Documents

Title 3—

Proclamation 6996 of May 1, 1997

The President

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 the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

